Persuasion and Eloquence:

A Poetic and Rhetorical Analysis of *Ludlul*'s Hymns, Akkadian Shuila-Prayers, and Biblical Hebrew Comparators



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in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

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Abstract

This thesis examines the use of poetic devices and their rhetorical impact in the opening and closing hymns of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (I:1–40 and V:71–120), the šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, and their Biblical Hebrew comparators, Job 3 and Psalm 25. By employing approaches from Rhetorical Criticism and Poetic Analysis, I investigate how various poetic devices are employed in different Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources dealing with suffering and recovery, and how these devices align with the rhetorical contexts of the sources, i.e., their speakers, audiences, and purposes.

The rhetorical analysis of the Akkadian sources, conducted in chapters 2 and 3, and Biblical Hebrew comparators, conducted in chapter 5, is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the units' speakers, audiences, and rhetorical purposes, employing Umberto Eco's *intentio operis*, "the intention of the text," that is, the conclusions that can be reached by looking at what the text itself states and does as a coherent whole. The second section is the poetic analysis of the sources. This examines the different poetic devices used and their rhetorical impact, that is, how they align with the speakers, audiences, and purposes identified in the first section. I analyse the poetic devices according to five categories of figures: prosodic; phonologic; syntactic; semantic; and morphologic.

Because of the diversity of the sources, this thesis takes a comparative approach by first comparing the poetic and rhetorical analysis across the Akkadian sources (chapter 4). After the rhetorical analysis of the Biblical Hebrew comparators (chapter 5), I also compare this to the Akkadian sources (chapter 6). My comparative approach shows how ancient poets employed different poetic devices and their different intents based on the

specific rhetorical contexts. It also shows the similarities and differences within and across two ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic traditions.

List of Abbreviations

Assyriological abbreviations

Ashm	Museum siglum of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
BM	Museum siglum of the British Museum, London
CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
CASPO	Corpus of Akkadian Shuila Prayers Online (http://shuilas.org/prayers.html, accessed 15/04/2026)
CBS	Museum siglum of the University Museum, Pennsylvania
CCP	Cuneiform Commentaries Project (https://ccp.yale.edu/, accessed 15/04/2026)
eBL	electronic Babylonian Library (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/, accessed 15/04/2026)
HT	King, L. W. (1920) *Hittite Texts in the Cuneiform Character from Tablets in the British Museum*. London.
IM	Museum siglum of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad
Ištar 1	Šuila to Ištar 1
K	Siglum of Kouyunjik tablets in the British Museum, London
Ludlul	*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*
Marduk 2	Šuila to Marduk 2
Rm	Museum siglum of the British Museum, London (Rassam)
Sb	Museum siglum of the Louvre Museum, Paris (Susa)
Si	Field numbers of tablets excavated at Sippar in the collections of the Archaeological Museums, Istanbul

Sm	Museum siglum of the British Museum, London (Smith)
Sp	Museum siglum of the British Museum, London (Spartali & Co)
SU	Field numbers of tablets excavated at Ḫuzirina in the collections of the Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, Ankara
Šamaš 1	Šuila to Šamaš 1
VAT	Museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin

Biblical Studies Abbreviations

BDB	Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

Biblical Books Abbreviations

Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
Exod	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Hos	Hosea
Isa	Isaiah
Jdg	Judges
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Ps(s)	Psalm(s)

Zec	Zechariah
1 Kgs	1 Kings
1 Sam	1 Samuel
2 Chr	2 Chronicles

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1 Introduction

1.1. Research Questions and Aims

In the conclusion to his 2023 monograph on *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and its scholarly context, Lenzi highlighted the need for studies on the rhetoric of *Ludlul*, its poetics, and its relationship with other texts in the Mesopotamian corpus and beyond.[1] This gap in scholarship led to four research questions addressed in this thesis: (1) Which poetic devices are employed in Akkadian poetry? (2) What rhetorical impacts do poetic devices have in Akkadian? (3) Do different rhetorical contexts lead to different uses of poetic devices in Akkadian? (4) How does the use of poetics as a rhetorical means in Akkadian compare to other ancient Near Eastern Semitic languages?

In response to the first three questions, I will analyse comparable corpora within the Standard Babylonian Akkadian tradition: *Ludlul*'s hymns and selected Akkadian šuila-prayers (Marduk 2; Ištar 1; Šamaš 1). As an ancient Near Eastern Semitic comparator in response to the fourth question, I will focus on selected Biblical Hebrew sources, particularly Job 3, a comparator to *Ludlul*'s hymns, and Psalm 25, a comparator to the šuila-prayers. My thesis will thus attempt to fill a gap in scholarship by offering a poetic and rhetorical analysis of comparable Akkadian sources and expanding this analysis to another ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic tradition, the Hebrew Bible.

My analysis stems from a traditional definition of rhetoric as the way to enact persuasiveness, the shaping of "an audience's belief or action regarding some relatively circumscribed problem, chiefly through argument," and eloquence, the transformation of "the listener by elevating the imagination or passions, or amplifying the emotions, and/or

[1] Lenzi 2023: 467.

displaying impressive form and style."[2] This thesis will thus focus on how poetic devices enact persuasiveness and eloquence, the two key elements of rhetoric, within the Akkadian tradition and in comparison to the Biblical Hebrew tradition.

My thesis thus has four aims that directly address the research questions and will contribute to the study of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew poetry and rhetoric. The first aim is to advance the study of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew poetic language, offering a detailed analysis of the use of different poetic devices in my corpus. The second aim is to understand the rhetorical context of the selected poetic units by identifying their speakers, audiences, and purposes. In particular, I will focus on the units' emic rhetorical contexts, that is, what the seven units portray as their speakers, audiences, and purposes, rather than what their possible *Sitze im Leben* were.[3] The third aim is to investigate the rhetorical impact of the units' poetic devices. Drawing on previous research in Rhetorical Criticism (§1.2.1) and Poetic Analysis (§1.2.2), I will investigate how the different poetic devices are used in accordance with the units' rhetorical contexts, contributing to persuasiveness and/or eloquence. The fourth aim is to develop a comparative approach between Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew rhetoric and poetry. I will explore how similarly or differently these traditions employ poetic devices according to the units' rhetorical contexts.

[2] Sloane and Jost 2012: 1175–1176.
[3] This methodological approach will be discussed in more detail in §1.3.

1.2. Literature Review

Since my thesis is a poetic and rhetorical analysis of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources, I present an overview of key publications in Assyriology and Biblical Studies on rhetoric (§1.2.1) and poetry (§1.2.2).[4] Because of the high number of studies, particularly in Biblical Studies, my literature review will focus only on key publications, which include further bibliography.

1.2.1. Rhetoric in Assyriology and Biblical Studies

The study of rhetoric in Assyriology is relatively recent and Sallaberger, Hallo, and Kennedy have offered the most important overviews of this topic.[5] Piccin's monograph *Linguistic Aspects of Persuasiveness in Akkadian* is the key publication on rhetoric in ancient Mesopotamia.[6] Piccin made a significant contribution to the field by defining different rhetorical devices and studying their use in Akkadian letters and prayers.

Rozzi's monograph *The Akkadian Great Hymns and Prayers* is also important for the study of Akkadian rhetoric, as it identifies various examples of rhetorical figures employed in the so-called "Akkadian Great Hymns and Prayers" as well as in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and the *Babylonian Theodicy*.[7] This publication is particularly important for my thesis because it creates a link between rhetoric and poetry in a related corpus. My analysis is also indebted to Schwemer's article "'Form Follows Function'? Rhetoric and Poetic Language in First Millennium Akkadian Incantations."[8]

[4] Key bibliography on the primary sources will be presented in §1.4.
[5] Sallaberger 2007: 67–74; Hallo 2004: 25–46; Kennedy 1998: 116–125.
[6] Piccin 2021a.
[7] Rozzi 2024b: 249–290, 295–318.
[8] Schwemer 2014: 263–288.

Lenzi's work on Akkadian prayers and how they attempt to persuade the target deities is a crucial contribution to the study of rhetoric in ancient Mesopotamia, particularly for my research on prayers of petition.[9] Richardson's article "Messaging and the Gods in Mesopotamia: Signals and Systematics" also contributes to my work on prayers, as he focuses on how the ancient Mesopotamians were "supposed to have heard and been heard by their gods."[10]

The study of Mesopotamian rhetoric has extended to other textual corpora, such as Neo-Assyrian annals and royal inscriptions,[11] Neo-Assyrian letters of petition,[12] and Akkadian epics.[13] Recently, Mittermayer demonstrated how the Sumerian disputation poems taught rhetoric to scribal students.[14] This important conclusion suggests that scribes were aware of the importance of rhetoric when conducting their own work.

In Biblical Studies, the study of rhetoric has a longer and more prolific tradition. Watson and Hauser provide a key resource in biblical rhetorical criticism, as their 1994 monograph outlines research on rhetoric in Biblical Studies and lists bibliographical resources.[15] Other important overviews of rhetorical criticism of the Hebrew Bible include those by Howard and Trible.[16]

Rhetorical criticism in Biblical Studies has taken two main approaches which stand in opposition.[17] On the one hand, Muilenburg's work focuses on the aesthetics and stylistics of the compositions.[18] On the other hand, Kennedy's approach centres on

[9] See, for example, Lenzi 2024b: 197–215; 2019b: 11–45.
[10] Richardson 2017: 168.
[11] See Ponchia 2005: 285–312; 2000: 251–260; Hoskisson and Boswell 2004: 65–78.
[12] See Piccin 2023: 1153–1169.
[13] See Haubold 2024: 198–214; Johandi 2015: 71–106.
[14] Mittermayer 2023: 181–189.
[15] Watson and Hauser 1994.
[16] Howard 1994: 87–104; Trible 1994: 5–87.
[17] A third approach focusing on the modern reader can be identified, but will not be used in this thesis. On this approach, see Cook 2015: 452–453; Trible 1994: 66–70.
[18] See Cook 2015: 452; Howard 1994: 88–90. Muilenburg's key publication on the topic is his article "Form Criticism and Beyond" (1969: 1–18).

persuasion and the compositions' "rhetorical situation," that is, the compositions' audiences and contexts.[19] My methodology will employ elements from both authors, since my analysis will be both poetic and rhetorical, looking at stylistics, persuasion, and context.[20]

The number of specific studies focusing on rhetoric in different compositions of the Hebrew Bible is too high to be discussed in this literature review. Therefore, I will limit this overview to key works on rhetoric in Job and the psalms, as these are my Biblical Hebrew comparators.[21] Regarding Job, van der Lugt's monograph *Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job* is an important study of strophic structuring and its rhetorical impacts.[22] Pohl's article "Arresting God's Attention: The Rhetorical Intent and Strategies" is also a key publication, as it employs Kennedy's approach and focuses on Job 3 and some of the rhetorical strategies it uses to persuade Yahweh to act.[23]

Concerning the biblical psalms, the tradition of rhetorical studies is a long one. The essays in *My Words Are Lovely: Studies in the Rhetoric of the Psalms* are important for the study of rhetoric and its figures in biblical psalms.[24] Research on persuasion as a core element of the biblical psalms has been undertaken, for example, by Charney, Diable, and Miller.[25] Cook, drawing on Kennedy's approach, has also significantly contributed to the rhetorical study of the biblical psalms and their elements of persuasion.[26]

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[19] See Kennedy 1984: 3–38. This approach is also advocated by Cook (2015: 452–454) and Howard (1994: 102–104).
[20] See my methodological discussion in §1.3.
[21] For more references to studies on rhetoric in the Hebrew Bible, see the bibliography provided by Watson and Hauser (1994: 21–98) and the references in Porter and Stamps (2002) and Cook (2015: 451–467).
[22] van der Lugt 1995.
[23] Pohl 2018: 1–19. As examples of other publications on rhetoric in Job, see Erickson 2013: 295–313; Yu 2011; Lo 2003.
[24] Foster and Howard 2008.
[25] Charney 2015; 2013: 33–63; 2010: 247–268; Diable 2007; Miller 2000: 337–344.
[26] Cook 2018; 2015: 451–467.

These publications demonstrate how the study of rhetoric is taking its first steps in Assyriology but has a longer tradition in Biblical Studies. Moreover, with the exception of work by Piccin, Rozzi, and Schwemer, scholars tend to separate the study of poetics and stylistics from persuasion and rhetorical context, the two Biblical Studies approaches headed by Muilenburg and Kennedy respectively. My thesis will combine elements from both approaches, offering fresh insights into the poetry and rhetoric of ancient Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible.

1.2.2. Poetry in Assyriology and Biblical Studies

The study of poetry plays an important role in Assyriology because of the abundance of literary sources in both Sumerian and Akkadian. Since this thesis focuses on Akkadian poetry, my literature review will address only key publications on this poetic tradition.[27] General overviews of the main poetic features of Akkadian poetry have been offered by Lenzi, Jiménez, Farber and Reiner, Foster, and Groneberg.[28] Regarding textual corpora, a number of sources have been subject to poetic analyses, namely prayers and hymns,[29] incantations,[30] and narrative poetry.[31] Among these publications, Hecker's *Untersuchungen zur akkadischen Epik*, Pohl's *Die akkadischen Hymnen der altbabylonischen Zeit*, and Rozzi's *The Akkadian Great Hymns and Prayers* are particularly important because of their thorough identification of poetic devices in the

[27] For further bibliography and a general overview of Sumerian poetry, see Carr 2024: 17–19; Feliu 2022: 180–222; Matuszak 2020: 77–86; Foster 2012: 1376–1377; Veldhuis 2004: 47–58.
[28] Lenzi 2019a: 44–67; Jiménez 2017: 72–76; Farber and Reiner 2012: 95–97; Foster 2005: 13–18; Groneberg 1996: 59–84.
[29] See Rozzi 2024b: 249–290, 295–318; Pohl 2022: 68–94; Groneberg 2003: 55–74; 1997; 1987.
[30] See Rinderer 2024: 285–322; Wasserman and Zomer 2022: 50–61; Baragli 2019: 293–321; Schwemer 2014: 263–288; Veldhuis 1999: 35–48; Michalowski 1981: 1–18.
[31] See Helle 2024: 279–295; 2020: 190–224; Michalowski 2024: 296–319; Piccin 2024: 263–284; Lambert 2013: 17–34; Kilmer 2006: 209–221; George 2003: 431–437; Hecker 1974.

respective corpora. Wasserman's monograph *Style and Form in Old Babylonian Literary Texts* includes a broader corpus and is a key publication on Akkadian poetry, because it analyses six different poetic features: hendiadys, *tamyīz*, *damqam-īnim*, merisms, similes, and rhyme.[32]

The study of Akkadian poetry has also focused on specific poetic devices. Regarding prosody and metre, Zimmern offered some of the first treatments of the topic, including references to the four-foot accent-based metre.[33] von Soden and, later, Helle based their analyses on the existence of secondary stress, focusing on a metrical system based on trochees and amphibrachs.[34] Wisnom did not adopt von Soden's suggestion of secondary stress as this is not confirmed, but rather focused on different identifiable stress patterns and their recurrence in *Enūma eliš*.[35] Other metrical analyses have prioritised accentual metre, that is, the number of main stresses in a line. West and Buccellati have provided the most detailed analyses of this accentual metre, highlighting the four-feet and three-feet poetic lines as the most common.[36] Watson has also briefly analysed Akkadian metre from an accentual perspective and the possibility of anacrusis.[37] van Rensburg offered a different approach to Akkadian metre by including syllable count besides the accent-based metre outlined by West and Buccellati.[38] Parallelism,[39] chiasmus,[40] repetition,[41] imagery,[42] and enumeration[43] are other poetic devices studied in Assyriology. Rozzi and Hess have analysed how paratextual markers of cuneiform tablets

[32] Wasserman 2003. For a broader poetic analysis of the Old Babylonian corpus, see also Groneberg 1971.
[33] Zimmern 1895: 1–24; 1893: 121–124. For a brief overview of metre in Akkadian and Sumerian, see Edzard 1997: 148–149.
[34] Helle 2014: 56–73; von Soden 1984: 213–284; 1981: 161–204.
[35] Wisnom 2015: 485–502.
[36] West 1997: 175–187; Buccellati 1990: 105–134.
[37] Watson 1984: 93–94, 110.
[38] van Rensburg 1990: 90–99. In her analysis of metre in Old Babylonian hymns, Pohl (2022: 92–93) also includes syllable counting.
[39] See Steinberger 2024; 2022: 293–308; De Zorzi 2022: 367–394; Streck 2007: 167–181; Donald 1966.
[40] See Smith 1981: 17–35.
[41] See Wisnom 2023: 112–143; Vogelzang 1996: 167–182; Cooper 1977: 508–512.
[42] See Foster 2010: 313–321; Streck 1999; Westenholz 1996: 183–206.
[43] See Wasserman 2021: 57–80.

relate to the poetic form of different Akkadian compositions: in Old Babylonian epics and in the Akkadian "Great Hymns and Prayers" respectively.[44]

Different studies have also looked at the orality and aurality of Akkadian poetry. The articles collected in *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural?* are an important introduction.[45] Bernardo Ballesteros has published a comparative study of naming expressions in early Greek and Old Babylonian Akkadian poetry.[46]

In Biblical Studies, general overviews and discussion of Biblical Hebrew poetry have been offered by Vayntrub, Dobbs-Allsopp, Alter, Alonso Schökel, and Watson.[47] Watson's monograph should be highlighted because of its thorough identification and analysis of poetic devices in Biblical Hebrew. Regarding Hebrew metre, Vance has shown that metre in a classical sense cannot be identified.[48] However, both Grosser and Harshav have suggested a free-rhythm approach to Hebrew metre.[49] One of the major topics in Biblical Hebrew is parallelism, which was categorized as synonymous, antithetical, and synthetical by Lowth.[50] This has been further studied, for example, by Berlin, who showed how parallelism can be expressed at different levels, namely grammatical, lexical, semantic, and phonologic,[51] and by Kugel, whose definition of parallelism as "A, and what's more, B" highlights how this feature creates movement within the compositions.[52]

Most publications on poetry in Assyriology and Biblical Studies identify at least some of the poetic devices and their effects. However, there is an overall lack of in-depth

[44] Rozzi 2024a: 323–340; Hess 2015: 251–284.
[45] Vanstiphout and Vogelzang 1992.
[46] Ballesteros 2023: 12–50.
[47] Vayntrub 2019; Dobbs-Allsopp 2015; Alter 2011; Alonso Schökel 1988; Watson 1984.
[48] Vance 2001.
[49] Grosser 2023; Harshav 2014.
[50] Lowth 1995.
[51] Berlin 1985.
[52] Kugel 1998. For more recent views on Hebrew parallelism, see also Tsumura 2023; Dobbs-Allsopp 2021: 1–35.

analyses of the rhetorical impact of the devices in the compositions, that is, how the poetic devices contribute to the rhetorical purposes of the compositions, how they convey persuasion and eloquence. The studies on specific poetic devices identify their possible effects in some compositions,[53] but, with the exception of a few publications,[54] most textual corpora have not been the subject of a poetic analysis that takes into account their rhetorical purposes. My thesis thus furthers the study of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew poetry by investigating the use of poetic devices and their rhetorical impacts within a limited but comparable corpus.

[53] See, for example, the impacts of repetition as identified by Wisnom (2023: 116–117, 138–141) and Vogelzang (1996: 168).

[54] See, for example, Rinderer 2024: 285–322; Schwemer 2014: 263–288. Rozzi (2024b) includes an identification of the poetic devices as rhetorical figures, but the devices' effects are not analysed in relation to the compositions' specific rhetorical purposes. Watson (1984) should also be highlighted as his analysis includes an identification of poetic devices and their effects but it is not corpus specific.

1.3. Methodology, Limitations and Structure

The literature review demonstrated the need for innovative methodologies combining rhetorical and poetic analysis. My methodology is thus based on Kennedy's rhetorical critical approach and Muilenburg's focus on stylistics or poetics.[55] Kennedy defines three steps in his approach. The first is the identification of the rhetorical units, i.e., the texts that will be the subject of the rhetorical analysis. In my thesis, the rhetorical units are *Ludlul*'s hymns (I:1–40; V:71–120), the Akkadian šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, Job 3, and Psalm 25. I will use the terms rhetorical units, poetic units, or just units when referring to these texts, and the term composition for *Ludlul* and Job in their entirety.

The second step is the identification of the so-called "rhetorical situation." This is a concept defined by Bitzer,[56] and can be compared to the *Sitz im Leben* of the rhetorical unit, i.e., how modern scholars think it was used in its ancient context. I will not focus on the largely unknown ancient realities of *Sitz im Leben*, but rather on the unit's rhetorical context, i.e., the speakers, audiences, and purposes identifiable in the units themselves rather than in their reconstructed context. This methodological decision stems, on the one hand, from the uncertainty regarding the *Sitz im Leben* of the rhetorical units and, on the other hand, from Umberto Eco's definition of *intentio operis*, "the intention of the text," that is, the conclusions that can be reached by looking at what the text itself states and does as a coherent whole.[57]

[55] See Kennedy 1984: 33–38; Muilenburg 1969: 1–18.
[56] Bitzer 1968: 1–14.
[57] On the uncertainty of the units' *Sitz im Leben*, see my comments in §1.4. Regarding the concept of *intentio operis*, see Eco 1992: 64–66. On the question of authorial intent for Assyriology, see Wisnom 2020: 16–19. An approach to ancient literature based on Eco's definition of *intentio operis* is also suggested by Barton (2013: 18–23).

The third step is the analysis of the means used by the units to achieve their purposes identified in the second step. In this third step, I will employ Muilenburg's approach by focusing on the poetic devices and how they are used in connection with the identified speakers, audiences, and purposes. For this poetic analysis, I will follow Plett's terminology, which was first applied to Assyriology by Rozzi, who divided the rhetorical or poetic figures into four categories: phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic.[58] I add the category of prosodic figures to refer to metre and stress patterns, because, despite Plett's inclusion of these features under the phonologic figures,[59] metre and poetic structuring are not limited to sound patterns but include other elements such as stress and parallelism. The following five tables outline the poetic devices that I will analyse in each category.

Poetic Device	**Definition**
Metre	"Meter is the measure of sound patterning in verse, occurring when a rhythm is repeated throughout a passage of lang. with such regularity that a base unit (such as a foot) becomes a norm and governs poetic composition."[60]
Strophic Patterns	A strophe is a unit of poetic lines defined by their parallelism.[61]
Prosodic Parallelism	Parallel stress patterns between lines or within a line.[62]

[58] See Rozzi 2024b: 254–258; Plett 2010: 65–67.
[59] Plett 2010: 129–144.
[60] Winslow 2012: 2382. Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew metre will be defined in §1.5.
[61] Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew strophic patterns will be defined in §1.5.
[62] This analysis is only applicable to Akkadian, as Biblical Hebrew stress in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) is based on the later Masoretic practices.

G-stress pattern	An Akkadian colon where the first and last syllables are stressed, with at least three unstressed syllables in between.[63]
Anacrusis	"An extra-metrical word."[64]

Table 1 - Prosodic Figures

Poetic Device	**Definition**
Assonance	Repetition of the same vowel within a line or strophe.[65]
Consonance	Repetition of the same consonant or similar consonants within a line or strophe.[66]
Alliteration	Repetition of the same sound at the beginning of successive words.[67]

[63] Wisnom 2015: 491. The G-stress pattern is only applicable to Akkadian and will be defined more precisely in §1.5.1.
[64] Watson 1984: 110. In Akkadian, I will only analyse the divine name as a vocative in anacrusis. Because of the uncertainties about Biblical Hebrew metre, I will not analyse this feature in the Biblical Hebrew corpus.
[65] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 259. To identify assonance in Akkadian, I calculated an average for the use of each vowel in every two lines using eBL's editions of *Ludlul* I, the *Great Prayer to Šamaš*, and the šuila Ištar 2, since the monologic and prayerful character of these texts accords with the sources selected for my analysis. The average for each vowel can be found in table 31 in the appendix, and I will only identify instances of assonance where these vowels are used above the approximate averages in the table. To identify assonance in Biblical Hebrew, I calculated an average for the use of each vowel in every two lines of Job 4, Lamentations 1, and Psalm 38. The average for each vowel can be found in table 33 in the appendix, and I will follow the same process as for Akkadian.
[66] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 259. I also calculated an average for the use of each consonant in every two lines using the same texts as employed for the identification of assonance in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew. The averages can be found in tables 32 and 34 respectively. In Biblical Hebrew, because of the low averages for most consonants, when the approximate averages are one or two, I decided to only include instances where the consonant is used at least three times in a couplet.
[67] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 259; Pohl 2022: 78–79. I will only identify cases where the sound has at least two letters, thus excluding the alliteration of just one letter. For a broader definition of alliteration as consonance, see Watson 1984: 225.

Homeoteleuton	Repetition of the same or similar sounds at the end of successive words.[68]
Homeoptoton	Repetition of the same or similar sounds at the end of successive words or poetic lines for grammatical reasons, i.e., grammatical rhyme.[69]
Rhyme	Repetition of the same sound at the end of successive poetic lines, excluding cases of homeoptoton.

Table 2 - Phonologic Figures

Poetic Device	**Definition**
Grammatical Parallelism	The correspondence in syntax (word order) and/or morphology (number, gender, case, conjugation, verbal stem) between lines or within a single line.[70]
Hymnic Parallelism	Hymnic parallelism in a quatrain follows the structure a–b–a′–b, where a′ includes the name of the divinity omitted in a. It is thus the repetition of the same poetic line but with the specification of the divine name.[71]
Gender-Matched Parallelism	The use of a masculine term in one line in parallel with a feminine term in another line.[72]

[68] For a similar definition, see Pohl 2022: 76–77; Piccin 2021a: 125.
[69] I, like Pohl (2022: 76–78), thus distinguish homeoteleuton and homeoptoton.
[70] For a similar definition of grammatical parallelism, see Steinberger 2024: 426.
[71] On hymnic parallelism, see Wisnom 2023: 121; Hecker 1974: 146–151.
[72] For a similar definition of gender-matched parallelism, see Watson 1984: 123.

Chiasmus	"A series (a, b, c, …) and its inversion (… c, b, a) taken together as a combined unit."[73]
Rhetorical Questions	A question that "does not expect an answer but a confirmation. It does not require extra information, but it comes to a yes or a no (the answer itself is implied in the question)."[74]
Repetition	Recurrence of a section of text, line, phrase, term, or root within one composition.[75]
Anaphora	Repetition of a word at the start of successive lines.[76]
Anadiplosis	The repetition of the last term of a line at the start of the following line.[77]
Epanadiplosis	The repetition of a term or sound at the start and end of a poetic line or couplet.[78]
Hyperbaton	"A *variatio* of the usual order of words in a sentence, through the insertion of another word or a parenthesis between two words that are closely linked, from a syntactic perspective."[79]

[73] Watson 1984: 201. In this thesis, I will identify chiasmus through a system of underlines. The terms which correspond syntactically will have the same type of underline. Four types of underline will be used: single; double; bold; and dotted.
[74] Piccin 2021a: 93.
[75] Repetition can take various forms, such as refrains, key words, and envelope figure, but in my analysis, I limit this syntactic figure to the repetition of lines, phrases, and roots. On the different types of repetition, see Rozzi 2024b: 270; Vogelzang 1996: 169–170; Watson 1984: 274–278.
[76] For a similar definition, see Pohl 2022: 74; Piccin 2021a: 113–114.
[77] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 286; Pohl 2022: 75. Rozzi (2024b: 286) includes this device under the morphologic figures, but because it is an instance of repetition, I have included it under the syntactic figures.
[78] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 286, 288. Rozzi (2024b: 286) includes this device under the morphologic figures, but because it is an instance of repetition, I have included it under the syntactic figures.
[79] Piccin 2021a: 137. For a similar definition, see Pohl 2022: 76.

Anastrophe	A variation in the traditional word order without hyperbaton.[80]

Table 3 - Syntactic Figures

Poetic Device	**Definition**
Epithet	"An adjective, or a noun, or a phrase added to another name to qualify it."[81]
Vocative	Case used in addressing a person or thing directly.[82]
Merism	The use of antipodal terms to refer to the totality.[83]
Enumeration	"A sequence of terms inserted in the poetic text."[84]
Climax	Climax "consists of a series of words or clauses arranged in a progressively increasing order of importance, which results in a final climactic tension."[85]
Simile	A comparison of two different elements by using "like" or "as," *kīma* or *kī* in Akkadian and the preposition *kĕ-* in Biblical Hebrew.[86]

[80] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 266; Piccin 2021a: 136.
[81] Piccin 2021a: 103.
[82] In my analysis, I limit the vocatives to the names of the addressees, second-person independent personal pronouns, and nouns that refer to the deities in the second person as "lord," "lady," "god," or "goddess."
[83] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 275; Wasserman 2003: 61.
[84] Rozzi 2024b: 276.
[85] Rozzi 2024b: 276. On climax, see also Wilcke 1975: 218.
[86] For a similar definition, see Wasserman 2003: 99.

Metaphor	It compares aspects of two different elements creating an equation between both, but without the use of "like" or "as."[87]
Synonymous Parallelism	Repetition of the same idea in two clauses using different vocabulary.[88]
Antithetical Parallelism	The opposition between two clauses through an antithesis of their concepts.[89]
Pun	A word play based on homonymy, paronomasia, double entendre, or polygraphy. [90]

Table 4 - Semantic Figures

Poetic Device	**Definition**
Polyptoton	A polyptoton can be verbal, which is the repetition of the same verb with variation of tense, number, and/or gender, or nominal, which is the repetition of the same noun with variation of case, number, and/or gender.[91]
Figura Etymologica	It consists in the use of the same root in a transitive verb and a noun.[92]

Table 5 - Morphologic Figures

[87] On the distinction between simile and metaphor, see Streck 1999: 30–34.
[88] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 266.
[89] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 266.
[90] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 275–276.
[91] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 286; Piccin 2021a: 85–86. I consider polyptotons in the same line or in successive lines.
[92] For a similar definition, see Rozzi 2024b: 286; Piccin 2021a: 83.

I will analyse the rhetorical impacts of these different poetic devices taking into account the units' rhetorical context, i.e., speakers, audiences, and purposes.

One limitation of my approach is the difficulty in determining the poetic devices' rhetorical effects because I am studying them from a modern perspective. However, a comparative analysis of their uses between different corpora and ancient languages allows for a more nuanced perspective on the devices' rhetorical effects. Moreover, the identification by other authors of the effects in ancient Semitic languages can give a basis for the possible effects in the corpora under study.[93]

I will first provide an overview of the Akkadian (§1.4.1) and Biblical Hebrew (§1.4.2) sources. Because of the importance of poetics in the thesis, I will outline the main characteristics of Akkadian (§1.5.1) and Biblical Hebrew (§1.5.2) poetry. My poetic and rhetorical analysis of the Akkadian sources will be divided into three chapters (§§2–4). In chapter 2, I will first identify the rhetorical context of *Ludlul*'s hymns (§2.1), i.e., their speakers, audiences, and purposes. The chapter will then be divided into an analysis of *Ludlul* I:1–40 (§2.2) and of *Ludlul* V:71–120 (§2.3). In each half, a transcription and translation of each rhetorical unit (§§2.2.1; 2.3.1) are followed by an analysis of the poetic devices and their rhetorical impacts (§§2.2.2; 2.3.2), divided into macro-level (§§2.2.2.1; 2.3.2.1) and micro-level (§§2.2.2.2; 2.3.2.2) analysis.[94] The first corresponds to the overall poetic structure of the unit and the second to the specific poetic devices employed

[93] Watson (1984) has clearly outlined the effects of different poetic devices in the Hebrew Bible, and other effects identified in Akkadian corpora will be mentioned throughout the thesis.

[94] The terminology "macro-level" and "micro-level" is borrowed from Rinderer (2024: 298–299). Regarding the transcription of all Akkadian sources, I follow the conventions used by eBL and applied to its "Corpus," as outlined in https://www.ebl.lmu.de/about/corpus, accessed 10/03/2026. In the transcriptions, I will include footnotes for terms or phrases which have significant variants in the manuscripts. The footnotes will indicate the spellings preserved in all manuscripts, but I will follow the readings that more closely align with the norms of Standard Babylonian grammar. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated. The same conventions and rules apply to other Akkadian sources quoted in the thesis.

throughout the unit. Chapter 3 will follow a similar structure, opening with an identification of the rhetorical context of the šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1 (§3.1). The chapter will first focus on Marduk 2 (§3.2), with a transcription and translation (§3.2.1) and a poetic analysis (§3.2.2). It will then focus on Ištar 1 (§3.3), also with a transcription and translation (§3.3.1) and a poetic analysis (§3.3.2), and finally on Šamaš 1 (§3.4), also divided into transcription and translation (§3.4.1) and poetic analysis (§3.4.2). All poetic analyses, as for the *Ludlul* hymns, will be divided into macro- and micro-level. Chapter 4 will offer a comparative analysis of the Akkadian sources, starting with the speakers, audiences, and purposes (§4.1). It will then include a comparison of the use of poetic devices (§4.2), which will be divided into the five categories of figures previously outlined.

I will then move to the Biblical Hebrew sources (§5), first focusing on Job 3 (§5.1), with an identification of the speakers, audiences, and purposes (§5.1.1), a transcription and translation (§5.1.2), and a poetic analysis (§5.1.3), also divided into macro- (§5.1.3.1) and micro-level (§5.1.3.2).[95] I will analyse Psalm 25 (§5.2), following the same structure: identification of the speakers, audiences, and purposes (§5.2.1), transcription and translation (§5.2.2), and a poetic analysis (§5.2.3), divided into macro- (§5.2.3.1) and micro-level (§5.2.3.2).

Chapter 6 offers a comparison between the Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources, pairing *Ludlul* with Job (§6.1) and the šuila-prayers with Psalm 25 (§6.2). Each half will consist of a comparative analysis of the rhetorical contexts (§§6.1.1; 6.2.1) and of the use of poetic devices according to the five categories of figures (§§6.1.2; 6.2.2).

[95] My transcriptions and translations of the Biblical Hebrew sources will follow the BHS. When deletions or additions are made, I will add a footnote explaining the reasoning. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

Chapters 2 to 6 each end with a summary outlining the main findings of that chapter, and chapter 7 will provide the final conclusions of the thesis, demonstrating how my findings address the broader research questions.

1.4. Primary Sources

As previously mentioned (§1.1), my poetic and rhetorical analysis will focus on a selected corpus of Akkadian rhetorical units: the two hymns in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (I:1–40; V:71–120) and three Akkadian šuila-prayers (Marduk 2; Ištar 1; Šamaš 1). The ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic tradition selected for comparison is the Hebrew Bible, with analyses of Job 3 and Psalm 25.

1.4.1. Akkadian Sources

1.4.1.1. *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

Ludlul bēl nēmeqi is a Standard Babylonian Akkadian composition addressed to the god Marduk and it narrates, in a first-person voice, the story of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, a man who is abandoned by Marduk and who lives a life of misfortune and suffering, until Marduk restores him.[96] The composition is divided into five tablets with 120 lines each, despite the earlier view that the composition only had four tablets.[97] The first tablet includes an opening hymn praising Marduk's wrath, mercy, and inscrutability (*Ludlul* I:1–40), followed by the description of divine abandonment and the protagonist's suffering (*Ludlul* I:41–III:8). After a series of dreams (*Ludlul* III:9–46), Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan starts recovering, regaining his previous status and well-being (*Ludlul* III:47–

[96] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan was probably an important official during Nazimaruttaš's reign (r. ca. 1307–1282 BC) who might have experienced suffering and injustice but ultimately recovered, writing or commissioning a composition to celebrate this recovery. On the question of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's historicity, see Lenzi 2023: 6–7; Oshima 2014: 14–17. See also how Fadhil and Jiménez (2019: 162) wonder if a legal dispute preserved in first-millennium manuscripts and involving Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan could be "the prose version of the same event narrated in 'Ludlul'," suggesting a historical basis for the narrator's suffering in the composition.

[97] For example, the editions by Lambert (1960: 21–62) and Annus and Lenzi (2010) only include four tablets. On the possibility of five tablets, see Lenzi 2017: 182; Oshima 2014: 6–9.

V:66). The composition ends with a feast and a hymn by the Babylonians which also includes some petitions (*Ludlul* V:67–120).[98] The opening and closing hymns (*Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120) will be the subject of my poetic and rhetorical analysis.

Lambert produced the first modern edition of *Ludlul* in his monograph *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*.[99] More recently, Annus and Lenzi published a compact edition for the State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts series.[100] Oshima has produced the most detailed edition.[101] eBL's edition led by Hätinen is important as it includes all currently known manuscripts.[102] In his monograph *Suffering in Babylon: Ludlul bēl nēmeqi and the Scholars, Ancient and Modern*, Lenzi also includes a recent transcription, translation, and selected notes.[103] Translations of *Ludlul* into other languages include those by Foster in English,[104] von Soden in German,[105] Oshima and Anthonioz in French,[106] and Lara Peinado in Spanish.[107]

Regarding *Ludlul*'s manuscripts, eighty-three first-millennium BC fragments and tablets have been so far identified and they stem from seven different locations: Aššur, Babylon, Ḫuzirina, Kalḫu, Kiš, Nineveh, and Sippar.[108] Among these manuscripts, twenty are school tablets preserving excerpts from *Ludlul*.[109] Additionally, one Neo-Assyrian

[98] For an overview of *Ludlul*'s plot, see Lenzi 2023: 2–3; Oshima 2014: 9–14.
[99] Lambert 1960: 29–62.
[100] Annus and Lenzi 2010: 15–44.
[101] Oshima 2014: 78–114, 169–342, 376–438.
[102] For a full updated list of the *Ludlul* manuscripts, see https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/L/2/2, accessed 06/03/2026 (collected by Hätinen in eBL).
[103] Lenzi 2023: 62–83.
[104] Foster 2005: 394–409.
[105] von Soden 1990: 110–135.
[106] Oshima and Anthonioz 2023: 66–157.
[107] Lara Peinado 2004: 142–158.
[108] I have excluded the commentaries. For an analysis and description of the manuscripts preserving *Ludlul*, see Lenzi 2023: 18–61. A full updated list of the manuscripts can be found online at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/L/2/2, accessed 06/03/2026 (collected by Hätinen in eBL).
[109] For a recent analysis and description of the contents of school manuscripts preserving parts of *Ludlul*, see Lenzi 2023: 187–209. However, not all school manuscripts are included in this analysis, as some were identified after the monograph's publication. On first-millennium BC Babylonian education, see Gesche 2001.

mukallimtu-commentary is on *Ludlul* and three Late Babylonian commentaries quote lines of *Ludlul* to explain terms in other compositions.[110]

A *Sitz im Leben* for *Ludlul* is difficult to reconstruct. For most Mesopotamian literature, only an educational and scholarly setting can be confirmed, as attested by the school manuscripts and the commentary tradition.[111] The copying of *Ludlul* belonged to the second stage of first-millennium BC scribal education, which was characterized by greater difficulty, the study of classical compositions of Babylonian culture, as well as the fundamentals of *āšipūtu*, "exorcism."[112] The importance of *Ludlul* in first-millennium BC scribal education and scholarly circles is evidenced by quotations and allusions in other first-millennium BC sources, such as a Neo-Assyrian letter to king Esarhaddon,[113] *Aššurbanipal's Lament*,[114] the Neo-Babylonian Ḫarran royal inscription,[115] and Nabonidus's inscription in Si 4+5.[116]

Despite its preservation only in first-millennium BC manuscripts, *Ludlul* was likely composed in the Babylonian literary flourishing of the late second-millennium BC.[117] Because of its shared vocabulary and structures with *āšipūtu* compositions such

[110] For an edition of the *mukallimtu*-commentary, see Lenzi 2023: 349–358; CCP 1.3 (https://ccp.yale.edu/P394923, accessed 06/03/2026). On the Late Babylonian commentaries, see Lenzi 2023: 383–387.
[111] On the *Sitz im Leben* of Mesopotamian literature, see Rozzi 2024b: 5; Lenzi 2019a: 71–72; Veldhuis 2004: 59; George 2003: 36–39; Vanstiphout 1986: 4.
[112] For an overview of this second stage of Babylonian scribal education, see Gesche 2001: 172–198. Cohen (2013: 64) also suggests that *Ludlul* might have been studied in the second stage of the curriculum in Kassite Babylonia. *Ludlul* and *Marduk's Address to the Demons* have the fifth highest number of school manuscripts (Fadhil and Jiménez 2025: 1, note 1). For an edition of *Marduk's Address to the Demons*, Tablet XI of *Udug-ḫul*, see Peterson 2020; Geller 2016: 340–398.
[113] For an edition of this letter, see Parpola 1993: no. 294. For a commentary on this letter, see Parpola 1987: 257–278. On the allusion to *Ludlul* in this letter, see Lenzi 2023: 395–396; Hurowitz 2002b: 129–132.
[114] For an edition of *Aššurbanipal's Lament*, see Novotny 2014: 80–81, 99. On the allusion to *Ludlul* in this composition, see Lenzi 2023: 413–425.
[115] For an edition of the Ḫarran inscription, see Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 187–192; Schaudig 2001: 486–499. On the allusion to *Ludlul* in this composition, see Lenzi 2023: 397–412.
[116] For an edition of this royal inscription, see Frazer and Adalı 2021: 231–262. This quote was identified in eBL's edition of *Ludlul* V (Hätinen 2022c).
[117] Lenzi 2023: 5–6; Beaulieu 2022: 381; 2007: 3–4; Annus and Lenzi 2010: xviii–xix; van der Toorn 2003: 77; Moran 2002: 198; Sitzler 1995: 84; von Soden 1990: 112; Lambert 1960: 26.

as šuila-prayers,[118] various authors have suggested an exorcistic context of production for *Ludlul*.[119] Oshima even suggests a ritual setting for *Ludlul* as a "praise-offering prayer" from Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan to Marduk after overcoming suffering.[120] However, these possible settings are debatable at the moment because of the lack of evidence and thus, only scholarly and school settings are securely attested.

1.4.1.2. Akkadian Šuila-Prayers

The šuila-prayers are named after their rubric šu.il$_2$.la$_{(2)}$, "lifted hand(s)," which is a gesture linked to an audience with a ruler or a deity.[121] They can be divided into three types: šuila-prayers in the Sumerian Emesal dialect sung by the *kalû*, "cult-singer;"[122] Sumerian šuila-prayers used by the *āšipu*, "exorcist," in the ritual *mīs pî*, "washing of the mouth;"[123] and Akkadian šuila-prayers associated with various rituals led by the *āšipu*. The sources for my thesis belong to this third group.

The Akkadian šuila-prayers have been understood, since Kunstmann, as part of the so-called *Gebetsbeschwörungen* or incantation-prayers.[124] Kunstmann included prayers with and without the šuila-rubric within the šuila category. Mayer applied this categorization to prayers that included the rubric and others that did not: prayers belonging to tablets preserving other šuila-prayers; prayers belonging to rituals which employed šuila-prayers; and prayers whose content is similar to the šuila-prayers.[125]

[118] On the similarities between *Ludlul* and šuila-prayers, see Lenzi 2023: 300–341; 2015: 67–105; Annus and Lenzi 2010: xxviii–xxix; Beaulieu 2007: 10–11; van Rensburg 1995: 235.
[119] Oshima 2014: 18–19; Beaulieu 2007: 9–10.
[120] Oshima 2014: 28–34. Other authors also understand *Ludlul* more as a thanksgiving prayer than a šuila-prayer (van der Toorn 2003: 76; Albertz 1988: 47–53; Weinfeld 1988: 217).
[121] Frechette 2012: 104–106.
[122] On the Emesal šuila-prayers, see Shibata 2021.
[123] On the *mīs pî* ritual, see Walker and Dick 2001; Berlejung 1998: 178–283. On the *āšipu* and for further bibliography, see Koubková 2024: 137–146; Jean 2006.
[124] Kunstmann 1932: 3.
[125] Mayer 1976: 7–8, 377. On šuila terminology, see Lenzi, Frechette, and Zernecke 2011: 28–29.

Moreover, Mayer defines these Akkadian šuila-prayers as "rituelle Bittgebete des Einzelnen," "ritual petition prayers of the individual."[126] I follow this understanding, as the lament is subordinate to the petition, the key part of the prayers.[127] Regarding structure, Kunstmann identifies three main parts: address, petition, and thanksgiving or blessing.[128] This is the structure followed by Lenzi, Frechette, and Zernecke,[129] and I will also use it in my analysis.

Concerning *Sitz im Leben*, the šuila-prayers were part of the corpus of *āšipūtu* as they were included in the *Exorcist's Manual*, which listed the compositions that an *āšipu* should study and read.[130] Moreover, they were employed in exorcistic rituals, such as *bīt rimki*, "house of washing," and *bīt salāʾ mê*, "house of the sprinkling of water."[131] This ritualistic and protective aspect of šuila-prayers is also attested in letters from scholars to the Neo-Assyrian kings. For example, the letter K 818 to Aššurbanipal instructs the king, addressed as *ikkaru*(lu_2.engar), "farmer," on the rituals he should perform during the substitute king period.[132] These rituals include eršaḫuĝa- and šuila-prayers to Nergal (o. 2–3), which either belonged to a namburbi-ritual or were performed separately.[133]

In terms of dating, most manuscripts of the šuila-prayers are from the first millennium BC.[134] However, two Middle Hittite manuscripts, HT 13+ and HT 77/c+, can

[126] Mayer 1976: 10–11.
[127] Mayer 1976: 12.
[128] Kunstmann 1932: 7. For an overview of other suggested structures, see Mayer 1976: 35. Oshima (2011: 14) follows a different structure with four stanzas: "hymnic introduction," "lament," "pleas," and "thanksgiving."
[129] Lenzi, Frechette, and Zernecke 2011: 27.
[130] See Geller 2018: 292. For two recent editions of the *Exorcist's Manual*, see Geller 2018: 296–303; Jean 2006: 63–72.
[131] On the *bīt rimki* ritual, see Schwemer 2019. On the *bīt salāʾ mê* ritual, see Ambos 2013. For a detailed analysis of the different ritualistic contexts of šuila-prayers, see Frechette 2012: 165–224; Zgoll 2003b: 25–30; Mayer 1976: 18–21; Kunstmann 1932: 54–82. On the specific ritual context of the šuila-prayers Ištar 2 and 10, see Zernecke 2011a: 336–343.
[132] K 818 = Parpola 1993: no. 381.
[133] See Frechette 2012: 184–185.
[134] For a full and updated list of the šuila manuscripts arranged by provenience, see http://shuilas.org/provenience.html, accessed 13/04/2026 (collected by Lenzi in CASPO).

be dated to the second millennium BC.[135] The former preserves part of the address of the šuila Adad 1a (ll. 1′–14′) and the latter part of the address and petition of the šuila Ištar 2 (o. ii 5′–12″, r. i 1′–7′). Mayer argues that these are not an indication of the existence of šuila-prayers in the second millennium BC, as only the address of the šuila Adad 1a is preserved in HT 13 +, suggesting that the petitions were added later, and the šuila Ištar 2, because of its length, does not fully comply with the šuila-tradition.[136] One late Middle Assyrian manuscript, VAT 13608+, preserves what Mayer classified as Sîn 6 (r. iii 14′–23′),[137] but this prayer does not seem to be a šuila, as two other manuscripts of this prayer have the rubric: ⌜ka⌝-⌜inim⌝-ma *ša₂* igi-du₈-a ^{d}30 ḫul sig₅-ga-[kam], "it is the wording for making an evil appearance of Sîn good."[138] It is therefore impossible, based on manuscript evidence, definitely to date the šuila-prayers to the second millennium BC. Nevertheless, the aforementioned manuscripts still point to the beginnings of this prayer tradition in the second millennium BC and this is further suggested by the use of the Standard Babylonian dialect in the šuila-prayers.[139]

Regarding the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers, nineteen first-millennium BC manuscripts preserve the entirety or parts of the šuila Marduk 2 and four other first-millennium manuscripts preserve only its incipit, making it the most widely attested šuila-prayer and one of the best preserved.[140] The manuscripts stem from five different locations: Aššur, Babylon, Ḫuzirina, Nineveh, and Uruk. The šuila Ištar 1 is preserved in

[135] HT 13 + = Weidner 1922: no. 26, transliterated and translated in Schwemer 2001: 671–674. HT 77/c + = Köcher 1953: no. 36–37, transliterated and translated in Zgoll 2003b: 55–59.
[136] Mayer 1976: 28, 31.
[137] Mayer 1976: 408.
[138] VAT 13608+ = Köcher 1964: no. 316. For the latest edition of this prayer, see Hätinen 2021: 497–506.
[139] Other second-millennium BC manuscripts preserve other *Gebetsbeschwörungen* (Mayer 1976: 28–30), which suggests that this prayer tradition was taking form in this period. Lenzi (2015: 69) also suggests a second-millennium BC dating for the Akkadian šuila-prayers.
[140] Lenzi, Frechette, and Zernecke 2011: 24. For a full list of the manuscripts, see http://shuilas.org/Q006101.html, accessed 13/04/2026 (collected by Lenzi in CASPO). For editions of this prayer, see Oshima 2011: 328–344; Ebeling 1953a: 64–65. Another important treatment of this prayer is provided by Greenwood (2011: 313–324).

part or in its entirety in ten first-millennium BC manuscripts, and one other first-millennium tablet preserves only its incipit.[141] Concerning provenience, the four locations are: Aššur, Babylon, Nineveh, and Sippar. For the šuila Šamaš 1, seventeen first-millennium BC manuscripts preserve it entirely or in part and they stem from Babylon, Ḫuzirina, Kiš, Nineveh, and Uruk.[142]

1.4.2. Biblical Hebrew Sources

1.4.2.1. Job

Job is a composition in forty-two chapters that has a prose Prologue (Job 1–2) and Epilogue (Job 42:7–17). These frame a poetic dialogue between Job and his friends (Job 3–37) and between Yahweh and Job (Job 38–42:1–6). My analysis will focus on Job 3, the first chapter of the poetic part. It consists of a prose speech introduction formula (Job 3:1–2), and a curse (Job 3:3–10) and lament (Job 3:11–26), both in poetry and uttered by Job.

A narrative and a dialogue can be identified as the two main literary genres of Job but the composition makes use of different genres and cannot be defined in a single one. Dell argues that this shows the radicality of the composition,[143] and that, because it seems

[141] For a full list of the manuscripts, see http://shuilas.org/Q006075.html, accessed 13/04/2026 (collected by Lenzi in CASPO). For editions of this prayer, see Ambos 2013: 198–202; Zgoll 2003b: 191–203; Ebeling 1953a: 60–63. See also https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/Mag/2/2/SB/1, accessed 14/04/2026.
[142] For a full list of the manuscripts and their transliteration, see http://shuilas.org/Q006169.html, accessed 13/04/2026 (collected by Lenzi in CASPO). For editions of this prayer, see Ambos 2013: 208–209; Smith 2011: 367–384; Mayer 1976: 503–510; Ebeling 1953a: 48–51. See also https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/Mag/2/31/SB/1, accessed 21/07/2026.
[143] Dell 1991: 107.

to parody and misuse different genres, Job is part of the sceptical literature.[144] Jones names it a "supergenre,"[145] and both Kynes and Newsom apply the term "polyphonic."[146]

The dating of Job is uncertain. Hartley suggests an early dating around the eighth or seventh centuries BC;[147] Freedman posits a seventh century BC or early sixth century BC dating because of the orthography,[148] but the archaic orthography probably is a literary attempt to archaize the composition, its characters, and setting.[149] The earliest Hebrew manuscripts of Job are from Qumran: 2QJob, 4QJob[a], 4QJob[b], and 4QpalaeoJob[c].[150] The latter is dated to 225–150 BC and it is written in Palaeo-Hebrew script, showing another literary strategy to archaize the composition.[151] Because of its Persian and Aramaic influences, most scholars would date Job to the post-Exilic period, probably in the late sixth century or fifth century BC.[152] Dell suggests a late dating probably in the fourth century BC,[153] and states that Job stems from a period of emerging Hellenistic influence.[154] Job thus seems to have been composed in the post-Exilic period, even if a folktale story might have existed earlier given the mention of Job alongside antediluvian Noah in Ezek 14:14, 20.[155]

Because of its division into prose and poetry, the unity of the composition has been called into question. Therefore, its composition history is sometimes understood as

[144] Dell 1991: 148–152. Sceptical is understood as a literary stream which uses traditional forms to question traditional views. On this definition, see Dell 1991: 1–4, 159–160.
[145] Jones 2021: 535.
[146] Kynes 2022: 181; Newsom 2009: 11.
[147] Hartley 1988: 19–20.
[148] Freedman 1969: 43.
[149] Seow 2013: 20. The author of Job does make use of poetic language for literary purposes, including the use of Aramaic words and roots to give Job and his friends a foreign feel, since they are portrayed as Transjordanian characters whose language is more similar to Aramaic than Hebrew (Greenstein 2007: 87–88).
[150] On the Qumran manuscripts of Job, see Luther 2025.
[151] Seow 2013: 5.
[152] Southwood 2021: 2; Greenstein 2019: xxvii; Joosten 2013: 356; Seow 2013: 40–44; Crenshaw 2001: 332.
[153] Dell 2013: 4–5.
[154] Dell 1991: 163–166.
[155] Greenstein 2019: xxiii; Clines 1989: lvii.

a continuous expansion, with the addition of different parts.[156] Nevertheless, the differences between the prose and poetry can be understood as literary techniques to differentiate the Israelite narrator from the foreign characters, and, in fact, both the prose and poetry depend on each other.[157]

The *Sitz im Leben* of the book is difficult to determine, because the circumstances in which Job was originally recited or read are uncertain.[158] Southwood interprets Job as "a dramatised comedy of advice,"[159] indicating a performative context for Job. The dialogue format of the composition does lend itself easily to performance. The ironic use of genres and several comic elements of Job point to its comic intent within this performative context.[160] However, this view of Job is not proven by the earlier evidence such as the Qumran manuscripts and, therefore, remains speculative.

1.4.2.2. Psalms of Individual Lament

The biblical psalms of individual lament are a category defined by Gunkel and applied to psalms where a person laments their own situation and petitions Yahweh for change.[161] These psalms generally have the following structural elements: invocation of Yahweh; complaint; petition; certainty that Yahweh will hear and answer; vow to offer thanksgiving; and sometimes hymnic praise or a thanksgiving prayer.[162] Gerstenberger highlights that the petition is the key element of these psalms of individual lament,[163] and

[156] Syring 2004: 166–168.
[157] Seow 2013: 27–29.
[158] Dell (1991: 168) suggests that Job's original context was within a group of scepctical intellectuals, but this is uncertain as there is no direct evidence for it.
[159] Southwood 2021: 2.
[160] For an in-depth analysis of Job's comic elements, see Southwood 2021: 50–174.
[161] Bodner 2024: 54–55; Gunkel 2020: 122.
[162] Gunkel 2020: 152–185.
[163] Gerstenberger 1980: 11–12.

thus I understand these psalms as "rituelle Bittgebete des Einzelnen," the definition applied by Mayer to the šuila-prayers.[164]

Psalm 25, the comparator I will analyse, is a psalm of individual lament and it is also an acrostic psalm, that is, a psalm where the initial letter of each successive verse or group of verses forms an alphabetic pattern, paralleling the twenty-two letter Hebrew alphabet.[165] Psalm 25 thus includes characteristics from both lamentation and acrostic psalms. Due to the lack of written sources before the end of the first millennium BC, it is difficult to assert a specific period for the psalm's composition and use. The earliest manuscripts preserving parts of Psalm 25 are the Dead Sea Scrolls 11QPs^{c}, 4QPs^{a}, and 5/6ḤevPs.[166] Gerstenberger dates this psalm to the exilic period,[167] but, Human, Anderson, and Ruppert date it to the post-exilic period because of the use of the acrostic and its relationship to wisdom.[168] Kraus states more generally that it has a late dating.[169] The use of the acrostic as an argument for a late dating is not convincing as the earliest Hebrew abecedary dates to the tenth century BC and the alphabetic acrostics stem from these practices.[170] It is thus impossible to define a specific period within the first millennium BC for dating Psalm 25.

The context of use or *Sitz im Leben* of the psalms of individual lament is uncertain because the psalms themselves and other texts in the Hebrew Bible do not provide much evidence for their ritual use.[171] Gunkel situates these psalms within rituals of purification, that might have been started because of an illness that was caused by an individual's sin and Yahweh's anger towards that individual.[172] Mowinckel follows this approach

[164] See §1.4.1.2.
[165] Dobbs-Allsopp 2009: 282. The acrostic psalms are Psalms 9–10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145.
[166] Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich 1999: 337.
[167] Gerstenberger 1988: 29.
[168] Human 1996: 77; Anderson 1972: 207; Ruppert 1972: 578.
[169] Kraus 1988: 322.
[170] On Hebrew abecedaries and their link to acrostic poems, see Dobbs-Allsopp 2009: 283–284.
[171] Gerstenberger 2019: 86–87; Cook 2015: 455–456.
[172] Gunkel 2020: 122–126, 135–136.

understanding these psalms as means to be purified from illnesses due to sin and Yahweh's punishment.[173] Gerstenberger, by comparing these psalms to the Mesopotamian prayers of petition, also understands them as having a purificatory function and a ritual use.[174] These ritualistic settings are however debatable at the moment because of the lack of emic evidence to prove them.

1.4.3. Criteria for Selection

This thesis focuses on *Ludlul* and Akkadian šuila-prayers due to these different text types sharing recognized thematic similarities and an *āšipūtu* context.[175] Within *Ludlul*, I decided to analyse the opening and closing hymns (*Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120) because their hymnic content is similar to the addresses in the šuila-prayers, and the closing hymn also includes petitions, another similarity with these prayers. This contrasts with the rest of *Ludlul* which mostly consists of narrative and lament, aspects that are not present in the selected šuila-prayers. Regarding my choice of the three šuila-prayers (Marduk 2; Ištar 1; Šamaš 1), two criteria were taken into consideration: first, the number and extent of manuscripts preserving these Akkadian prayers because an effective analysis of the poetic devices depends on a good state of preservation; and second, the diversity of the principal deities, as this allows comparison between prayers addressed to different gods.

Concerning the Biblical Hebrew sources, *Ludlul* has been meaningfully compared to Job and has sometimes been called the "Babylonian Job."[176] Job is thus a natural comparator for *Ludlul*. My decision to analyse Job 3 is due to its position within the book

[173] Mowinckel 2010: 141–159; 1992: 2–6.
[174] Gerstenberger 2019: 87; 1980: 134–160.
[175] See my comments in §1.4.1.1.
[176] For examples of these comparisons and further literature, see Gorea 2007; Uehlinger 2007: 97–163.

as the beginning of the poetic part, paralleling *Ludlul*'s opening hymn. Moreover, it is the only poetic chapter before the dialogue with the friends and Yahweh, and thus its monologic character is more similar to *Ludlul*. The Biblical Hebrew psalms of individual lament have been the subject of fruitful comparison with the Akkadian šuila-prayers,[177] thus offering a parallel to the Akkadian sources. The selection of Psalm 25 as the Biblical Hebrew comparator is based on two criteria. First, the length of this prayer is similar to the length of the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1. Second, Psalm 25 focuses more on petitions than lament, a similarity with the three selected šuila-prayers.

In chapter 6, where the Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources are compared, I will include references to units outside of my core corpus when needed, as they provide a wider basis for comparing the use of poetic devices. These references will still stem from closely related corpora, namely the Akkadian šuila-prayers and the biblical psalms.

[177] See, for example, Gerstenberger 2019: 81–94; 1980; Zernecke 2011a; 2011b: 173–182; Lenzi 2010: 303–315.

1.5. Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew Poetry

1.5.1. Features of Akkadian Poetry

The primary element of Akkadian poetry is the poetic foot, a syntactic unit with one major stress, which can be simple, i.e., one metrical word, or complex, i.e., two metrical words.[178] The latter can be composed, for example, of either a construct chain or a noun and its attributive adjective.[179] Any foot can contain any number of non-metrical words, such as prepositions and particles.[180] The poetic feet can be further structured into odd and even cola: an odd colon contains one simple foot and an even colon contains two simple feet or one simple and one complex.[181] An Akkadian poetic line usually has four feet or two even cola divided by a caesura in the middle, but other patterns such as three feet also occur.[182] Due to variability, it is impossible, at the moment, to identify a strict metrical pattern, but this outline provides the basic elements of Akkadian poetic lines.[183]

In the Akkadian transcriptions, I will follow eBL's conventions, using | for foot divisions and || for the caesura. When a poetic line has more than four possible metrical words, I will use (|) or (||) to divide any construct chains as these could be two separate simple feet or one complex foot.[184] If no construct chains are found, I will divide all possible metrical words according to the standard conventions, thus leaving the possibility for lines with more than four poetic feet.[185]

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[178] West 1997: 175–176; Buccellati 1990: 109–110. I will use the terminology employed by Buccellati (1990: 105–134).
[179] For examples of complex feet, see Buccellati 1990: 110–111.
[180] For a definition of non-metrical words see Buccellati 1990: 110.
[181] Buccellati 1990: 111.
[182] On the four-foot lines or *Vierheber* as the most common metrical pattern, see Jiménez 2017: 73; Lambert 2013: 20–25; George 2003: 162–165; West 1997: 175; Buccellati 1990: 112; Hecker 1974: 113. For examples of lines with more or fewer poetic feet, see Buccellati 1990: 112; Hecker 1974: 109–117.
[183] On the uncertainty and irregularity of Akkadian metre, see Lenzi 2019a: 50; Edzard 1997: 149.
[184] I will employ this system because construct chains are the most common type of complex feet, despite the existence of other types of complex feet (Buccellati 1990: 110–111).
[185] Metrical divisions will always be used when quoting poetic compositions, except in the sections on the units' rhetorical contexts (§§2.1; 3.1; 5.1.1; 5.2.1).

Regarding stress, I follow the conventional reconstruction of rules and principles as summarized by Wisnom and Knudsen.[186] Akkadian poetic lines tend to end in a trochee, i.e., a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one.[187] The role of secondary stress is highly debated, and in my analysis, I will follow the outline provided by Wisnom.[188] When identifying prosodic parallelism, I will highlight in bold the stressed syllable, excluding non-metrical words, since each poetic foot only has one main stress in its metrical word. According to Wisnom's analysis of Akkadian stress-patterns, the rarest is the G-stress pattern, a colon where the first and last syllables are stressed, with at least three unstressed syllables in between.[189] Because of its rarity, it can be considered particularly emphatic and it will be identified in my analysis of the Akkadian corpus.[190]

Concerning poetic structuring, Akkadian poetic lines are usually grouped in units of two lines (couplets), three lines (triplets), or four lines (quatrains) consisting of two couplets. Monostichs, i.e., a single line, are also found, as well as larger units.[191] These groupings, strophes, can form broader units which are called stanzas.[192] Parallelism, the correspondence, contrast, or expansion between two or more poetic lines through repetition and variation, is the feature that allows for a definition of these strophic and stanzaic divisions.[193] Besides parallelism, the use of phonologic figures, variable syntax, repetition, chiasmus, and imagery contributed to the literariness of the compositions, their poetics.[194]

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[186] Wisnom 2015: 488; Knudsen 1980: 3–4.
[187] This feature was first identified by Landsberger (1926: 371). See also Lenzi 2019a: 48; Jiménez 2017: 74–75; Wisnom 2015: 488. For a list of exceptions to this pattern, see Hecker 1974: 102–106. See also how Pohl (2022: 93–94) argues that the trochaic ending is a feature of Old Babylonian Akkadian as a whole and not a specific feature of poetry.
[188] Wisnom 2015: 488. On secondary stress, see Wisnom 2015: 488–489; Helle 2014: 58–59. For a critique of Wisnom's and Helle's approaches, see Pohl 2022: 90–92.
[189] Wisnom 2015: 491.
[190] On its emphatic effects, see Wisnom 2015: 494.
[191] On the couplet as the most common strophic pattern in Akkadian, see Lenzi 2019a: 53; Hecker 1974: 142. On other strophic patterns, see Lenzi 2019a: 55–57; Buccellati 1990: 113.
[192] On the stanza in Akkadian poetry, see Buccellati 1990: 113–114.
[193] Lenzi 2019a: 53–54.
[194] For further studies on different Akkadian poetic features, see the references in §1.2.2

1.5.2. Features of Biblical Hebrew Poetry

The defining feature of Biblical Hebrew poetry is parallelism.[195] In his *De sacra poesi hebraeorum*, Lowth defined in the eighteenth century three categories of biblical parallelism: synonymous, antithetical, and synthetical.[196] More recent approaches to parallelism have gone beyond these categories, and Kugel's definition of parallelism as "A, and what's more, B,"[197] became central in Biblical Studies. Alongside parallelism, the terseness of the poetic lines is another defining feature of biblical poetry.[198] Therefore, one line or multiple lines will be short sentences defined by different forms of parallelism within and/or between them.[199]

Hebrew poetry, like Akkadian poetry, includes other poetic devices that contribute to parallelism and help distinguish poetry from prose. These devices include imagery, namely metaphors and similes; phonologic figures such as assonance and alliteration; refrains or key words; repetition; and rhetorical questions.[200] Besides the use of poetic techniques, another element that helps distinguish poetry from prose is the lack of prose particles such as the definite article, the relative pronoun, the definite object marker, and conjunctions.[201]

Poetic structures and groupings are similar to the ones found in Akkadian poetry. I will use the term line or poetic line to refer to the basic unit of poetry as it is the term used in Assyriology and also employed by Grosser and Dobbs-Allsopp in their

[195] Tsumura 2023: 1; Dobbs-Allsopp 2015: 3; Vance 2001: 6; Kugel 1998: 1–2; Berlin 1985: 7; Watson 1984: 114.
[196] For a translation of his work, see Lowth 1995.
[197] Kugel 1998: 13.
[198] Berlin 1985: 5, 16.
[199] For a critique of parallelism as the defining feature of biblical poetry, see Grosser 2023: 10–15.
[200] For references and examples of these poetic devices in Biblical Hebrew, see Watson 1984.
[201] Freedman 1987: 11.

approaches to biblical poetry.[202] The smallest structure is the monostich,[203] but the couplet is the most common strophe.[204] Other strophic structures include the triplet and the quatrain.[205] Strophes can be grouped into a bigger structure called a stanza and a poem can contain any number of stanzas.[206]

Regarding the structure of each line, metre has been a highly debated topic within Biblical Studies, and the two main approaches have been accentual and syllabic.[207] Most scholars nowadays do not understand Biblical Hebrew poetry as metrical and thus metre does not play a major role in poetic analyses.[208] I follow Harshav's understanding of biblical poetry as free-rhythm accentual poetry, that is, each line will usually have a number of main stresses that can vary within a limit of two to four.[209] Therefore, the rhythm of each line is defined by stresses but these did not need to be fixed and variation was acceptable.[210] Moreover, the meaning of the rhythm is not determined per se but derives from a dialogue with the text and its meaning.[211] My poetic analysis will thus stem from this free-rhythm approach, analysing each pattern in relation to the unit's meaning and not limited by a fixed metre. As in the Akkadian transcriptions, I will use | for foot divisions. I will follow Vance's conventions for determining what constitutes a poetic foot in Biblical Hebrew poetry, i.e., the main accents.[212]

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[202] Grosser 2023: 51–55; Dobbs-Allsopp 2015: 20–29.
[203] Watson 1984: 168–169.
[204] Watson 1984: 174.
[205] For bigger strophic patterns, see Watson 1984: 187–190.
[206] Watson 1984: 161.
[207] Vance 2001: 97–207.
[208] Dobbs-Allsopp 2015: 99–103; Alter 2011: 8. In his monograph, Vance (2001: 495–497) showed that there is not a strict accentual or syllabic metre in biblical compositions.
[209] Harshav 2014: 44. Grosser (2023: 38–43) also takes biblical poetry as free-rhythm poetry.
[210] Harshav 2014: 59.
[211] Harshav 2014: 50.
[212] Vance 2001: 289–290. The rules can be outlined as follows: words are assigned one main stress corresponding to one foot; construct chains only have one main accent and are thus one foot; independent monosyllabic prepositions are considered enclitics and thus do not have a main accent; independent polysyllabic prepositions have one main accent and are thus a foot; negative particles only have a main accent when they are independent words; independent personal pronouns, interrogative pronouns, and demonstrative pronouns have a main accent; particles tend to have a main accent, except when they are

joined with another word by a *maqqeph*, forming a new particle or conjunction which will have one main accent.

2 Poetic and Rhetorical Analysis of *Ludlul*'s Hymns

In this chapter, I offer a detailed poetic and rhetorical analysis of *Ludlul*'s hymns (I:1–40 and V:71–120), starting with an identification of their rhetorical context (§2.1). I then focus on *Ludlul* I:1–40 (§2.2), with a transcription and translation (§2.2.1), as well as a detailed analysis of its poetic figures (§2.2.2). I follow a similar structure for *Ludlul* V:71–120 (§2.3), offering a transcription and translation (§2.3.1) and a poetic analysis (§2.3.2). In the summary (§2.4), tables, divided by the five categories of poetic figures, list the poetic devices identified in both hymns.

2.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

Ludlul I:1–40 opens with a first-person precative verbal form, which gives the title of the composition: *ludlul*, "may I praise." The person who praises is identified in *Ludlul* III:44 as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, the narrative's protagonist.[213] The closing hymn is introduced by him as being spoken by the Babylonians:

69 *īmurūma <mārū>*[214] *bābili kī uballaṭu* [*bē*]*lu*
70 *pâtu kalîšina ušāpâ narbî*[*šu*]

The Babylonians saw how the lord revives,
All the mouths proclaimed [his] greatness.

(*Ludlul* V:69–70)

Therefore, the speaker in *Ludlul* V:71–120 is the people of Babylon, while in *Ludlul* I:1–40 this is Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. Moreover, in *Ludlul* V:119, it is stated that the people praised Marduk through *zamā*[*ri*] *ša šubši-mešrê-šakkan*, "the song of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan," possibly the whole poem.[215]

Regarding the audiences, both hymns are addressed to Marduk as the god identified in *Ludlul* I:3, and the closing hymn was meant to proclaim his greatness (*Ludlul* V:70). Moreover, in *Ludlul* V:120, Marduk is directly addressed through the use of a second-person possessive suffix: *tanittaka*, "your praise." In the introductory hymn, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan also addresses *nišū*, "the people:"

39 *lušalmidma nišī qitruba gamālšin*

May I teach the people their salvation is close

(*Ludlul* I:39)

[213] On Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, see my comments in §1.4.1.1.
[214] The term *mārū*, "sons," is reconstructed. Traditionally, the reconstruction is taken as *mār*, "son of," the singular form in the construct state (Lenzi 2023: 90; Oshima 2014: 110; Lambert 1960: 58). However, eBL (Hätinen 2022c) suggests the plural form *mārū*, which is in accord with the plural verbal form *īmurūma*, "they saw."
[215] Lenzi 2023: 183.

Thus, the wider community is also an audience of the introductory hymn, as well as of *Ludlul* as a whole.[216] The closing hymn also addresses this wider community as the following imperative sentence shows:

82 [*ap*]*âtu mala bašâ marūtuk dullā*
Human beings, as many as they are, praise Marduk!
(*Ludlul* V:82)

Ludlul V:71–120 might also include addresses to the king Nazimaruttaš (*Ludlul* V:99) and Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan (*Ludlul* V:111), but, due to the fragmentary state of the lines, it is difficult to establish clearly whether these are direct addresses or petitions for them.

The rhetorical purpose of the introductory hymn is expressed in the opening verb: *ludlul*, "may I praise." Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan wishes to praise the "lord of wisdom," Marduk, and proceeds to do so through a series of antitheses that express the god's wrath and mercy, defining the doxological or hymnic character of the rhetorical unit.[217] The precative *lušalmidma*, "may I teach," in *Ludlul* I:39 expresses the instructional purpose of *Ludlul*, which was thus meant to teach the wider community how Marduk can restore a sufferer's life.[218] Piccin and Worthington suggest that this line indicates the intention of *Ludlul* to "bring comfort to its human audience and recitants."[219] These authors thus propose a direct link between one of the audiences, the wider community, and one of the purposes, teaching Marduk's ultimate mercy.

The rhetorical purpose of the closing hymn is shown in *Ludlul* V:70 by the expression *ušāpâ narbî*[*šu*], "proclaimed [his] greatness." Therefore, like the introductory hymn, *Ludlul* V:71–120 is also a doxological or hymnic rhetorical unit aimed at praising

[216] Lenzi (2023: 340–341) also notes that *Ludlul* is addressed to everyone and not just to a limited number of individuals.
[217] See Lenzi 2023: 283–284; 2011: 483–485; Oshima and Anthonioz 2023: 51; Abusch and Milstein 2021: 126–127; Oshima 2014: 9–10; Annus and Lenzi 2010: xix–xx; Moran 2002: 192; Sitzler 1995: 89; Albertz 1988: 31–37.
[218] See Lenzi 2023: 335–336.
[219] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 121.

Marduk.[220] Despite the closing hymn's fragmentary state, it is possible to identify a set of petitions in *Ludlul* V:113–118 for the recovery of a sufferer. These lines have been interpreted as a set of petitions for Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan.[221] However, they are petitions for someone's distress to be put to an end, which is not fully in accord with the situation of the protagonist who has already had his circumstances changed in Tablets III–V. Therefore, Lenzi convincingly argues that this is a set of petitions for anyone undergoing a moment of hardship.[222] This hints at *Ludlul*'s purpose of aiming to calm a human audience, which was suggested by Piccin and Worthington.[223] Thus besides praising Marduk, this rhetorical unit also seems to have a petitionary character.

[220] See Lenzi 2023: 3.
[221] Oshima 2014: 339.
[222] Lenzi 2023: 182.
[223] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 121.

2.2. *Ludlul* I:1–40

2.2.1. Transcription and Translation

1 *ludlul* | *bēl* (|) *nēmeqi* || *ila*[224] | *muštāla*

2 *eziz* | *mūši* || *muppašir*[225] | *urri*

3 *marūtuk* | *bēl* (|) *nēmeqi* || *ila*[226] | *muštāla*

4 *eziz* | *mūši* || *muppašir*[227] | *urri*

5 *ša kīma ūmi* | *meḫê* || *namû* | *uggassu*

6 *u kīma*[228] *mānit* | *šēreti*[229] || *zâqšu* | *ṭâbu*

7 *uzzuššu* | *lā maḫār* || *abūbu* | *rūbšu*

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[224] VAT 10522, o. 1 (= Ebeling 1953b: no. 24): *ila*(diĝir); BM 41141, o. 1 (= Hätinen 2022a: 141): *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš}; IM 67628, o. 1 (= Wiseman 1980: 102–104): *ila*(diĝir); K 9392+, o. 1 (= Hehn 1906: 389–390): *ila*(diĝir); K 17700, o. 1 (= Hätinen 2022a: 140): *ila*(diĝir); IM 132669, o. 1 (= George and Al-Rawi 1998: 188–189, 192): *ila*(diĝir). The form with the sign MEŠ in BM 41141 (o. 1) can also be used to indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically (Worthington 2012: 284–287). The same phenomenon is found in *Ludlul* I:3.

[225] VAT 10522, o. 2: *mu-pa-aš$_2$-*⌜*šir*⌝; IM 67628, o. 2: *mu-up-pa-šir$_3$*; K 9392+, o. 2: *mu-*⌜*pa*⌝*-šir$_3$*; K 17700, o. 2: [*mu-up-pa*]-⌜*šir*⌝; IM 132669, o. 2: *mu-*⌜*up*⌝*-pa-šir$_3$*. Most manuscripts preserve an N-stem active participle form of *pašāru*, "to release." However, VAT 10522 preserves a D-stem active participle and K 9392+ preserves an ambiguous form. Worthington (2012: 119–120) convincingly argues that the D-stem form is a corruption of the N-stem form. I have thus transcribed an N-stem active participle from *pašāru* in the construct state. Lenzi (2023: 96) also follows this interpretation.

[226] BM 41141, o. 3: [*ilī*(diĝir)]⌜meš⌝; IM 67628, o. 3: *ila*(diĝir); K 9392+, o. 3: *ila*(diĝir); K 17700, o. 3: ⌜*ila*(diĝir)⌝; IM 132669, o. 3: *ila*(diĝir).

[227] VAT 10522, o. 4: *mu-pa-aš$_2$-šir*; IM 67628, o. 4: *mu-up-pa-šir$_3$*; K 9392+, o. 4: *mu-*⌜*pa*⌝*-šir$_3$*; K 17700, o. 4: [*mu*]-⌜*up*⌝*-pa-*⌜*šir$_3$*⌝; IM 132669, o. 4: *mu-up-pa-šir$_3$*. Regarding this term, see the discussion referring to *Ludlul* I:2.

[228] VAT 10522, o. 6: ⌜*ki*⌝*-i*; IM 67628, o. 6: [*ki*]-⌜*i*⌝; K 9392+, o. 6: *ki-i*; BM 66345, o. 1′ (= George and Taniguchi 2019: no. 145): ⌜*ki*⌝*-*⌜*ma*⌝; IM 132669, o. 6: *ki-ma*.

[229] VAT 10522, o. 6: *me-ri-*⌜*te*⌝; IM 67628, o. 6: *eš-re-ti*; K 9392+, o. 6: *še-*⌜*re*⌝*-e-ti*; K 17700, o. 6: [*še*]-*re-e-ti*; IM 132669, o. 6: *še-re-e-ti*. VAT 10522 has a variant, using the term *merītu*, "pasture," and IM 67628 uses the term *ešrētu*, "shrines." Both Lenzi (2023: 96) and Oshima (2014: 174) state that VAT 10522 preserves the term *mešrītu*, "riches;" however Hätinen (2022b) identifies the sign ME and not MEŠ. My collation from the photograph also indicates this. Horowitz and Lambert (2002: 245) understand both variants as scribal errors, as both the sign ME and the sign EŠ could be aurally confused with the sign ŠE (Lenzi 2023: 96). Moreover, the tablet VAT 10522 seems to have some scribal errors, as noted for the participle *muppašir* in *Ludlul* I:2 and 4. Frances Reynolds kindly pointed out to me that the error in VAT 10522 might have arisen from another meaning of *namû* as "pasturage" which led the scribe to write *merīte*, "pasture," in the succeeding line. In IM 67628, the use of EŠ might be an inverted writing for ŠE (Oshima 2014: 380), since sometimes a VC sign can be used for a CV sign in Neo-Assyrian orthography (Leonhardt 2024: §A.53; Deller 1962: 188–190).

8 *mussaḫḫir* | *karassu* || *kabattašu* | *tayyārat*

9 *ša nakbat*[230] | *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*

10 *rittuššu*[231] | *rabbat*[232] || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

11 *marūtuk* | *ša nakbat*[233] (|) *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*

12 *rabbat*[234] | *rittašu* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

13 (*ša*)[235] *ina libbātīšu* | *uptattâ* | *qabrātu*

14 *īnuššu*[236] | *ina karašê* || *ušatbi*[237] | *maqta*

15 *ikkelemmūma* | *inessû* || *lamassu* | *u šēdu*

16 *ippallasma* | *ana ša iskipūšu* || *ilšu* | *isaḫḫuršu*

17 *akṣat* | *ana surri* || *ennettašu* | *kabittu*

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[230] VAT 10522, o. 9: ⌜*nak*⌝-*bat*; IM 67628, o. 9: ⌜*nak*⌝-*bat*; K 9392+, o. 9: *nak*-BI; BM 66345, o. 4′: [*nak*]-⌜*bat*⌝; IM 132669, o. 9: *nak-bat*.

[231] VAT 10522, o. 10: [*rit*]-⌜*tuš*⌝-*šu*$_2$; IM 67628, o. 10: *rit-tuš*; K 9392+, o. 10: *rit-tuš*; BM 66345, o. 5′: [*rit*]-⌜*tuš*⌝-*šu*$_2$; IM 132669, o. 10: ⌜*rit*⌝-*tuš-šu*. The noun form *rittuššu* can be understood as a pseudo-locative, i.e., a noun that has a locative form but that stands for a nominative, an accusative, or rarely a genitive noun. This is argued, for example, by Mayer (1996: 431) for the form *uzzuššu* in *Ludlul* I:7. The form *rit-tuš*, preserved in IM 67628 and K 9392+, is also a pseudo-locative form and poetic form typical of Standard Babylonian texts which do not include the possessive suffix *-šu* (Mayer 1996: 434).

[232] Birmingham 1982 A 3115, o. 5′ (= Horowitz and Lambert 2002: 241): [*rab-ba-a*]-*tu*$_2$; VAT 10522, o. 10: ⌜*rab*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝-⌜*te*⌝; IM 67628, o. 10: *rab*-⌜*ba*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝; K 9392+, o. 10: *rab-bat*; K 17700, o. 10: [*rab-ba-*(*a*)]-⌜*ti*⌝; BM 66345, o. 5′: *rab-ba-a-ti*; IM 132669, o. 10: ⌜*rab*⌝-*ba-a-ti*. Oshima (2022: 98–100) argues that the manuscripts preserving the stative verbal form *rabbat* with an *-i* at the end take this vowel as a subordinate clause marker replacing the usual *-u* vowel. However, the third-person feminine singular stative forms do not need a subjunctive ending already in Old Babylonian grammar (van Soldt 2015: 34; von Soden 1995: §83a). Moreover, the use of the final *-i* could be the ending for a verbal adjective.

[233] VAT 10522, o. 11: ⌜*nak*⌝-*bat*; IM 67628, o. 11: ⌜*nak*⌝-[*bat*]; K 9392+, o. 11: *nak*-BI; BM 66345, o 6′: *nak-bat*; IM 132669, o. 11: *nak-bat*.

[234] VAT 10522, o. 12: [*rab-ba*]-⌜*te*⌝; BM 36320+, o. 1′ (= Fincke 2021: 211–212): ⌜*rab*⌝-⌜*ba*⌝-[*a-ti*]; IM 67628, o. 12: *rab-ba-tu*$_4$; K 9392+, o. 12: ⌜*rab*⌝-*bat*; BM 66345, o. 7′: [*rab-ba*]-*a*-⌜*ti*⌝; IM 132669: *rab-ba-a-ti*.

[235] IM 67628, o. 13 omits *ša*.

[236] BM 36320+, o. 3′: *i-nu-šu*$_2$; IM 67628, o. 14: *e-nu-uš-šu*$_2$; IM 132669, o. 14: ⌜*i*⌝-[*nu*]-⌜*šu*⌝. I follow Hätinen (2022b) and Mayer (2014: 276) in taking this term as *īnuššu*, deriving from the verb *ênu*, "to eye," and not as *inūšu*, "at that time."

[237] The verbal form *ušatbi* is a Š-stem preterite form of the verb *tebû*, "to get up." Despite it being a preterite, I translate it as a present form because I am taking it as a gnomic preterite, i.e., a preterite used to express a timeless action. The parallelism with the other durative verbal forms in the quatrain (*Ludlul* I:13–16) suggests taking *ušatbi* as a present. On the gnomic preterite, see Mayer 1992: 373–399. Other translations also use a present verbal form (Lenzi 2023: 65; Hätinen 2022b; Piccin and Worthington 2015: 122; Oshima 2014: 79).

18 *ikkarriṭma* | *zamarma*[238] || *itâr* | *ālittuš*

19 *iddudma*[239] | *rīmāniš*[240] | *uganna*[241]

20 (*u*)[242] *kī araḫ* | *būri* || *ittanasḫara* | *arkīšu*[243]

21 *zaqtā* | *niṭâtūšu* || *usaḫḫalā* | *zumra*[244]

22 *pašḫū* | *ṣindūšu* || *uballaṭū* | *namtara*[245]

23 *iqabbīma* | *gillata* | *ušrašši*[246]

24 *ina ūm* (|) *išartīšu*[247] | *uptaṭṭarū* || *eʾiltu* | *u annu*

25 *šūma* | *utukka* || *raʾība* | *ušarši*

26 *ina têšu* | *ušdapparū* || *šuruppû* | *u ḫurbāšu*

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[238] Birmingham 1982 A 3115, o. 13′: [*za*]-⌜*mar*⌝; BM 36320+, o. 7′: *za*-⌜*am*⌝-*ru*; IM 67628, o. 18: *za-mar-ma*; BM 66345, o. 13′: *za-mar*; IM 132669, o. 18: *za-mar*.

[239] I understand the verb *iddudma*, "he becomes pointed," as a G-stem durative form from *edēdu*, "to be(come) pointed," alluding to Marduk's horns as he is compared to a *rīmu*, "wild bull," in this line. Regarding this verbal form, see Lenzi 2023: 98; Oshima 2014: 177–178.

[240] BM 36320+, o. 8′: *ri*-⌜*ma*⌝-*a-niš*$_x$(MU); IM 67628, o. 19: ⌜*ri*⌝-*ma-niš*$_2$$^{?}$; BM 66345, o. 14′: *ri-ma*-[*niš*$^{?}$]; IM 132669, o. 19: *ri-ma-a-niš*$_x$(MU); BM 55019, o. 6′ (= Hätinen 2025: 116): [*ri*]-⌜*ma*$^{?}$⌝-⌜KIŠ$^{?}$⌝. I follow Piccin and Worthington (2015: 114–115) in taking the sign MU with the value *niš*$_x$. The signs preserved in IM 67628 are sometimes understood as ⌜*ri*⌝-*ma-šu* (Oshima 2014: 382), but Hätinen (2022b) and my own collation of the signs from the photograph indicate that the last sign might be GIŠ which has the value *niš*$_2$. The most recently identified manuscript BM 55019 probably preserves the sign KIŠ, which, as stated by Hätinen (2025: 116), can be a scribal mistake or it could have a so far unattested value *niš*$_y$.

[241] I follow Oshima (2014: 179–180) in his interpretation of the verb *uganna*, "he thrusts," as a D-stem verbal form from *genû*, "to thrust," and not from *kunnû*, "to treat kindly."

[242] BM 36320+, o. 9′ and IM 132669, o. 20 omit *u*.

[243] BM 36320+, o. 9′: *ar*$_2$*-ki-šu*$_2$; BM 38790+, o. 14′: *ar*$_2$-[*ki*$^{?}$]-⌜*šu*$_2$⌝; IM 67628, o. 20: *arki*(egir)-*šu*$_2$; BM 73592, o. 1′ (= George and Taniguchi 2019: no. 146): [*arki*(egir)]-⌜*ia*⌝; IM 132669, o. 20: *arki*(egir)-*ia*; 2024,6004.183, o. 6′ (= Hätinen 2025: 114): [*ar*$_2$*-ki*]-⌜*šu*$_2$⌝; BM 61433, o. 7′ (= Oshima 2014: pl. VII): ⌜*arki*(egir)⌝-⌜*šu*$_2$⌝.

[244] BM 36320+, o. 10′: *zu-um-ri*; BM 38790+, o. 15′: *zu-um*-⌜*ri*⌝; IM 67628, o. 21: *zu-um-ra*; BM 73592, o. 2′: [*zu-um*]-⌜*ri*⌝; IM 132669, o. 21: *zu-um-ri*; BM 55019, o. 8′: ⌜*zu*⌝-⌜*um*⌝-*ri*. Most manuscripts preserve a first-person singular possessive suffix, but as the lines so far do not point to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's own experience, I have opted for the accusative ending without a possessive suffix, as does eBL's edition (Hätinen 2022b).

[245] BM 36320+, o. 11′: *nam*-⌜*tar*⌝-*ri*; BM 38790+, o. 16′: *nam-tar*; IM 67628, o. 22: *nam-ta-ra*; BM 73592, o. 3′: [^{d}]⌜*nam*⌝-*tar*; IM 132669, o. 22: ^{d}*nam-tar*; BM 55019, o. 9′: ⌜*nam*⌝-*tar*.

[246] BM 36320+, o. 12′: *uš-raš-šu*$_2$; BM 38790+, o. 17′: *uš-raš-šu*$_2$; IM 67628, o. 23: *uš-raš-ši*; BM 73592, o. 4′: [*uš-raš*]-*šu*$_2$; IM 132669, o. 23: *uš-raš-šu*$_2$; BM 55019, o. 10′: [*uš*]-⌜*ra*⌝-⌜*aš*$_2$⌝-x*šu*$_2$. The verbal form *ušrašši* is a ŠD preterite of *rašû*, "to acquire," which, like *ušatbi* in *Ludlul* I:14, I am taking as a gnomic preterite because of parallelism with other durative verbal forms. Other translations also use a present verbal form (Lenzi 2023: 65; Hätinen 2022b; Piccin and Worthington 2015: 122; Oshima 2014: 79).

[247] BM 36320+, o. 13′: [*i-šer*$_3$*-ti*]-⌜*šu*$_2$⌝; IM 67628, o. 24: *i-šar-ti-šu*$_2$; IM 132669, o. 24: ⌜*i*⌝-*šer*$_3$*-ti-šu*$_2$.

27 *mušmiddi* | [*riḫiṣ*]*ti*?[248] (|) *adad* || *miḫiṣti* (|) *erra*

28 *musallim* | *ili* || *u ištari* | *šabbasûti*

29 *bēlu* | *ap*[*kallu*] || *mimma*[249] *libbi* (|) *ilī* | *ibarri*

30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*[250]

31 *marūtuk* | *apkallu* || *mimma*[251] *libbi* (|) *ilī* | *ibarri*

32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad*[252] | *ṭēnšu*

33 *ana kī kabtat* | *qāssu* || *libbašu* | *rēmēnī*[253]

34 *ana kī gaṣṣu* | *kakkašu* || *kabattašu* | *mušniššat*

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*

36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu*[254] || *lišālil*[255] | *qāssu*

37 *lušāpi* | *uggassu* || *ša kīma nūni* | *ākulu* | *rušumta*

38 *īnunamma* | *zamar* || *kī uballiṭu* | *mītūta*

39 *lušalmidma* | *nišī* || *qitruba* | *gamālšin*[256]

40 *ḫissassu* | *damiqtu* || *lemna* | *litbal*

1 May I praise the lord of wisdom, thoughtful god,

2 Furious at night, forgiving at dawn.

3 Marduk, the lord of wisdom, thoughtful god,

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[248] IM 67628, o. 27: x-x-˹*ti*˺; 1879,0708.225, o. 3′ (= Oshima 2014: pl. V): [...]-˹*ti*˺; IM 132669, o. 27: [...]-x-˹*ti*˺.

[249] IM 67628, o. 29 omits *mimma*.

[250] BM 36320+, o. 19′: ˹*il*˺-*mad*; IM 67628, o. 30: *i-de*; BM 73592, o. 11′: *il*-˹*mad*˺; IM 132669, o. 30: *i-de*.

[251] IM 67628, o. 31 omits *mimma*.

[252] BM 36320+, o. 21′: ˹*i*˺-*lam-mad*; IM 67628, o. 32: *i-lam-mad*; IM 132669, o. 32: *i-de*.

[253] BM 36320+, o. 22′: *re*-˹*em*˺; IM 67628, o. 33: *re-me-ni*; BM 73592, o. 14′: ˹*re*˺-*me*$_2$-*ni*; IM 132669, o. 33: *re-me*$_2$-*ni*.

[254] IM 67628, o. 36: *ia-u*$_2$; IM 132669, o. 36: *a-a-u*$_2$.

[255] BM 36320+, o. 25′: [*li-ša*$_2$]-˹*lil*˺; IM 67628, o. 36: *li-qal-lil*; BM 73592, o. 17′: [*li-ša*$_2$]-˹*lil*˺; IM 132669, o. 36: *li-ša*$_2$-*lil*.

[256] IM 67628, o. 39: *ga*-[*mal-šin*]; K 10503+, o. 1′ (= Hätinen 2025: 117): ˹*ga*˺-[*mal-šin*]; IM 132669, o. 39: *ga-ma-al-šin*. I follow Hätinen (2019: 77–79) in understanding the form in IM 132669, o. 39 as *ga-ma-al-šin* and not *gu-ma-al-šin*, and the sign preserved in IM 67628, o. 39 as *ga*-[...] and not *gi*-[…].

Furious at night, forgiving at dawn.

The one whose rage, like a storm of tempests, is a desert,

But whose blowing, like a breeze of morning hours, is sweet.

In his anger unopposed, his fury a deluge,

His feelings are merciful, his mood is relenting.

The weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,

Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.

Marduk, the weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,

Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.

Because of whose rage tombs are opened,

At his glance, he raises the fallen from disaster.

He glares and the protective spirits depart,

He gazes and his god returns to the one he had rejected.

His heavy punishment is immediately harsh,

He has mercy quickly and turns motherly.

He becomes pointed and thrusts like a wild bull,

(But) like a cow with a calf, he keeps turning back behind him.

His beatings are barbed, they pierce the body,

His bandages are soothing, they restore the doomed.

He speaks and imposes punishment,

On the day of his justice, debt and transgression are absolved.

It is he who afflicts with the *utukku*-demon (and) shivering,

By his incantation, chills and tremors withdraw.

Who increases [the flooding?] of Adad, the blow of Erra,

Who reconciles the enraged god and goddess.

29 [Sage] lord, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,

30 No one among [the gods] knows his way.

31 Sage Marduk, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,

32 No god can understand his thought.

33 As his hand is heavy, his heart is merciful,

34 As his weapon is cruel, his mood is sustaining.

35 Without his consent (lit. heart), who may calm his blow?

36 Apart from his intention (lit. mood), who may stay his hand?

37 May I, who ate mud like a fish, proclaim his rage,

38 He quickly granted me favour, just as he revived the dead.

39 May I teach the people their salvation is close,

40 May his favourable invocation take away evil.

2.2.2. Poetic Analysis

2.2.2.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Albertz divided the hymn into six different parts: *Ludlul* I:1–4, 5–12, 13–20, 21–28, 29–36, 37–40.[257] The first quatrain is the opening praise that then leads into three parts where the speaker continues the praise, focusing on Marduk himself (*Ludlul* I:5–12) and the impact on humankind (*Ludlul* I:13–20, 21–28).[258] Albertz understands the fifth part (*Ludlul* I:29–36) as a general conclusion and the sixth (*Ludlul* I:37–40) as a personal conclusion. Moran divided the hymn into three parts with a first-person singular precative form introducing each: *Ludlul* I:1–36, 37–38, 39–40.[259] The first part (*Ludlul* I:1–36)

[257] Albertz 1988: 31–32.
[258] *Ludlul* I:9–12 is also about Marduk's impact on humankind, unlike what Albertz suggests.
[259] Moran 1983: 255.

corresponds to the praise of Marduk, the second (*Ludlul* I:37–38) to the speaker's experience, and the third (*Ludlul* I:39–40) to the speaker's wish to teach about Marduk. I agree with Albertz who links the introduction in *Ludlul* I:1–4 to the conclusion in *Ludlul* I:37–40 because of the use of precative verbal forms.[260] However, I will not separate the other lines into different parts as they all express praises to Marduk, including *Ludlul* I:29–36, which extols the god's inscrutability (*Ludlul* I:29–32, 35–36) and duality (*Ludlul* I:33–34).[261] Thus, I divide the hymn into three stanzas: an introduction in *Ludlul* I:1–4, a praise of Marduk in *Ludlul* I:5–36, and a conclusion in *Ludlul* I:37–40.[262]

Stanza	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Chapter section**
Introduction	1–4	§2.2.2.2.1
Praise of Marduk	5–36	§2.2.2.2.2
Conclusion	37–40	§2.2.2.2.3

Table 6 - Stanzaic division of *Ludlul* I:1–40

Regarding the overall structure of the hymn, different authors have highlighted the presence of three quatrains, the first with the structure a, b, a′, b (*Ludlul* I:1–4), the second with the structure a, b, a′, b′ (*Ludlul* I:9–12), and the third with the structure a, b, a′, c (*Ludlul* I:29–32).[263] Oshima explains this use as a way to direct attention to Marduk because these are the only strophes in the hymnic introduction where the god's name is

[260] Albertz 1988: 31.
[261] Piccin and Worthington (2015: 118) state that the quatrain of *Ludlul* I:33–36 summarizes the praise developed in the previous quatrains because it extols Marduk's duality expressed in *Ludlul* I:5–28 and his inscrutability shown in *Ludlul* I:29–32.
[262] See also Lenzi's (2011: 484–485) overview of Albertz's and Moran's divisions.
[263] Oshima 2022: 97; Albertz 1988: 31–32. Lenzi (2011: 483–484) only mentions *Ludlul* I:9–12 and 29–32. Abusch and Milstein (2021: 128) also include *Ludlul* I:5–8 and 17–20, but do not provide a clear reason for this.

used, always in the third line.[264] Nevertheless, I understand the hymn to be fully composed of quatrains as the other strophes, although they do not follow such an explicit pattern, they still display an internal cohesion between the different lines.[265] *Ludlul* I:5–8 refers to the phenomena of wind, storms, and deluges with the use of *ūmi meḫê*, "storm of tempests" (*Ludlul* I:5), *mānit šēreti*, "breeze of morning hours" (*Ludlul* I:6), and *abūbu*, "deluge" (*Ludlul* I:7). *Ludlul* I:14–16 alludes to Marduk's sight and its wrathful and merciful impacts, and *Ludlul* I:13, despite not referring to sight, stands in antithesis to *Ludlul* I:14, marking the beginning of the four-line strophe.[266] The quatrain of *Ludlul* I:17–20 includes metaphors of motherhood in both lines alluding to Marduk's mercy (*Ludlul* I:18, 20).[267] *Ludlul* I:25–28 refers to external entities and Marduk's control over them, including the *utukku*-demon (*Ludlul* I:25), Adad (*Ludlul* I:26), Erra (*Ludlul* I:27), and the personal gods (*Ludlul* I:28). The quatrain of *Ludlul* I:33–36 refers to Marduk's *qātu*, "hand" (*Ludlul* I:33, 36), and his *miḫiṣtu*, "blow" (*Ludlul* I:35).[268] The only quatrain with less clear internal cohesion is *Ludlul* I:21–24. However, the quatrain pattern throughout the hymn and its general balance suggest that these lines should also be regarded as a quatrain.[269] Moreover, in these lines, Marduk is portrayed as a healer (*Ludlul* I:21–22) and a judge (*Ludlul* I:23–24), images derived from two human roles which create cohesion within the quatrain.

As argued by Piccin and Worthington, the formal complexity of the hymn reflects the complexity of Marduk's character.[270] Moreover, since these quatrains are composed

[264] Oshima 2022: 97.
[265] Hätinen (2022b) and Oshima (2014: 78–81) also divide this hymn into ten quatrains in their editions. Lenzi (2023: 64–71) follows this structure, but also applies it to the entirety of Tablet I.
[266] The terms for the god's sight parallel each other in *Ludlul* I:14–16, as each occupies the first foot in each line.
[267] Lenzi (2023: 99) had already noted that both lines establish a link between mercy and femininity.
[268] Piccin and Worthington (2015: 118) also link these lines because of the use of the terms *libbu*, "heart" (*Ludlul* I:33, 35), and *kabattu*, "mood" (*Ludlul* I:34, 36), in the quatrain.
[269] Piccin and Worthington (2015: 119–120) also understand these lines as a quatrain, but link *Ludlul* I:23–24 to *Ludlul* I:25–26 of the following quatrain, thus forming a quatrain within two quatrains.
[270] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 118.

of two couplets each, the unit has a recurrent and balanced strophic pattern, which is further emphasized by the series of antitheses opposing Marduk's wrath and mercy. This recurrent pattern of quatrains with antithetical parallelism emphasizes Marduk's all-encompassing power, contributing to his praise.[271] The final quatrain draws the audience's attention to Marduk's mercy, because only one line refers to his wrath (*Ludlul* I:37), while three refer to his mercy (*Ludlul* I:38–40). This strophic pattern is in accordance with the purpose of showing everyone that Marduk is ultimately merciful.

One possible interpretation for the use of forty lines in the hymn is the fact that Ea's name could be written using the cuneiform sign for this number,[272] thus establishing a link between Marduk, Ea, and wisdom. Moreover, the first line of *Ludlul* has a direct reference to *nēmequ*, "wisdom," which is a term included in three epithets of Ea, the god of wisdom.[273] The title *apkallu*, "sage," used for Marduk in *Ludlul* I:29, 31, is also commonly used for Ea.[274] The symbolic use of numbers in Marduk compositions is possibly attested in *Enūma eliš*, where the god's fifty names can allude to Enlil's number and the acquiring of his powers by Marduk.[275] In *Sargon's Letter to Aššur*, the king claims to have captured 430 Urartian settlements (line 422), which corresponds to the total number of lines in the composition.[276] Nevertheless, *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn does not explicitly focus on wisdom nor does it have any other references to Ea. Furthermore, there could be other reasons for the use of the number forty as it, for example, represents one third of the tablet.

[271] On the emphatic effect of repetitive structures in Akkadian poetry, see Steinberger 2024: 243–244.
[272] See *An = Anum* II:161, as edited by Lambert and others (2023: 116).
[273] On Ea's role as god of wisdom, see Espak 2006: 41–42; Galter 1983: 95–103. On Ea's epithets, see Galter 1983: 34–51. However, the title *bēl nēmeqi*, "lord of wisdom," is also widely attested for Marduk, as in, for example, the *Syncretistic Hymn to Gula*:16′, 63′, as edited by Bennett (2021: 200–201, 204–205).
[274] On the use of *apkallu* for Marduk and Ea, see CAD/A: 171–172.
[275] See Helle 2023: 104; Fadhil and Jiménez 2022: 253; Seri 2006: 508.
[276] This feature was highlighted by Hurowitz (2008: 107–108). For an edition of this composition, see Frame 2021: 271–307.

2.2.2.2. Micro-Level Analysis

2.2.2.2.1. *Ludlul* I:1–4

As stated by Moran, "the opening quatrain is the essence of the entire poem,"[277] working as an introduction to both the hymn and *Ludlul*. This quatrain mentions Marduk directly (*Ludlul* I:3), and, as suggested by Oshima, the verbatim repetition of the couplets in these lines draws the attention of the reader and/or listener to Marduk.[278] This syntactic figure of repetition by first using the verbal form *ludlul*, "may I praise," and then the god's name is an example of the so-called hymnic parallelism, a quatrain with the structure a–b–a′–b.[279] The indication of the wish to praise and the use of hymnic parallelism are traditional elements of the beginning of Sumerian hymns, the *invocatio*, as designated by Metcalf,[280] and are also used in the Old Babylonian Akkadian hymns, probably borrowing from the Sumerian tradition.[281] This sets *Ludlul* I:1–40 in this older Mesopotamian hymnic tradition.

The introductory character of the quatrain is also reflected in the word choice and the syntactic order in *Ludlul* I:1, 3:

1 *ludlul* | *bēl* (|) *nēmeqi* || *ila* | *muštāla*
3 *marūtuk* | *bēl* (|) *nēmeqi* || *ila* | *muštāla*

May I praise the lord of wisdom, thoughtful god
Marduk, the lord of wisdom, thoughtful god

(*Ludlul* I:1, 3)

[277] Moran 1983: 258. Lenzi (2023: 95–96) reaffirms this idea.
[278] Oshima 2022: 97.
[279] On hymnic parallelism, see Wisnom 2023: 121; Hecker 1974: 146–151. This syntactic figure can also be designated "lyrical repetition," as employed by Rozzi (2024b: 24), or "ornamentale Wiederholung," as employed by Pohl (2022: 88) and Wilcke (1975: 214). Rozzi (2024b: 303–304) had already noted the use of hymnic parallelism in this quatrain in her analysis of the rhetorical figures in *Ludlul*. Ballesteros (2023: 26–27) names this type of parallelism "traditional quatrain," also found in Akkadian epics and not just hymns.
[280] Metcalf 2015: 22–28. On the uses of hymnic parallelism in Sumerian literature, see also Feliu 2022: 209–213; Veldhuis 2004: 51–52; Wilcke 1975: 214–217.
[281] Metcalf 2015: 59–60; Falkenstein and von Soden 1953: 41–42.

The poet creates parallelism between the two cola by placing *bēl nēmeqi*, "lord of wisdom," in the second foot, and *muštāla*, "thoughtful," in the fourth foot, as both feet describe Marduk and together summarize the contents of the hymn and the message of *Ludlul*. The first epithet refers to Marduk's superior wisdom and his power to deliver divine justice.[282] This thus alludes to the god's power and inscrutability, which is praised in *Ludlul* I:29–32 and 35–36. The term *muštāla*, "thoughtful," can be interpreted as referring to the other aspect extolled in the introductory hymn: Marduk's duality and his ultimate mercy. Piccin and Worthington convincingly argue that *muštāla* can be linked to the concept of mercy, "setting the tone for what follows."[283] The two feet thus serve as epithets and the poetic caesura separates the two aspects that are then praised in the hymn: Marduk's superior wisdom and the god's ultimate mercy.[284] The pauses created by metre are understood by Plett as a prosodic figure and the caesura in Akkadian poetry might have included a pause.[285] Therefore, the caesural pause highlights the two epithets of Marduk and his praise. In *Ludlul* I:3, the poet enhanced the syntactic parallelism through the use of Marduk's name in the first foot and the noun *ila*, "god," in the third foot, creating parallelism between the two cola.

Ludlul I:2 and 4 further explore the power and balance of Marduk's character:

2, 4 *eziz* | *mūši* || *muppašir* | *urri*
Furious at night, forgiving at dawn

(*Ludlul* I:2, 4)

The caesura separates the wrath and mercy of the god, balancing the two elements and placing the mercy in the second half. As argued by Piccin and Worthington, the placement

[282] See Johnston 2019: 67; Oshima 2014: 169. On wisdom vocabulary, see Piccin 2021b: 147–179.
[283] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 116.
[284] Similar epithets for Marduk are found in *Advice to a Prince*:23: *marūtuk* | *apkal* (|) *ilī* || *rubû* | *muštālu*, "Marduk, the sage of the gods, the thoughtful prince." Here again the caesura divides the two aspects of Marduk: his superior wisdom and his mercy. For an edition of this composition, see Mitto 2022.
[285] For accent, pause, and pitch as prosodic figures, see Plett 2010: 129–144. For the possibility of the caesura corresponding to a pause in speech in Akkadian poetry, see West 1997: 184.

of Marduk's merciful character in the second colon of the lines or in the second line of the couplets points to the idea that mercy is Marduk's ultimate attitude towards a sufferer.[286] Other poetic devices contribute to the semantic antithesis in these lines, highlighting the contrast and Marduk's ultimate compassion.[287] Both cola have grammatical parallelism through the use of construct states (*eziz mūši* and *muppašir urri*), and the line as a whole has merism through the use of the word pair *mūši*, "night," and *urri*, "dawn."[288] Merism indicates totality, and thus, in these lines, dramatically and succinctly it expresses Marduk's totalizing wrath and mercy, contributing to his praise.[289] The poet enhances the balance and antithesis between the cola by the alliteration of the syllable /mu/ at the start of *mūši*, "night," and *muppašir*, "forgiving," the second and third foot respectively. These lines thus continue the thought initiated in *Ludlul* I 1 with the use of the term *muštāla*, which also starts with the syllable /mu/, and its association to mercy. These different poetic devices emphasize Marduk's totalizing character and his ultimate mercy in accordance with the purposes of the introductory hymn.

The prosodic parallelism, as all terms except *muštāla* and *marūtuk*, are stressed in the first syllable, contributes to the quatrain's balance and performativity. The exceptions to the stress pattern of this quatrain in *muštāla* and *marūtuk* highlights them, emphasizing Marduk's name and his ultimate mercy.[290] Therefore, this break in the stress pattern, by

[286] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 115. The movement from anger to mercy is a common characteristic of Sumero-Akkadian religious poetry and myth. The conciliation coming after the punishment and lament in the Old Babylonian Sumerian myths on Inana and Dumuzi and Inana and mortal kings, as analysed and described by Metcalf (2025b: 85–96, 107–115), is an example of this long religious tradition.
[287] On antitheses, see Piccin 2021a: 132.
[288] Moran (1983: 257–258) emphasizes how the change between night and day in *Ludlul* I:2, 4 reflects the changes that occur throughout the composition. The use of *mūšu* and *urru* as a merism is already attested in the Old Babylonian period (Wasserman 2003: 66–67). This merism in reference to anger and mercy is also used in the *Great Hymn to Marduk* or the *Prayer Marduk 2*:81/83: *urra* | *napšurka* || *šēzuz* | *mūši*, "The day is your forgiveness, furious at night." For an edition of this prayer, see Oshima 2011: 216–270.
[289] On merism's totalizing effects, see Rozzi 2024b: 275; Wasserman 2021: 66; Watson 1984: 321. For another example of a merism in syntactic parallelism, see *Maqlû* III:117–118, as analysed by Rinderer (2024: 305).
[290] Piccin and Worthington (2015: 115) convincingly argue that the hymn's goal is to extol Marduk's propensity for mercy even if sometimes he is angry.

highlighting the god's mercy, aligns with the purposes of teaching the wider community about Marduk's ultimate compassion.

2.2.2.2.2. *Ludlul* I:5–36

Ludlul I:2 and 4 are the first praise of Marduk's antithetical attitude, which the poet further explores in the hymn's second stanza. The quatrain in *Ludlul* I:5–8 expresses this antithesis through parallelism, similes, and metaphors:

5 *ša kīma ūmi* | *meḫê* || *namû* | *uggassu*
6 *u kīma mānit* | *šēreti* || *zâqšu* | *ṭâbu*
7 *uzzuššu* | *lā maḫār* || *abūbu* | *rūbšu*
8 *mussaḫḫir* | *karassu* || *kabattašu* | *tayyārat*

The one whose rage, like a storm of tempests, is a desert,
But whose blowing, like a breeze of morning hours, is sweet.
In his anger unopposed, his fury a deluge,
His feelings are merciful, his mood is relenting.

(*Ludlul* I:5–8)

The syntax in the first couplet is parallel: the first colon of the lines contains a particle (*ša* and *u*) followed by the preposition *kīma* and two terms in a genitive relationship (*ūmi meḫê* and *mānit šēreti*);[291] the second colon is composed of a noun with a third-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*uggassu* and *zâqšu*) and a G-stem infinitive (*namû* and *ṭâbu*). The parallelism in the first colon is further emphasized through the morphologic, syntactic, and phonologic parallelism of *meḫê*, "tempests," and *šēreti*, "morning," in lines 5 and 6, as they both are in the genitive case, occupy the second foot,

[291] The terms *ūmi meḫê* in *Ludlul* I:5 can also be understood as two terms in coordination without a coordinator, i.e., in asyndeton. However, the parallelism with the first colon of *Ludlul* I:6 which has a clear genitive relationship suggests that *ūmi meḫê* are also in a genitive relationship. These two terms are also attested together in a genitive relationship in line 27 of the diĝiršadaba [*anāku*] *ilī mīnâ ēpuš*, "What have [I] done, my god?" edited by Jaques (2015: 74–78, 89–90, 100–101).

and use the /e/ sound.[292] However, in the second colon, the poet breaks the patterned parallelism through the use of a chiastic construction:

5 *ša kīma ūmi* | *meḫê* || *namû* | *uggassu*
6 *u kīma mānit* | *šēreti* || *zâqšu* | *tâbu*

(*Ludlul* I:5–6)

The poet uses again a similar chiastic structure in the second colon of *Ludlul* I:7–8:

7 *uzzuššu* | *lā maḫār* || *abūbu* | *rūbšu*
8 *mussaḫḫir* | *karassu* || *kabattašu* | *tayyārat*

(*Ludlul* I:7–8)

The chiasmus in the second cola of this quatrain is also parallel, as in lines 5 and 7, the terms with the possessive suffix are in the fourth foot (*uggassu* and *rūbšu*), while in lines 6 and 8, they are in the third foot (*zâqšu* and *kabattašu*). These four terms also have homeoptoton, because of the possessive suffix *-šu*. These syntactic and phonologic interplays establish a link between the lines that refer to the same aspects of Marduk, his wrath in lines 5 and 7, and his mercy in lines 6 and 8. This emphasizes the antithesis that traverses the introductory hymn, showing the importance the poet is placing on Marduk's character. This antithesis is also deepened in *Ludlul* I:7– 8 as the poet uses another chiastic construction with the terms including possessive suffixes:

7 *uzzuššu* | *lā maḫār* || *abūbu* | *rūbšu*
8 *mussaḫḫir* | *karassu* || *kabattašu* | *tayyārat*

(*Ludlul* I:7–8)

The chiasmi and phonologic figures contribute to the quatrain's inner parallelism.[293] Moreover, chiasmus and variation in word order can emphasize antitheses,[294] and, in

[292] Nevertheless, the poet still highlights their difference because the terms have opposing stresses, as *meḫê* is stressed in the last syllable and *šēreti* in the first.
[293] For the use of chiasmus and phonologic figures as a form of parallelism and interconnectedness, see the *Great Šamaš Hymn*:5 and 98, as analysed by De Zorzi (2022: 388–389).
[294] On this role of chiasmus, see Rozzi 2024b: 265; Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148. Another example of the use of chiasmus to emphasize an antithesis is found in lines 81/83 of the *Great Hymn to Marduk* or the

Ludlul I:5–8, chiasmus highlights the contrast between Marduk's wrath and mercy, the hymn's key theme, ultimately contributing to the god's praise.

This quatrain is marked by an ending rhyme with the vowel /u/ in lines 5–7.[295] However, the last term in this quatrain, *tayyārat*, "is relenting," breaks the existing rhyme pattern, acting as a "counterpatterning."[296] This highlights the last line which focuses on Marduk's mercy, directing the human and divine audiences to the god's compassion, a key element of the unit's purposes. I should note that the ending rhyme can always be coincidental, but the striking difference with *tayyārat* suggests a purposeful use.

The couplet of *Ludlul* I:5–6 also employs semantic figures, namely similes through the use of the preposition *kīma*, and metaphors; line 7 also includes a metaphor.[297] Following Streck's terminology, the similes in *Ludlul* I 5 and 6 and the metaphor in *Ludlul* I:7 use imagery from the natural world, particularly from atmospheric phenomena.[298] Marduk's wrath is compared to a storm in *Ludlul* I:5 and equated with a deluge in *Ludlul* I:7, opposing the god's compassion which is compared to a morning breeze in *Ludlul* I:6.[299] These semantic figures create a merism because of the atmospheric phenomena's opposing nature and contribute to the vividness and scale of Marduk's emotions, emphasizing his totalizing character, as both aggressive and calm atmospheric phenomena are used. These devices parallel the metaphors and merism in *Ludlul* I:2 and

Prayer Marduk 2, previously cited: *urra* | *napšurka* || *šēzuz* | *mūši*, "The day is your forgiveness, furious at night."

[295] The use of rhyme for different purposes is already attested in Old Babylonian poetry, as shown in Wasserman 2003: 157–173.

[296] This term as applied to Akkadian poetry was defined by Buccellati (1990: 109).

[297] The metaphor in *Ludlul* I:7 has already been pointed out by Rozzi (2024b: 306).

[298] For this terminology, see Streck 1999: 181–183. See also Wasserman 2003: 136.

[299] Regarding the form of the metaphor in *Ludlul* I:7, it is a *Nominalsatzmetapher*, as designated by Streck (1999: 38–39), since the second colon of line 7 is a verbless clause. The deluge as a metaphor in Mesopotamian sources has a long literary tradition. On this topic, see Reynolds 2019: 256–257, 382–383; Streck 1999: 181–182; Westenholz 1996: 194–200. The divine "sweet wind" as a bearer of positive elements is also already attested in the Old Babylonian period (Jiménez 2013: 386–387), and *mānitu*, "breeze," is also used with these positive connotations in other hymns (Jiménez 2013: 389–394).

4 where Marduk's wrath is equated with the night and his mercy with the day.[300] Line 5, beside the simile, also includes a metaphor as Marduk's wrath is equated with *namû*, "a desert."[301] This metaphor further emphasizes the antithesis because of the barrenness and destruction associated with the desert, which contrasts with Marduk's sweet blowing in *Ludlul* I:6.

The quatrain in *Ludlul* I:9–12 further explores Marduk's power (*Ludlul* I:9, 11) and mercy (*Ludlul* I:10, 12):

9 *ša nakbat* | *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*
10 *rittuššu* | *rabbat* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*
11 *marūtuk* | *ša nakbat* (|) *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*
12 *rabbat* | *rittašu* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

The weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.
Marduk, the weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.

(*Ludlul* I:9–12)

A striking feature of this quatrain is the consonance of the /š/ sound, which couples with the use of the *-šu* possessive suffix in the previous quatrain. Moreover, lines 9 and 11 have homeoteleuton through the words *qātīšu*, "his hand," and *inaššû*, "bear." Line 12 also contains this phonologic figure in the words *rittašu*, "his grasp," and *ukaššu*, "he holds up." This quatrain and the previous one have assonance with the vowels /a/ and /u/. In phono-symbolism, these sounds tend to express strength and deepness in contrast to the lighter /i/ and /e/.[302] Even though phono-symbolism has to be taken contextually, the

[300] Regarding the form of the metaphors in *Ludlul* I:2 and 4, they are a *Genitivverbindung*, following Streck's terminology (1999: 40), as each colon has a genitive chain.
[301] This metaphor is a *Nominalsatzmetapher*. On *namû*, "desert," as a metaphor for destruction, see Streck 1999: 183. The Akkadian term *namû* is equated with the Sumerian e_2-ri-a (see CAD N/1: 249), and this term is used in line 348 of the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* referring to the destruction of the city. Therefore, this image has a long tradition in Mesopotamian literature. For an edition of this lamentation, see Michalowski 1989. On the use of this motif in Sumerian literature, see also Metcalf 2025a: 44.
[302] See Plett 2010: 127–128; Maloney 2009: 48. On phono-symbolism, see Piccin 2021a: 94.

assonance of /a/ and /u/ is in accordance with the strength of Marduk shown in these quatrains. Therefore, this phonologic figure possibly emphasizes the god's power.

The poet emphasizes the antithesis through the use of a chiastic structure in the first cola of lines 9 and 10:

9 *ša nakbat* | *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*
10 *rittuššu* | *rabbat* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

(*Ludlul* I:9–10)

Moreover, the poet emphasizes this quatrain through the direct reference to Marduk, whose name might be an anacrusis before the first foot in *Ludlul* I:11.[303] The importance of this strophe might be linked to the use of the term *mīta*, "the dying one," which can refer to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and his experience. In fact, the idea that the protagonist was close to death is mentioned in *Ludlul* I:38, II:81, III:82, V:4, and V:8. Oshima suggests that the funeral-resembling ritual described in *Ludlul* II:114–116 and performed for Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan has the aim of avoiding death.[304] Therefore, the idea that the protagonist was close to death and that Marduk saved him is key in the composition as a whole.[305] The move from the cosmological level with the reference to *šamāʾū*, "heaven," in line 9 to the human level with *mīta* in line 10 creates an increased focus on the personal experience of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan.

[303] This use of Marduk's name in anacrusis can also be seen in the quatrains of the hymnic introduction of the *Prayer Marduk 1*, edited by Oshima (2011: 137–190), as the poet adds Marduk's name in "hymnic parallelism" to lines that already have four poetic feet (*Prayer Marduk 1*:5 and 7, 9 and 11, 13 and 15, 17 and 19, 25 and 27, 29 and 31, 37 and 39). In other quatrains, the poet maintains the four feet by replacing the title *bēlu*, "lord," with Marduk's name (*Prayer Marduk 1*:1 and 4, 21 and 23). This poetic feature of anacrusis is not limited to Marduk compositions, as lines 53 and 55 of the *Great Prayer to Nabû*, edited by Rozzi (2024b: 58–125), also contain anacrusis; line 53 has four poetic feet and line 55 adds the divine name. The possibility of anacrusis for vocatives in Akkadian poetry had already been explored by Lambert (2013: 27–28) and Zimmern (1895: 14–15).

[304] Oshima 2023: 318.

[305] For Marduk's role in Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's fate reversal, see *Ludlul* V:1–36. This idea of Marduk saving the dying man is already attested in the Ugarit Marduk composition preserved in RS 25.460, as edited by Oshima (2011: 205–215): *mīta* | *uballiṭa* | *yâši*, "He revived the dying one, me" (RS 25.460, ll. 14′/16′). These ideas are, however, not limited to Marduk, as a similar phrase is found, for example, in the *Bullussa-rabi's Hymn to Gula*: *ina nīš* | *īnīya* || *mītu* | *iballuṭ*, "At the lifting of my eyes, the dying one revives" (*Bullussa-rabi's Hymn to Gula*:86). For an edition of this hymn, see Földi 2021.

The chiasmus and morphologic change in *Ludlul* I:10 and 12 between *rittuššu*/*rittašu*, "his grasp," and *rabbat*, "is gentle," might also be a poetic strategy to emphasize Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's personal experience in this quatrain.[306] In *Ludlul* I:12, the two terms change their position, thus creating an anastrophe, the fronting of the verbal form *rabbat*. This change in the syntax allows for an alignment between Marduk in line 11 and *rabbat* in line 12, creating a link between the two and emphasizing the god's merciful character, one of the key rhetorical goals of the hymn and the composition.

The quatrain in *Ludlul* I:13–16 continues the antithetical description of Marduk's actions:

13 (*ša*) *ina libbātīšu* | *uptattâ* | *qabrātu*
14 *īnuššu* | *ina karašê* || *ušatbi* | *maqta*
15 *ikkelemmūma* | *inessû* || *lamassu* | *u šēdu*
16 *ippallasma* | *ana ša iskipūšu* || *ilšu* | *isaḫḫuršu*

Because of whose rage tombs are opened,
  At his glance, he raises the fallen from disaster.
He glares and the protective spirits depart,
  He gazes and his god returns to the one he had rejected.

(*Ludlul* I:13–16)

Line 13 is the first three-foot line in the composition, thus drawing attention to its contents.[307] This line continues the theme of the previous quatrain: Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's closeness to death, a key theme in *Ludlul*. The terms *qabrātu*, "tombs," and *maqta*, "fallen," parallel each other as they are the last terms in each line. The rescued *maqta*, like the rescued *mīta* in lines 10 and 12, can refer to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, who almost experienced the "tomb" as previously mentioned.[308] As analysed by Lenzi, the term *maqtu* can refer to a destitute person,[309] someone who has lost their status and protections,

[306] The chiasmus and its artistry have already been noted by Rozzi (2024b: 302).
[307] Three-foot lines can slower the rhythm (George 2003: 163), thus creating an emphatic effect.
[308] For this link between *mītu* and *maqtu* in the introductory hymn of *Ludlul*, see Groneberg 1996: 73.
[309] Lenzi 2023: 97.

and this corresponds to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's situation after Marduk's abandonment.[310] Therefore, these lines seem to allude to the protagonist's own experience and the use of the three-foot line at the start might be emphatic for this same reason.

The poet placed terms related to Marduk's sight in the first foot of lines 14–16, emphasizing the god's role in the actions and also his power, since Marduk's look is enough to punish and forgive.[311] This contributes to the praise of the god because it reflects his might, which also extends to his control over other protective entities, namely the *lamassu*- and *šēdu*-spirits (*Ludlul* I:15), and the personal god (*Ludlul* I:16).[312] I, like George and Al-Rawi,[313] and Oshima,[314] understand *ilšu*, "his god," in *Ludlul* I:16 as the subject of the verb *isaḫḫuršu*, "he returns to him," as this also expresses Marduk's power because the personal god only returns as a consequence of Marduk's benevolent gaze.

This quatrain also has a series of phonologic figures. It is possible to identify homeoteleuton between *inessû*, "they depart," and *lamassu* (*Ludlul* I:15) and homeoptoton between *iskipūšu*, "he rejected him," *ilšu*, "his god," and *isaḫḫuršu*, "he returns to him," (*Ludlul* I:16). The first and second feet of line 14 exhibit alliteration and all the lines rhyme in /u/. The poetic devices contribute to the quatrain's rhythm and parallelism. The lines also have similar stress patterns, creating prosodic parallelism:

13 (*ša*) *ina libbāt**ī**šu* | *uptat**tâ*** | *qab**rā**tu*
14 ***ī**nu**š**šu* | *ina kara**šê*** || *u**šat**bi* | ***maq**tu*
15 *ikkelem**mū**ma* | *ines**sû*** || *la**mas**su* | *u **šē**du*
16 *ippal**las**ma* | *ana ša iski**pū**šu* || ***il**šu* | *isaḫ**ḫur**šu*

[310] See, for example, how the protagonist is socially ostracized in *Ludlul* I:79–104.
[311] These effects of divine gaze are not limited to Marduk in *Ludlul*, and similar ideas are already attested in the Old Babylonian period, as in *Ammiditāna's Hymn to Ištar*:15: *naplasušša* | *bani* | *buʾāru*, "At her gaze, happiness forms." In this example, the poet also fronts the divine gaze. For an edition of this hymn, see Pohl 2022: 176–184. The importance of the benevolent divine gaze, particularly with the N-stem of the verb *palāsu*, is also attested, for example, in the šuila Ištar 2 (Zernecke 2012: 130), which, as previously mentioned (§1.4.1.2), could have been composed in the second millennium BC. For an edition of this šuila, see Zgoll 2003b: 41–67. Therefore, these *Ludlul* lines are part of a longer Mesopotamian literary tradition that highlights divine gaze.
[312] It should be noted that Marduk does not replace the personal gods despite his power over them, as argued for by Hätinen (2023: 162–163).
[313] George and Al-Rawi 1998: 197.
[314] Oshima 2014: 177.

(*Ludlul* I:13–16)

All the feet are trochaic with the exception of the second feet of lines 13–15. Therefore, this quatrain has a specific rhythm that, alongside the other phonologic figures, contributes to its parallelism and complexity.

Lines 17–20 mark the end of the first half of the hymn:

17 *akṣat* | *ana surri* || *ennettašu* | *kabittu*
18 *ikkarriṭma* | *zamarma* || *itâr* | *ālittuš*
19 *iddudma* | *rīmāniš* | *uganna*
20 (*u*) *kī araḫ* | *būri* || *ittanasḫara* | *arkīšu*

His heavy punishment is immediately harsh,
He has mercy quickly and turns motherly.
He becomes pointed and thrusts like a wild bull,
(But) like a cow with a calf, he keeps turning back behind him.

(*Ludlul* I:17–20)

These lines employ phonologic, syntactic, and semantic figures to continue the set of antitheses describing Marduk's character. The poet creates parallelism between lines 17 and 18 through the consonance of the /t/ sound, also playing with the /ṭ/ sound in the couplet, and the placement of adverbs of time in the second foot of each line. In *Ludlul* I:18, the terms *ikkarriṭma*, "he has mercy," and *zamarma*, "quickly," have homeoptoton through the enclitic *-ma*, which in *zamarma* can be seen as emphatic, showing how quickly Marduk can forgive.[315] The fronting of *ikkarriṭma*, "he has mercy," brings emphasis to Marduk's merciful character, a strategy that is also present in previous quatrains.

Line 19 again slows the pace as it is a three-foot line and employs a simile using imagery from a wild animal, *rīmu*, "wild bull," to refer to Marduk's wrath. Line 20 parallels line 19 by employing a simile, but creates an antithesis because the simile in this

[315] On the emphatic character of the enclitic *-ma*, see Piccin 2021a: 80.

line uses imagery from a domestic animal, *arḫu*, "cow."[316] Therefore, the poet emphasizes the antithesis of Marduk's wrath and mercy by creating a contrast within the semantic field of fauna and by using gender-matched parallelism: the male wild animal of line 19 is strong and aggressive; the female domestic animal of line 20 is calm and caring.[317] These animals can also be understood as a merism that further emphasizes the antithesis.

The following quatrain marks the beginning of the second half of the hymn:

21 *zaqtā* | *niṭâtūšu* || *usaḫḫalā* | *zumra*
22 *pašḫū* | *ṣindūšu* || *uballaṭū* | *namtara*
23 *iqabbīma* | *gillata*[318] | *ušrašši*
24 *ina ūm* (|) *išartīšu* | *uptaṭṭarū* || *eʾiltu* | *u annu*

His beatings are barbed, they pierce the body,
  His bandages are soothing, they restore the doomed.
He speaks and imposes punishment,
  On the day of his justice, debt and transgression are absolved.

(*Ludlul* I:21–24)

The first two lines have grammatical parallelism: in the first colon, both start with a plural stative verbal form (*zaqtā* and *pašḫū*), followed by the subject with a third-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*niṭâtūšu* and *ṣindūšu*), and, in the second colon, they have a D-stem durative verbal form (*usaḫḫalā* and *uballaṭū*), followed by an accusative object (*zumra* and *namtara*).[319] Moreover, both lines have similar stress patterns:

21 ***zaq**tā* | *niṭâ**tū**šu* || *u**saḫ**ḫ**alā* | ***zum**ra*
22 ***pašḫ**ū* | *ṣin**dū**šu* || *u**bal**laṭū* | ***nam**tara*

(*Ludlul* I:21–22)

[316] This simile is also highlighted by Rozzi (2024b: 305).
[317] On the role of gender-matched parallelism as emphasizing antitheses, see Watson 1984: 125–126. Metaphors and similes with *rīmu*, "wild bull," in Akkadian epics are an expression of strength (Streck 1999: 174), and in the Old Babylonian period already this imagery is associated with anger (Wasserman 2003: 155–156). On the maternal aspects of *arḫu*, "cow," see its use in the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* I:36 as an epithet of Ninsun. See also the image of a turning cow and its calf in the ivories found in Arslan-Tash (Thureau-Dangin and others 1931: pl. XXXVII–XLIII).
[318] My understanding of *gillatu* in this line is as punishment, as Howe (2021: 68) convincingly argues for this meaning using the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* XI:185–186 as an example.
[319] Piccin and Worthington (2015: 118) had already highlighted this couplet's parallelism.

Both lines end in a rhyming /ra/ sound. The only breaks in this extremely well-balanced couplet are the difference in stress between *zumra* and *namtara*, despite both being stressed in the first syllable, and the use of feminine plural verbal forms in line 21 and masculine plural verbal forms in line 22, a form of gender-matched parallelism. These breaks highlight the antithesis between Marduk's anger and mercy, but the harmony can also be an expression of how both emotions reflect the god's power. Therefore, these poetic devices contribute to the praise of Marduk's mercy and/or power.

Line 23 is another three-foot line and its first and last feet are finite verbal forms. This parallels line 19 which is also a three-foot line and also has finite verbal forms in the first and last feet. Moreover, line 19 is the third line in the last quatrain of the first half of the hymn, and line 23 is the third line in the first quatrain of the second half of the unit. Therefore, it seems that the poet employed similar metrical divisions to define this midpoint of the hymn. The fronting of the verb in *Ludlul* I:23 emphasizes Marduk's power because just his speech, like his glare in line 15, is enough to bring about punishment.[320] Line 24, like line 20 in the previous quatrain, is longer than line 23, highlighting the contrast between Marduk's actions. In this quatrain, the consonance of the /ṭ/ sound also plays with the use of the /t/ sound.

The following quatrain continues the praise of Marduk's powers:

25 *šūma*[321] | *utukka* || *raʾība* | *ušarši*
26 *ina têšu* | *ušdapparū* || *šuruppû* | *u ḫurbāšu*
27 *mušmiddi* | [*riḫiṣ*]*ti*[?] (|) *adad* || *miḫiṣti* (|) *erra*
28 *musallim* | *ili* || *u ištari* | *šabbasûti*

It is he who afflicts with the *utukku*-demon (and) shivering,
By his incantation, chills and tremors withdraw.
Who increases [the flooding[?]] of Adad, the blow of Erra,

[320] The importance of divine speech is well-attested in the hymnic tradition, as shown, for example, in line 13 of the Old Babylonian *Hymn to Amurru*: *amurru bēlī etel qabûka lā uttakkaš zikraka šīmat*[*ka* ...], "Amurru, my lord, your speaking is preeminent, your utterance should not be stopped, [your] fate [...]." For an edition of this prayer, see Pohl 2022: 102–111.
[321] Fadhil and Jiménez (2019: 159) understand this term in parallelism with *iqabbīma* in *Ludlul* I:23, thus suggesting that it should be translated as "thus he:" in reference to Marduk speaking.

Who reconciles the enraged god and goddess.

(*Ludlul* I:25–28)

In line 25, the fronting of *šūma*, "it is he" or "thus he," emphasizes Marduk's power over the *utukku*-demon and the sufferer, and in line 26, the fronting of *ina têšu*, "by his incantation," also highlights Marduk's power because it is through his action that "chills and tremors" stop. These devices thus continue to emphasize the power of Marduk's speech. Piccin highlights the grammatical parallelism between lines 23 and 25, and lines 24 and 26, since *iqabbīma* (*Ludlul* I:23) parallels *šūma* (*Ludlul* I:25), *ušrašši* (*Ludlul* I:23) parallels *ušarši* (*Ludlul* I:25), and *eʾiltu u annu* (*Ludlul* I:24) parallels *šuruppû u ḫurbāšu* (*Ludlul* I:26).[322] The use of the verbal forms *ušrašši* and *ušarši* is an example of a verbal polyptoton, highlighting Marduk's action. Line 26 has a further parallel with line 24 as both start with the preposition *ina* followed by a noun (*ūm* and *têšu*). In the quatrain of *Ludlul* I:5–8, the poet set a parallel between the lines referring to wrath and the ones referring to mercy through chiasmus. The poet now sets a parallel across different quatrains but still links the lines referring to wrath (*Ludlul* I:23, 25) and the ones referring to mercy (*Ludlul* I:24, 26).

Lines 27 and 28 begin with participles and have assonance with the /i/ sound. In line 27, [*riḫiṣ*]*ti*, "[flooding]," and *miḫiṣti*, "blow," have consonance and assonance with just one different consonant, adding to the parallelism between the two cola. Each line in this couplet uses a divine pair to show Marduk's power: Adad and Erra in line 27, and the personal god and goddess in line 28. In this quatrain, the poet uses a word pair in each line: *utukku* and *raʾību* in line 25; *šuruppû* and *ḫurbāšu* in line 26;[323] Adad and Erra in

[322] Piccin 2021a: 135.

[323] These two terms are used in the same phrase in other sources, namely in K 2608+ o. 14 (= Lambert 2007: no. 5); K 10056 l. 7′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/K.10056, accessed 21/04/2026); BM 38586 o. 18 (= Geller 2016: 44–58); and CBS 11304 o. 19 (= Geller 2016: 44–58).

line 27;[324] and *ilu* and *ištaru* in line 28.[325] These word pairs create a form of enumeration, as lines 25 and 26 refer to diseases and afflictions, and lines 27 and 28 to deities. Despite these lines not being a list as in traditional enumeration, these references still create a sense of accumulation and totality, highlighting Marduk's absolute power.[326]

In the following quatrain, there is a change of theme:

29 *bēlu* | *ap*[*kallu*] || *mimma libbi* (|) *ilī* | *ibarri*
30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*
31 *marūtuk* | *apkallu* || *mimma libbi* (|) *ilī* | *ibarri*
32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad* | *ṭēnšu*

[Sage] lord, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
No one among [the gods] knows his way.
Sage Marduk, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
No god can understand his thought.

(*Ludlul* I:29–32)

This quatrain moves to the topic of Marduk's superior knowledge, alluding back to the first epithet of Marduk in this hymn: *bēl nēmeqi*, "lord of wisdom" (*Ludlul* I:1, 3). Lines 25–28 already introduce this theme as they highlight Marduk's power over other gods. In lines 29 and 31, the poet expands this by referring to Marduk's knowledge over "everything," *mimma*, that the gods think. This reference alludes back to Marduk's name Šazu and its traditional etymological explanation, given, for example, in *Enūma eliš*:[327]

35 *šazu* | *mudê* (|) *libbi* (|) *ilī* || *ša ibarrû* | *karša*

Šazu, the one who knows the heart of the gods, who sees the innermost.

(*Enūma eliš* VII:35)[328]

[324] These deities appear together in two celestial omens in K 3921+ r. 14′ and 16′ (= Reiner and Pingree 1981: 56–59) as a divine pair that ravages the people. This emphasizes their wrathful and destructive roles which are also alluded to in *Ludlul* I:27.
[325] For other examples of *ilu* and *ištaru* as a merism, see Wasserman 2003: 86–87.
[326] On this totalizing effect of enumeration, see Rozzi 2024b: 276; Piccin 2021a: 101; Wasserman 2021: 66.
[327] For further literature on this etymological explanation, see Fadhil and Jiménez 2021: 217–218; Oshima 2014: 185.
[328] The incipit of the šuila Marduk 7 uses a similar expression: *bēlu* | *šazu* || *mudê* (|) *li*[*bbi* (|) *ilī*] (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti*, "Oh lord, Šazu, the one who knows the h[eart of the gods] of heaven and earth." For an edition of this šuila, see Oshima 2011: 366–368.

In lines 29 and 31, the poet employs the title *apkallu*, "sage," which also emphasizes Marduk's wisdom over the other deities.[329] The poet also uses hymnic parallelism by first using the term *bēlu*, "lord" (*Ludlul* I:29), and then Marduk's name (*Ludlul* I:31). As previously mentioned (§2.2.2.2.1), the repetition and the use of the god's name are emphatic, and the poet uses these poetic devices in a quatrain that focuses on the second theme of the hymn. Therefore, through these elements, the poet draws the attention of the audience to the importance of this quatrain, contributing to the praise of Marduk and the unit's doxological rhetoric. The assonance of the /i/ sound in the second cola of lines 29 and 31 contributes to the lines' rhythm. Lines 31 and 32 have consonance of the /l/ and /m/ sounds.[330]

Unlike lines 29 and 31, line 32 does not repeat line 30.[331] Despite the lines expressing the synonymous notion that the other gods cannot know or understand Marduk's ideas and decisions, the poet uses chiastic line structures to emphasize the variation between the lines:

30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*
32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad* | *tēnšu*

(*Ludlul* I:30, 32)[332]

Lines 30 and 32 have a chiastic construction between all their poetic feet, and this reinforces the negation.[333] In fact, the chiasmus shows that the gods undoubtedly cannot

[329] Similar epithets are used for Marduk, for example, in the prayer *Eriš šummi*:4 (*apkal ilī*, "sage of the gods"), edited by Fadhil and Jiménez (2022: 229–274), and in the *Prayer Marduk 2*:1 (*apkal igigī*, "sage of the Igigī"), edited by Oshima (2011: 216–270). However, these epithets are not limited to Marduk, as the epithet *apkal ilī* is also employed, for example, in reference to Ea (see Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* XI:183). In fact, *apkallu* is a common epithet for both Marduk and Ea (see CAD A/2: 171–172). On the use of the epithet *apkal ilī* for Marduk in *Enūma eliš* and Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, see Heath-Whyte 2023: 293, note 27.
[330] The consonance of the sound /m/ can remind the listener of Marduk. As a parallel example, see how the consonance of the sound /m/ in the opening of *Enūma eliš* may allude to *mû*, "water," and the watery creation (Michalowski 2024: 307–308).
[331] Rozzi (2024b: 303) highlights the synonymous parallelism between the lines in this quatrain.
[332] Oshima (2014: 185) states that the accusative objects in these lines, *alaktu* (*Ludlul* I:30) and *ṭēmu* (*Ludlul* I:32), are synonyms, which contributes to the parallelism and chiasmus between the lines.
[333] On chiasmus as a way to reinforce negation, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148.

understand Marduk's *alaktu*, "way," and *ṭēmu*, "thought," even if the poet changes the word order. The antithesis between the lines of each couplet also emphasizes the contrast between Marduk who knows everything in the heart of the gods and the gods who do not know Marduk's plans. Therefore, the antitheses and the chiastic constructions link the lines, and contribute to the praise of Marduk through his inscrutability. This inscrutability extends not only to the other gods but also to humanity, for if even the gods cannot understand Marduk, how much less can humankind hope to comprehend him.[334]

This inscrutability of Marduk by the gods is particularly striking as this statement is not common. However, a similar phrase is found in the *ikribu*-prayers to Sîn:

31′ *u ṭēnšu* | *ilu* || *mamman* | *lā īdû*
And whose mind no god can know.

(*ikribu*-prayers to Sîn:31′)[335]

It is thus an important feature of *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, emphasized by the chiasmus, but still a part of a broader Akkadian hymnic tradition, where divine inscrutability is a strategy to praise the deity.

The last quatrain of the hymn's second stanza summarizes the themes addressed in the hymn:[336]

33 *ana kī kabtat* | *qāssu* || *libbašu* | *rēmēnī*
34 *ana kī gaṣṣu* | *kakkašu* || *kabattašu* | *mušniššat*
35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

As his hand is heavy, his heart is merciful,
As his weapon is cruel, his mood is sustaining.
Without his consent (lit. heart), who may calm his blow?
Apart from his intention (lit. mood), who may stay his hand?

(*Ludlul* I:33–36)

[334] The inscrutability of the gods by humanity is directly mentioned in *Ludlul* II:36–38.
[335] For an edition of these prayers, see Hätinen 2021: 483–496.
[336] See Piccin and Worthington 2015: 118.

Lines 33–34 each express Marduk's duality and his ultimate mercy, voiced in *Ludlul* I:5–28, and lines 35–36 express Marduk's absolute power over all other entities and his inscrutability, voiced in *Ludlul* I:29–32.[337] As the hymn draws to a conclusion, the poet uses different poetic devices as a way to praise Marduk. In lines 33–34, the grammatical parallelism is clear, as the first cola include a subordinating conjunction (*ana kī*) followed by an adjectival predicate (*kabtat* and *gaṣṣu*) and the subject (*qāssu* and *kakkašu*), and the second cola include a main clause subject (*libbašu* and *kabattašu*) and an adjectival predicate (*rēmēnī* and *mušniššat*).[338] Moreover, the caesura defines the antithesis as Marduk's wrathful character is expressed in the first colon and his merciful character in the second. The chiastic construction between the cola also contributes to the antithesis, as in the first colon the poet uses the predicate followed by the subject with possessive suffix, and in the second colon the poet uses the opposite syntax:

33 *ana kī kabtat* | *qāssu* || *libbašu* | *rēmēnī*
34 *ana kī gaṣṣu* | *kakkašu* || *kabattašu* | *mušniššat*

(*Ludlul* I:33–34)

These lines also have different phonologic figures, particularly the assonance of the vowels /a/ and /u/. Line 34 has a repetition of the sibilants /s/, /ṣ/, and /š/; and both lines have consonance with the /k/ sound, playing with the velars /g/ and /q/ also used in the couplet. Line 34 has homeoptoton of /šu/ in *kakkašu* and *kabattašu*.[339] The two lines also have prosodic parallelism with the exception of the third feet, as *libbašu* is stressed on the first syllable and *kabattašu* is stressed on the second:

33 *ana kī* ***kab****tat* | ***qās****su* || ***lib****bašu* | *rē****mē****nī*
34 *ana kī* ***gaṣ****ṣu* | ***kak****kašu* || *ka****bat****tašu* | *mušniš****š****at*

[337] Oshima (2014: 186) argues that *Ludlul* I:35–36 shows that the poet understood Marduk as the ultimate authority responsible for people's punishment and relief, leading to the other gods having less power.
[338] This parallelism had already been noted by Moran (1983: 259).
[339] Regarding phonologic figures in *Ludlul* I:33–34, see Moran 1983: 259. The homeoptoton had already been noted by Rozzi (2024b: 300) as homeoteleuton.

(*Ludlul* I:33–34)

Nevertheless, both terms end in two unstressed syllables, maintaining the stress parallelism between the lines. As noted by Moran, the poetic beauty of these lines creates a sense of "solemnity" and the placing of the antithesis within each line links back to *Ludlul* I:2 and 4, which also had this structure.[340] This establishes a ring structure around the second stanza of the hymn. The chiasmus in lines 33 and 34 emphasizes the antithesis, a feature attested in previous quatrains such as *Ludlul* I:5–8. This highlights Marduk's duality and his ultimate compassion, as the poet places the god's mercy in the second cola. The pause in the caesura would also contribute to this antithesis and emphasis on divine compassion.

Lines 35–36 are also poetically striking. The first cola have a noun with a third-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*libbīšu* and *kabtatīšu*) in the first foot and an interrogative pronoun (*mannu* and *ayyu*) in the second foot, thus creating grammatical parallelism between the two lines.[341] These first cola have a similar stress pattern:[342]

35 *ša lā lib**bī**šu* | ***man**nu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtat**ī**šu* | ***ay**yu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

The second cola have a chiastic structure:

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

[340] Moran 1983: 259. The quatrains in the second stanza of the hymn express the antitheses using two lines and not within one line.
[341] Before the noun in the first foot, line 35 has the determinative-relative *ša* and the negative adverb *lā*, and line 36 has the preposition *ela*. Rozzi (2024b: 301–302) has highlighted these lines as containing interrogative parallelism.
[342] *Ludlul* I:35 has three unstressed syllables at the start, while *Ludlul* I:36 has four unstressed syllables.

This chiasmus is further developed through morphologic parallelism as *miḫiṣtašu* and *qāssu* are accusative objects with a third-person masculine singular possessive suffix and *lišapšiḫ* and *lišālil* are Š-stem precative verbal forms. This chiastic structure of the second cola parallels the chiastic structure of the second cola of lines 30 and 32:

30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*
32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad* | *tēnšu*

(*Ludlul* I:30, 32)

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

The accusative objects with the third-person masculine singular possessive suffix occupy the third feet in lines 30 and 35 (*alaktašu* and *miḫiṣtašu*) and the fourth feet in lines 32 and 36 (*ṭēnšu* and *qāssu*), while the verbal forms occupy the fourth feet in lines 30 and 35 (*ul īde* and *lišapšiḫ*) and the third feet in lines 32 and 36 (*ul ilammad* and *lišālil*). Therefore, the poet links lines 35 and 36 to the previous quatrain that addressed a similar theme of the lack of comprehension of Marduk's ways and thoughts and thus lack of influence over him.[343] In lines 30 and 32, the chiasmus was meant to emphasize the negation. In lines 35 and 36, this syntactic figure has a similar purpose as it emphasizes an impossibility.[344] The parallelism between lines 30 and 32 and lines 35 and 36 is further developed through the use of the interrogative pronouns *manāma*/*mannu* (*Ludlul* I:30, 35) and *ayyu* (*Ludlul* I:32, 36).

The use of two Š-stem verbal forms (*lišapšiḫ* and *lišālil*) and a word pair alluding to inner emotions (*libbu* and *kabtatu*) in lines 35 and 36 points to the lack of influence over Marduk and the need for his consent in order for him to relent. Only by winning

[343] The thematic link between lines 35–36 and the previous quatrain had already been noted by Piccin and Worthington (2015: 118).
[344] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.

Marduk's permission can one change his emotional state. Lines 35–36 also repeat the sibilants /s/, /ṣ/, and /š/.

The last quatrain of the second stanza is poetically significant as it draws the hymn to a conclusion and summarizes its main themes. The poet used chiasmus in both couplets to emphasize Marduk's duality, compassion, and power, contributing to the praise of the god.

2.2.2.2.3. *Ludlul* I:37–40

Ludlul I:37–40 marks the ending of the hymn:

37 *lušāpi* | *uggassu* || *ša kīma nūni* | *ākulu* | *rušumta*
38 *īnunamma* | *zamar* || *kī uballiṭu* | *mītūta*
39 *lušalmidma* | *nišī* || *qitruba* | *gamālšin*
40 *ḫissassu* | *damiqtu* || *lemna* | *litbal*

May I, who ate mud like a fish, proclaim his rage,
He quickly granted me favour, just as he revived the dead.
May I teach the people their salvation is close,
May his favourable invocation take away evil.

(*Ludlul* I:37–40)

Line 37, like the first line of the hymn, opens with a first-person singular precative verbal form of communication about Marduk, establishing a link between the first and last quatrains of the unit.[345] The second term *uggassu*, "his rage," is also used in line 5, the first line in the second stanza of the hymn, adding another link between the concluding quatrain and the beginning of the hymn. The reference to Marduk's wrath might sound surprising as the previous stanza had shown that the ultimate purpose of the hymn was to

[345] The ring structure created by the links between the beginning and ending of a composition is traditional in Akkadian poetry. See, for example, the reference to the walls of Uruk in Tablets I and XI of the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* (see Helle 2023: 97; Zgoll 2010: 443–470). De Zorzi (2024: 204–207) convincingly argues that the *Babylonian Theodicy* is also a ring composition. An example of a smaller ring composition is the first prayer of the *Maqlû* series (see Piccin 2021a: 224–228). For other examples of ring compositions, see Smith 1981: 25–31.

praise Marduk's mercy and thereby achieve it. Nevertheless, the reference to the god's anger reflects Marduk's power and, moreover, line 38 acts as the antithetical thought, following the couplet pattern from the previous stanza. Line 38 in fact shows that Marduk ultimately had compassion for Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and the reference to the *mītūtu*, "dead," in an emphatic position within the line alludes to a key theme of the hymn and *Ludlul* as a whole: the protagonist's closeness to death. The fact that Marduk was able to save Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan from this proximity to death contributes to the praise of the god because it shows his power. This also points to the possibility of others being saved by Marduk. Lines 37 and 38 end in a rhyming /ta/ sound, highlighting the parallelism and creating a homeoptoton. The fauna simile in line 37 alludes to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan reaching his lowest point during his suffering.[346] This contributes to the contrast with his restoration mentioned in line 38.

Line 39, like line 37, opens with a first-person singular precative verbal form of communication and it emphasizes the role of the protagonist in teaching other people, reflecting the instructional character of the composition. As argued by Piccin and Worthington, this line leaves a message of hope for the reader or listener because he knows that Marduk will soon forgive and rescue him.[347] The final line ends in a precative verbal form, thus encircling the couplet (*Ludlul* I:39–40), the quatrain (*Ludlul* I:37–40), and the hymn as a whole. Piccin and Worthington convincingly argue that the term *ḫissatu*, "invocation," could be referring to the hymn itself,[348] because of the term's link to praying.[349] Therefore, the final lines of the hymn leave a message of hope for the audience, as the recitation of the hymn itself might take away evil, and Šubši-mešrê-

[346] See Lenzi 2023: 101. On the metaphoric uses of *nūru*, "fish," see Streck 1999: 175.
[347] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 121.
[348] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 121.
[349] Lenzi 2023: 101; Piccin and Worthington 2015: 121; Oshima 2014: 187.

Šakkan’s story, narrated in the following lines and tablets, is an attestation to the salvation brought by Marduk.

2.3. *Ludlul* V:71–120

2.3.1. Transcription and Translation

71 *mannuma* | *iqbi* || *amār* | *šamšīšu*

72 *ina libbi* (|) *manni* | *ibbaši* || *etēq* (|) *sūqīšu*

73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*

74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* | *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*

75 *marūtuk* | *ina qabri* || *bulluṭa* | *ile$^{??}$e*

76 *zarpānītu* | *ina karašê* || *eṭēra* | *amrat*

77 *ēma šaknat* | *erṣetu* || *ritpāšū* | *šamāmū*[350]

78 *šamšu* | *uštappâ* || *gīra* | *innapḫu*

79 *mû* | *illakū* || *iziqqu* | *šāru*[351]

80 *šūt aruru* | *ikruṣu*[352] | *keressin*[353]

81 *šakittu* | *napšata* || *petâ* | *purīda*

82 [*ap*]*âtu* | *mala bašâ* || *marūtuk* | *dullā*

83 […] …[354] || *šūt pâ* | *kun*[*nā*][355]

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[350] VAT 9303, r. 14′ (= Ebeling 1923: no. 10): *šamāmē*(an)^{e}; VAT 10538+, o. 9′ (= Ebeling 1953b: no. 67): [*ša$_2$-ma*]-˹*me*$^{?}$˺; SU 1952.212+, l. 6′ (= Gurney and Finkelstein 1957: no. 27): ˹*ša$_2$*˺-*ma-mi*. It is important to note that VAT 10538+ and SU 1952.212+ indicate the use of the form *šamāmū* instead of *šamû* at the end of the line as it maintains the *clausula accadica*, i.e., the use of a trochaic stress at the end of lines in Akkadian poetry. The *clausula accadica* was first noted by Landsberger (1926: 371). On this poetic feature, see Pohl 2022: 93–94; Lenzi 2019a: 48; Jiménez 2017: 74–75; Wisnom 2015: 488; Lambert 2013: 18–20; West 1997: 183–184; Hecker 1974: 102–108. On the use of the form *šamāmū* at the end of poetic lines instead of *šamû*, see Lambert 2013: 20.

[351] VAT 9303, r. 16′: *ša$_2$-a-ru*; VAT 10538+, o. 9′: *ša$_2$*-˹*a*˺-˹*ru*˺; SU 1952.212+, l. 8′: *šārū*(im)^{meš}. As in *Ludlul* I:1 and 3, the use of the sign MEŠ can indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically (see §2.2.1).

[352] VAT 9303, r. 17′: *ik-ru-ṣu*; VAT 10538+, o. 12′: *ik-ri-iṣ-ṣu*.

[353] VAT 9303, r. 17′: *ke-re-es-si-in*; VAT 10538+, o. 12′: *ke-re-es*-˹*su*˺-˹*un*$^{?}$˺.

[354] VAT 9303, r. 20′: ˹*a*˺ *ta bul* x x x.

[355] VAT 9303, r. 20′: ˹*kun*˺-[*na*]; VAT 10538+, o. 15′: UR-*ta-aš$_2$*; BM 77253, ii′ 3′ (= George and Taniguchi 2019: no. 164): […]-*taš*. The final sign in VAT 10538+ had previously been restored as PA (Lenzi 2023: 178; Oshima 2014: 435) leading to an unusual form of the verb *wapû*, "to be(come) visible," in the Š-stem. However, Hätinen's collation (2022c) indicates that the final sign is AŠ$_2$, also shown in the hand-copy. Regarding the form UR-*ta-aš$_2$*, it is difficult to establish a verb that fits it, because the values *lig*, *lik*, and

84 [… || *k*]*al* (|) *nišī* | *libēlma*[356]

85 [… || *li*]*rē* | *kal* (|) *dadmē*

86 […] || *mīlu*[357] | *ina nagbi*

87 [… || *pa*]*rak* (|) *ilī* | *lībila*ʔ

88 […] (||) *seḫip*ʔ (|) *šamê* | *u*ʔ [*erṣe*]*ti*ʔ

89 [...] || *uriṣṣā*ʔ | *maqta*ʔ[358]

90 [...] ...[359] | *lišš*ûšu

91 [...] ...[360]

92 [...] | *nannāramma*[361] (||) ...[362] [...] ...[363]

93 [*šadî*ʔ][364] | *u tâmāti* || [...]

94 [...] *bursangâšin*[*a*ʔ[365] ...]

95 [...] (|) *ūmī* (|) *palêšu* || [...] ...[366]

96 [...] ...[367] | *napšatu* || [...] | *balāṭu*[368]

97 [...] ...[369] *ūmī* [... || *liš*]*tēlipū*ʔ | *šuršūšu*

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liq of the sign UR, which could suggest a precative verbal form, do not provide clear results. An option would be the verb *qiāšu*, "to present," but the Gt precative form would be *liqtīš* (von Soden 1995: 33*) and not *liqtāš*.

[356] VAT 9303, r. 21′: *li*-˹*bel*$_2$˺-[*ma*]; VAT 10538+, o. 16′: *li-be-el-ma*; BM 77253, ii′ 4′: [*li-be*]-˹*el*˺.

[357] VAT 9303, r. 23′: ˹*mīlū*(illu)˺^{meš}; VAT 10538+, o. 18′: *mīlu*(illu). Like in *Ludlul* I:1, 3 and *Ludlul* V:79, the sign MEŠ can indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically.

[358] VAT 10538+, o. 21′: ˹*u*$_2$ʔ˺-*ri-iṣ-ṣa* ˹*ma*˺-˹*aq*ʔ˺-˹*tu*$_2$ʔ˺. Oshima (2014: 110–111) renders this line as x *ri-iṣ-ṣa* ˹*tukul*˺-˹*ti*˺, "help and aeg[is]." I follow eBL's (Hätinen 2022c) view and understand the first term as a D-stem preterite verbal form of *rêṣu*, "to help."

[359] VAT 10538+, o. 23′: x x-*su-nu*.

[360] BM 77253, ii′ 11′: […]-˹*nu*ʔ˺.

[361] The translation of *nannāru* as "luminary" reflects the term's links to brightness and luminosity as argued for by Hätinen (2021: 31–38).

[362] VAT unnumbered, r. 2′ (= Ebeling 1923: no. 116): *li*-x.

[363] BM 77253, ii′ 12′: […]-˹*šu*$_2$ʔ˺.

[364] This reconstruction follows eBL's (Hätinen 2022c) and is based on the expression *šadû u tâmātu*. On this expression, see CAD T: 151.

[365] VAT unnumbered, r. 4′: *bur*ʔ(PAD)-*sag-ga*$_2$-*ši*-˹*na*˺.

[366] BM 77253, ii′ 15′: x-˹*te*˺/˹*ud*˺-*šu*$_2$.

[367] VAT unnumbered, r. 6′: […]-˹*tu*$_4$˺.

[368] When the nouns *napištu* and *balāṭu*, which can both be translated as "life," are employed in close proximity, I will use "vitality" for *napištu* and "life" for *balāṭu*.

[369] VAT unnumbered, r. 7′: ˹*ḫur*˺/˹*ri*˺ ˹*du*$_8$ʔ˺.

98 [...] | *esagi*[*l* ...] ...[370] || *liṣarriš* | *papallu*

99 [... *nazi*]*maruttaš* | [...] | *u napišta*ʔ | *balāṭa*

100 [...] ...[371] | *napšatu* [...] ...[372]

101 [...] ...[373] [...] ...[374]

102 [... *bē*]*lu*ʔ [...] ...[375] || *itūru* | *ālšu*

103 [... *niš*]*ī* || *ṣalmat* (|) *qaqqadi* | *libēlma*ʔ

104 [... *ša*ʔ *zarpā*]*nītu*ʔ || *rēmu* | *ša marūtuk*

105 [... *esag*]*il*ʔ | *u bābilu* || ...[376] | *šarḫu*

106 [...] ...[377] || *linnabi* | *ina*[378] *damqiti*

107 [*ina esagil* | *ēkal* (|) *ilī*[379] || *l*]*alê* (|) *balāṭi* | *lišbi*

108 [...] (|) *šamê* | *lirši*

109 [...] | *nizmassu*

110 [...] | *eli baʾūlātīšu*

111 [...] | *Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan*

112 [... *šu*]*meri* | *u akkadî* || *muma*ʔʔ*er* (|) *māti*

113 [*ša*ʔ *maru*]*šta*ʔ[380] | *īmuru* || *lippaṭir* | *aranšu*

114 [...] || *mānaḫtašu* | *lištapšiḫ*

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[370] VAT unnumbered, r. 9′: -⌜*an*ʔ⌝.
[371] VAT unnumbered, r. 11′: […]-⌜*tu*$_4$⌝.
[372] BM 77253, ii′ 20′: x ⌜*du*ʔ⌝.
[373] VAT unnumbered, r. 12′: x *nap*-[…].
[374] BM 32208+, r. ii′ 1′ (= George and Taniguchi 2019: no. 149): x x x *šu*$_2$.
[375] BM 32208+, r. ii′ 2′: […]-⌜*tu*$_4$⌝.
[376] BM 32208+, r. ii′ 5′: ERIN$_2$ *ti*$_3$.
[377] BM 32208+, r. ii′ 6′: […] x-*uš*.
[378] VAT 10538+, r. 2′: ⌜*ina*⌝; BM 32308+, r. ii′ 6′: *ana*.
[379] This reconstruction is based on the parallel line identified in the royal inscription Si 4+5, iv 12 (= Frazer and Adalı 2021: 231–262): [*ina*] ⌜*e*$_2$⌝-*sag-il*$_2$ *ēkal*(e$_2$.gal) *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš} *la-le-e balāṭi*(tin) *liš-bi*. This reconstruction follows eBL's (Hätinen 2022c) suggestion.
[380] Oshima (2014: 112) reconstructs [*e-nu-ma ep-še-ta-šu*$_2$ *ma-ru-u*]*š-tu*$_2$, but eBL (Hätinen 2022c), Lenzi and Annus (2011: 188), and Annus and Lenzi (2010: 30) suggest [*ša maru*]*šta* because of spacing.

115 [*ilšu*ʔ[381] ...] || *ištartašu* | *likabbissu*

116 [... *n*]*išū* || *liše*ʾ*ā*ʔ[382] | *šulmāniš*

117 [...] ...[383] || *šarrašu* | *likabbissu*

118 [*ṭūb* (|) *šīri*][384] | *u*ʔ *ḫūd* (|) *libbi* || *liba*ʾʾ*i* | *ūmīšam*

119 [*nišū*ʔ[385] ... *i*]*na*ʔ *zamā*[*ri*] | *ša šubši-mešrê-šakkan* || *idlulā* | *dalī*[*līšu*]ʔ

120 [... *marūtuk*ʔ][386] || *tanittaka*[387] | *ṭābat*

71 Who indeed (would have) said (he would) see his sun? (lit. Who indeed said the seeing of his sun?)

72 Who (would have) thought (he would) pass along his street? (lit. In the heart of whom did the passing along of his street exist?)

73 Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?

74 Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?

75 Marduk is able to revive from the tomb,

76 Zarpānītu has experience of saving from disaster.

77 Wherever earth is established, heaven is very wide,

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[381] This reconstruction is based on the traditional word pair *ilu* and *ištartu*, "god" and "goddess," and follows eBL (Hätinen 2022c).

[382] VAT 10538+, r. 12′: ⌜*li*ʔ⌝-x-ʾ*a*; BM 34650, r. 10′ (= George and Taniguchi 2019: no. 163): […]-*im*. Oshima (2014: 438) proposes the reading ⌜*li*⌝-⌜*mu*⌝-ʾ*a* for manuscript VAT 10538+, from the verb *emû*, but the writing is unusual and unlikely, as noted by Lenzi (2023: 183). A precative verbal form of the verb *še*ʾ*û*, "to seek," could fit the context. My collation of the tablet has not allowed for any improved readings, and it is difficult to establish whether the first sign is LI. The break does not seem to have enough space for LI and MU, thus it is possible that the second sign is ŠE.

[383] VAT 10538+, r. 13′: […] x-$šu_2$.

[384] This reconstruction is based on the traditional idiom *ṭūb šīri u ḫūd libbi*, "sweetness of flesh and joy of heart," and follows eBL (Hätinen 2022c).

[385] This reconstruction follows eBL (Hätinen 2022c).

[386] The reconstruction of Marduk's name follows eBL (Hätinen 2022c) and is based on the Sumerian parallel hymn endings which have the divine name followed by za_3-mi_2-zu du_{10}-ga-am_3, "your praise is sweet."

[387] VAT 10538+, r. 17′: ⌜*ta*⌝-*nit-ta-šu*$_2$; BM 34650, r. 14′: ⌜*ta*⌝-*nit-ta-ka*.

78 The sun shines, the fire is ignited,

79 The water flows, the wind blows.

80 Those whose lump of clay Aruru pinched off,

81 The living ones, those who can walk,

82 Human beings, as many as they are, praise Marduk!

83 [...] those who can speak,

84 [...] may he rule over all the people,

85 [... may he shepherd] all the inhabited world,

86 [...] the flooding from the depths,

87 [...] may he bring[?] the sanctuaries of the gods,

88 [...] the extent[?] of heaven and[?] [earth[?]]

89 [...] he helped up[?] the fallen[?]

90 [...] may they lift him

91 […]

92 [...] luminary […]

93 [The mountains[?]] and seas [...]

94 [...] their offerings[?] [...]

95 [...] the days of his reign [...]

96 [...] vitality [...] life

97 [...] the days [...] may its roots be made[?] to sprout[?].

98 [...] Esagil [...] may the shoot sprout out.

99 [...] Nazimaruttaš [...] and vitality[?], life

100 [...] vitality [...]

101 […]

102 [...] the lord[?] [...] his city returned,

103 [...] may he rule[?] (over) the people, the black-headed ones,

104 [... of[?]] Zarpānītu[?], the mercy of Marduk,

105 [...] Esagil[?] and Babylon […] proud

106 [...] may he be called upon for goodness,

107 [In Esagil, the palace of the gods,] may he be satisfied with the abundance of life,

108 [...] may he get x of heaven,

109 [...] (*may he achieve*) his desire,

110 [...] over his subjects,

111 [...] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,

112 [...] of Sumer and Akkad, the ruler of the land.

113 [The one who[?]] experienced [distress[?]], may his transgression be absolved,

114 [...] may his weariness be assuaged,

115 [May his god[?]...], may his goddess honour him,

116 [...] may the people seek[?] in peace,

117 [...] may his king honour him,

118 May he daily look for [sweetness of flesh] and[?] joy of heart.

119 [The people[?]] sang his praises[?] through[?] the song of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,

120 [… Marduk[?]], your praise is sweet.

2.3.2. Poetic Analysis

2.3.2.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Because of the final hymn's fragmentary state, it is difficult to establish a clear stanzaic and strophic division. Oshima divides his transliteration and translation of the hymn into the following strophes: *Ludlul* V:71–82, 83–88, 89–101, 102–106, 107–109, 110–112, 113–120.[388] Hätinen establishes the following division: *Ludlul* V:71–72, 73–76, 77–79, 80–83, 84–87, 88–91, 92–95, 96–98, 99–101, 102–105, 106–110, 111–112, 113–116, 117–120.[389] Lenzi divides the hymn into the following strophes: *Ludlul* V:71–76, 77–79, 80–82, 83–86, 87–104 (clearly no strophic division due to fragmentary text), 105–108, 109–112, 113–116, 117–120.[390] This shows the variety of approaches to this hymn and the difficulty in establishing a clear strophic division.[391] My own division is tentative and it tries to reflect the different themes addressed in the hymn. The first stanza is between lines 71 and 76, as lines 71–74 pose rhetorical questions and lines 75 and 76 answer the questions in lines 73 and 74. Lines 77–82 can be taken as one stanza that invites all humanity to praise Marduk. Lines 83–92, because of their use of precatives, seem to be a series of petitions for Marduk to rule over the whole world. Lines 93–112 seem to focus on the well-being of the Babylonian king Nazimaruttaš and mention Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. Lines 113–118 are a set of petitions for anyone who is in a moment of distress and lines 119–120 conclude the hymn.

[388] Oshima 2014: 110–113.
[389] Hätinen 2022b.
[390] Lenzi 2023: 90–94.
[391] Oshima (2014: 110–113) and Lenzi's (2023: 90–94) lineation of this final hymn does not fully agree with the lineation provided by eBL due to the fragmentary state of the manuscripts and the difficulties of aligning them.

Stanza	Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120	Chapter section
Rhetorical questions and answers	71–76	§2.3.2.2.1
Praise of Marduk by all humanity	77–82	§2.3.2.2.2
Petitions for Marduk's rule	83–92	§2.3.2.2.3
Petitions for the king	93–112	§2.3.2.2.4
Petitions for anyone in distress	113–118	§2.3.2.2.5
Conclusion	119–120	§2.3.2.2.6

Table 7 - Stanzaic division of *Ludlul* V:71–120

This division shows the hymn's ring structure: lines 77–92 emphasize the universal praise of Marduk and his power over all of humanity; lines 93–112 move this emphasis to Babylon and its human king; and lines 113–118 move back to a more universal view by referring to any person in a moment of distress. This ring structure emphasizes Marduk's absolute and all-encompassing power, as his impact extends to everything. This structure can also be important for the human audience because the hymn culminates in a set of petitions for someone undergoing adversity, which could help anyone who identifies with the suffering Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan endured. Lines 119–120 conclude this ring structure by alluding to the whole poem *zamā*[*ri*] *ša šubši-mešrê-šakkan*, "the song of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan." In fact, the performance of this song, as already implied in *Ludlul* I:40, can help anyone by moving Marduk to compassion.

Within the structure of *Ludlul* as a whole, this final hymn and the introductory hymn create a ring structure. In the introductory hymn, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan praises Marduk and after the protagonist's story of deliverance, all the people of Babylon praise the god (*Ludlul* V:69–70, 119). The terminology also shows this connection between the two. The last quatrain of the introductory hymn opens with a first-person singular precative verbal form *lušāpi*, "may I proclaim" (*Ludlul* I:37). The line that introduces the final hymn uses a third-person feminine plural verbal form *ušāpâ*, "they proclaimed" (*Ludlul* V:70). Both verbal forms are Š-stem forms from the verb *wapû*, "to be(come) visible," and both are used to refer to the praise of Marduk by Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan in Tablet I and by all the people of Babylon in Tablet V. Both hymns also praise Marduk through his all-encompassing nature. In the introductory hymn, the poet extols Marduk's anger, mercy, and inscrutability, and in the final hymn, the poet extols Marduk's power over all of humanity and his mercy. As the description of the walls of Uruk in the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš* reflects the composition's theme of search for life,[392] the hymns in *Ludlul* define the doxological nature of the composition.[393] The ring structure of *Ludlul* also contributes to the praise of Marduk as both the opening and ending are praises and encircle the entire composition in this praise. The structure of the composition is thus in itself a form of praise, contributing to the rhetorical purposes of *Ludlul*.

The final hymn has fifty lines, possibly paralleling the fifty names of Marduk at the end of *Enūma eliš* (VI:123–VII:136), which are usually understood as a takeover by Marduk of Enlil's power because fifty was the number of Enlil.[394] Both the naming of Marduk in *Enūma eliš* and the fifty-line praise of the god occur at the end of the compositions. Moreover, like in *Ludlul* V:70, the poet uses a verbal form derived from

[392] See Zgoll 2010: 443–470.
[393] Lenzi (2023: 306; 2015: 73) argues that *Ludlul* is not a hymn but it is hymn-like.
[394] On the fifty names in *Enūma eliš*, see Helle 2023: 104; Fadhil and Jiménez 2022: 253; Seri 2006: 508.

wapû in the line before the gods start naming Marduk: *lū šūpât*, "may they be proclaimed" (*Enūma eliš* VI:122). Thus, one possible interpretation for the use of fifty lines in the final hymn of *Ludlul* is the praise of Marduk through his takeover of Enlil's power.[395] Nevertheless, neither *Ludlul* as a whole nor the final hymn have references to Enlil and there could be other explanations for the use of fifty lines. In fact, an alternative interpretation is that the final hymn has ten more lines than the opening hymn, creating a sense of completion as now not only Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan but also all the people of Babylon praise Marduk.

2.3.2.2. Micro-Level Analysis

2.3.2.2.1. *Ludlul* V:71–76

The first strophe opens with a set of rhetorical questions (*Ludlul* V:71–74) followed by an answer (*Ludlul* V:75–76):

71 *mannumma* | *iqbi* || *amār* | *šamšīšu*
72 *ina libbi* (|) *manni* | *ibbaši* || *etēq* (|) *sūqīšu*
73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* | *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*
75 *marūtuk* | *ina qabri* || *bulluṭa* | *ile$^{??}$e*
76 *zarpānītu* | *ina karašê* || *eṭēra* | *amrat*

Who indeed (would have) said (he would) see his sun? (lit. Who indeed said the seeing of his sun?)
  Who (would have) thought (he would) pass along his street? (lit. In the heart of whom did the passing along of his street exist?)
Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?
  Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?
Marduk is able to revive from the tomb,
  Zarpānītu has experience of saving from disaster.

(*Ludlul* V:71–76)

[395] On the symbolic use of numbers in Akkadian literature, see my comments regarding *Ludlul* I:1–40 in §2.2.2.1.

Rhetorical questions play a structuring role in Biblical Hebrew poetry as they open or close stanzas,[396] and in this hymn they also play this structuring role by opening the rhetorical unit. Lines 71 and 72 refer to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and how it seemed impossible for him to escape his dreadful situation. This contrast between the protagonist's past and present expresses how unbelievable and wondrous his recovery was, contributing to the praise of the god responsible for this recovery. The genitive construction *amār šamšīšu*, literally "the seeing of his sun," in line 71 can be understood as an allusion to Marduk because of the word-play or pun with ^{d}amar.utu.[397] This further emphasizes the praise to the god.[398]

The poetic artistry and eloquence already shown in the opening hymn are also reflected in the closing hymn. *Ludlul* V:71–72 have consonance with the /b/ and /q/ sounds and assonance of the vowel /i/. The poet also employs two variants of the interrogative pronoun *mannu*, "who?" (*mannumma* and *manni*). Moreover, the second cola are grammatically parallel: infinitive verbal form in the construct state (*amār* and *etēq*) followed by a noun in the genitive with a third-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*šamšīšu* and *sūqīšu*). The second cola also have prosodic parallelism:

71 *mannumma* | *iqbi* || *a**mār*** | *šam**šī**šu*
72 *ina libbi* (|) *manni* | *ibbaši* || *e**tēq*** (|) *sū**qī**šu*

(*Ludlul* V:71–72)

These different forms of parallelism contribute to the couplet's unity and eloquence.

Even though the first two rhetorical questions were already meant to praise Marduk, lines 73 and 74 bring Marduk and his divine consort Zarpānītu to the forefront. These lines add to *Ludlul*'s ring structure as the rhetorical questions in *Ludlul* I 35 and 36

[396] See Watson 1984: 341–342.
[397] On this word-play, see already Hurowitz 2010: 90.
[398] On the emphatic function of puns and wordplay, see Noegel 2021: 62–65.

also in parallel use *ša lā* (*Ludlul* I:35, V:73), *mannu* (*Ludlul* I:35, V:73), *ela* (*Ludlul* I:36, V:74), and *ayyu* (*Ludlul* I:36, V:74):[399]

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

This parallelism extends to the syntax as the second colon of *Ludlul* I:35 is syntactically parallel with the second colon of *Ludlul* V:73, while the second colon of *Ludlul* I:36 is parallel with the second colon of *Ludlul* V:74:

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* (|) *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*

(*Ludlul* V:73–74)

Moreover, the accusative objects in *Ludlul* I:35 and V:73 start with the sound /mi/, and in *Ludlul* I:36 and V:74, the accusative objects have a /t/ sound which with the addition of the possessive suffix leads to a sound change to /ss/. The different poetic devices that contribute to the parallelism between these couplets point to the ring structure of the composition and also show a similar structure behind the construction of the rhetorical questions.[400] The chiastic construction in *Ludlul* V:73–74 parallels the chiasmus in *Ludlul* I:35–36 and seems to have a similar purpose of emphasizing impossibility: only Marduk and Zarpānītu can save; they encompass the totality of salvation, just like no god in *Ludlul* I:35–36 can control Marduk. The chiasmus in *Ludlul* V:73–74 also creates an opposition between the terms *mītūtašu*, "his death," and *napšassu*, "his life," which occupies the last

[399] On this feature, see already Lenzi 2023: 177; Albertz 1988: 40.
[400] The parallel use of interrogative pronouns like *mannu* and *ayyu* is found in other poetic compositions. See, for example, the *Babylonian Theodicy*:161, 163. Grammatical parallelism between two successive rhetorical questions is also found, as in, for example, the *Great Prayer to Šamaš*:174–175. However, these different elements of parallelism between rhetorical questions in different parts of one composition are, to my knowledge, limited to these examples from *Ludlul*'s hymns.

foot in line 74. This chiasmus shows the reversal of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's situation, and emphasizes his recovery.[401]

The use of *mannu*, "who?" in line 73 also links this line to line 71 which uses *mannumma*, "who indeed?" This adds to the parallelism between the rhetorical questions, which is also shown metrically as lines 71 and 73 are shorter than lines 72 and 74. Lines 73 and 74 also have grammatical parallelism between them as in the first cola the poet uses the divine nouns (Marduk and Zarpānītu) followed by interrogative prepositions (*mannu* and *ayyītu*). All poetic feet in lines 73 and 74 have a trochaic stress, adding to the parallelism between the rhetorical questions. The only exception is the third foot of line 73, *mītūtašu*, "his death." As already seen in the introductory hymn (§2.2.2.2.2), the theme of the protagonist's closeness to death plays a key role and thus this "counterpatterning" stress might also reflect this. In the first colon of line 73, the poet uses alliteration with the sound /ma/, while in the first colon of line 74, he uses homeoteleuton with the sound /tu/. Both lines have consonance with the sound /t/. The reference to the divine pair Marduk and Zarpānītu is an example of gender-matched parallelism reflecting totality.[402]

Lines 75 and 76 are an answer to or a completion of the rhetorical questions of lines 73 and 74. This emphasizes the role of Marduk and Zarpānītu in the recovery of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and contributes to the divine praise through the repetition of the idea that only these gods could have saved the protagonist. Line 75 parallels line 73 not only in the reference to Marduk, but also in the use of a D-stem form of the verb *balāṭu*, "to live." Lines 75 and 76 have an extremely high degree of grammatical parallelism: both start with the divine name (Marduk and Zarpānītu) followed by the preposition *ina* with a noun in the genitive (*qabri* and *karašê*), and the second cola have an accusative

[401] On the use of chiasmus to emphasize the reversal of a state, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 147.
[402] On this effect of gender-matched parallelism, see Watson 1984: 125.

infinitive verbal form (*bulluṭa* and *eṭēra*) followed by a finite verbal form (*ileʾʾe* and *amrat*).[403] The reference to Marduk and Zarpānītu is again another example of gender-matched parallelism. These different types of parallelism contribute to the praise of Marduk and his wife because it adds a sense of formality to these lines and a clear assertion that these gods can rescue the people in the direst distress. These lines also contribute to the ring structure of the composition because the terms *qabru*, "tomb" (*Ludlul* V:75), and *karašû*, "disaster" (*Ludlul* V:76), are also used in parallel in *Ludlul* I:13–14. Nevertheless, in the final hymn both terms are used in reference to the merciful character of Marduk and Zarpānītu, whereas in the introductory hymn *qabru* is used in allusion to Marduk's wrath. This contrastive use expresses the different kinds of praise between the two hymns, but also how ultimately Marduk is merciful, as it was shown in the personal experience of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. In the introductory hymn, the terminology reflects both the anger and mercy of Marduk; in the final hymn, the terminology reflects only Marduk's mercy.

2.3.2.2.2. *Ludlul* V:77–82

The following strophes continue the praise to Marduk:

77 *ēma šaknat* | *erṣetu* || *ritpāšū* | *šamāmū*
78 *šamšu* | *uštappâ* || *gīra* | *innapḫu*
79 *mû* | *illakū* || *iziqqu* | *šāru*
80 *šūt aruru* | *ikruṣu* | *keressin*
81 *šakittu* | *napšata* || *petâ* | *purīda*
82 *apâtu* | *mala bašâ* || *marūtuk* | *dullā*

Wherever earth is established, heaven is very wide,
The sun shines, the fire is ignited,
The water flows, the wind blows.
Those whose lump of clay Aruru pinched off,

[403] The only difference between the two lines is that in line 75 the final verb is a durative whereas in line 76 it is a stative.

The living ones, those who can walk,
Human beings, as many as they are, praise Marduk!

(*Ludlul* V:77–82)

These lines can be divided into triplets with the first triplet referring to the natural environment and the second to humanity.[404] Lines 77–79 create an idea of totality through the enumeration of different natural elements which act as word pairs: *erṣetu*, "earth," and *šamāmū*, "heaven," in line 77; *šamšu*, "sun," and *gīra*, "fire," in line 78; *mû*, "water," and *šāru*, "wind," in line 79.[405] Oshima argues that *mû* and *šāru* in line 79, unlike *erṣetu* and *šamāmū* in line 77, do not act as a merism.[406] However, the triplet as a whole and the enumeration of these six different elements are a totalizing description of the natural world.

These lines are similar to line 64 of the *Eriš šummi* hymn, also addressed to Marduk:

64 [*ult*]*u išid šamê ana elât šamê ēma šamšu aṣû iziqqu šāru mû* (*u*) *gīru ukallū napša*

From the horizon to the zenith, wherever the sun rises, the wind blows, the water (and) fire hold life.

(*Eriš šummi*:64)[407]

This line is also a totalizing description contributing to the praise of Marduk in the hymn, as it is used in the section where Marduk is exalted as the king of the universe (*Eriš šummi*:61–86). Similarly, in *Ludlul* V, this totalizing description is employed in a hymn where Marduk is praised for his power over everything. Therefore, *Ludlul*'s closing hymn and *Eriš šummi* seem to share a similar totalizing description of nature through

[404] For this division, see Lenzi 2023: 177; von Soden 1990: 134–135.
[405] The nouns *šāru*, "wind," and *mû*, "water," are also used as a word pair in the *Prayer to Marduk 2*:10: [*mu*]*kīn* (|) *šāri* | *tīk* (|) *mê* | *elu qarbāti*, "The one who establishes wind (and) the rain of water over the meadowlands." For an edition of this prayer, see Oshima 2011: 216–270.
[406] Oshima 2014: 335. For *erṣetu* and *šamāmū* as a merism, see Wasserman 2003: 74–77.
[407] For an edition of *Eriš šummi*, see Fadhil and Jiménez 2022: 229–274. Because of the length of the poetic line, I have not included metrical divisions.

enumeration in order to praise Marduk.[408] In the recently edited *Hymn in Praise of Babylon and the Babylonians*, there is also a reference to the three elements water, fire, and wind:

75 *mê*(*ka*) | *ana šiknāt* (|) *napišti* || *mitḫāriš* (|) *balāṭi* | *limīd*[*ū*]
76 *ittīšunu* | *summuḫū* || *išātu* | *u šār*[*u*]

May (your) waters become plentiful for the living things, all life!
With them are mixed fire and wind.

(*Hymn in Praise of Babylon and the Babylonians*:75–76) [409]

These three elements, mentioned in *Ludlul* V, *Eriš šummi*, and the *Hymn in Praise of Babylon and the Babylonians* are considered "the three primordial elements," and they represent the Anu-Enlil-Ea triad: Anu is equated with fire, Enlil with wind, and Ea with water.[410] The reference to these elements in a *Hymn in Praise of Babylon and the Babylonians* is situated within the praise of Marduk, showing a parallel with the other two compositions.

The poetics of *Ludlul* V:77–79 are quite patterned as the assonance of the /u/ sound shows, including the final rhyming /u/. In line 79 there is internal chiasmus:

79 *mû* | *illakū* || *iziqqu* | *šāru*

(*Ludlul* V:79)

This chiasmus expresses the simultaneity and harmony of the actions.[411] It also allows for a closer proximity between the verbs *illakū*, "it flows," and *iziqqu*, "it blows," which almost have homeoteleuton with the sounds /ku/ and /qu/. Line 78 has internal grammatical parallelism as each colon is composed of subject (*šamšu* and *gīra*) followed

[408] Regarding intertextuality, it is difficult to establish which composition served as the basis for the other. However, as Fadhil and Jiménez (2022: 230) point to *Enūma eliš*'s influence over *Eriš šummi* and date the latter to possibly after the 12th century BC, I would suggest that the poet of *Eriš šummi* took *Ludlul* V as a source for the composition.
[409] For an edition of the *Hymn in Praise of Babylon and the Babylonians*, see Fadhil and Jiménez 2025: 1–58.
[410] See Fadhil and Jiménez 2025: 2.
[411] On chiasmus as a way to emphasize simultaneity and harmony, see Watson 1981: 149.

by verb (*uštappâ* and *innapḫu*), and the first colon has a G-stress pattern: ***šam**šu* | *uštap**pâ***.[412] This triplet alludes to the normal status of the environment, which contrasts with the references to the nature in the introductory hymn where catastrophic events like the deluge and storms (*Ludlul* I:5, 7) were used to refer to Marduk's wrath. This difference already attested in the use of *qabru* further expresses the ultimate mercy of Marduk and how the god brought normality and balance back to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's life.

The second triplet continues the totalizing description as the poet uses synonymous parallelism to refer to the whole of humanity, starting with a reference to the creation of humankind in line 80.[413] In Biblical Hebrew poetry, totalizing descriptions tend to end with the term *kōl*, "all,"[414] and in this description in *Ludlul*, the poet uses the expression *mala bašâ*, "as many as they are," in line 82.[415] This indicates the totalizing character of this description of the natural environment and humanity. This stanza ends with a masculine plural imperative form of the verb *dalālu*, "to praise," the verb used in the first foot of the first line of *Ludlul*. This not only contributes to the ring structure of the composition, but also to the goal expressed in the introductory hymn, as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan through his personal experience has taught the mercy of Marduk, and now all can and shall praise the god. In fact, the emphatic position of the verbal form at the end of these two triplets contributes to the highlight of Marduk's praise. The totalizing description also contributes to the exaltation of the god because this description indicates that everyone everywhere should praise Marduk. Line 82 thus represents a climax of the

[412] For this terminology, see my comments in §1.5.1.
[413] Regarding this reference, see Oshima 2014: 335.
[414] See Vayntrub 2020b: 215.
[415] In *Ludlul* V:84–85, which continues this totalizing description, the poet uses the Akkadian cognate *kalû*, "all."

previous lines that included the enumeration of the natural elements and the synonymous parallelism referring to humankind.

This second triplet also expresses unity in its poetics through the assonance of the sounds /a/ and /u/. In line 80, the poet uses a *figura etymologica*, repeating the root *k–r–ṣ* and thus emphasizing the action of creating humankind.

2.3.2.2.3. *Ludlul* V:83–92

Lines 83–92 are fragmentary:

83 […] … || *šūt pâ* | *kun*[*nā*]
84 [… || *k*]*al* (|) *nišī* | *libēlma*
85 [… || *li*]*rē* | *kal* (|) *dadmē*
86 […] || *mīlu* | *ina nagbi*
87 [… || *pa*]*rak* (|) *ilī* | *lībila*$^{?}$
88 […] (||) *seḫip*$^{?}$ (|) *šamê* | *u*$^{?}$ [*erṣe*]*ti*$^{?}$
89 [...] || *uriṣṣa*$^{?}$ | *maqta*$^{?}$
90 [...] ... | *lišššûšu*
91 [...] ...
92 [...] | *nannāramma* (||) ... [...] ...

[...] those who can speak,
[...] may he rule over all the people,
[... may he shepherd] all the inhabited world,
[...] the flooding from the depths,
[...] may he bring$^{?}$ the sanctuaries of the gods,
[...] the extent$^{?}$ of heaven and$^{?}$ [earth$^{?}$]
[...] he helped up$^{?}$ the fallen$^{?}$
[...] may they lift him
[…]
[...] luminary […]

(*Ludlul* V:83–92)

This section of the hymn continues the totalizing description of the previous section, as the references to *kal nišī*, "all the people" (*Ludlul* V:84), *kal dadmē*, "all the inhabited world" (*Ludlul* V:85), *nagbi*, "the depths" (*Ludlul* V:86), *parak ilī*, "the sanctuaries of the gods" (*Ludlul* V:87), *šamê u erṣeti*, "heaven and earth" (*Ludlul* V:88), and *nannāramma*,

"luminary" (*Ludlul* V:92) continue the description of the totality of humankind and its surroundings. This contributes to the praise of Marduk because it proclaims the immense extent of the god's power. The change in injunctive forms from the imperative in line 82 to a set of precatives in this stanza of the hymn suggests a difference in the addressees. The imperative in line 82 is directed to all people to praise Marduk, whereas the precatives are directed to the god in the third person. This suggests that the order to praise Marduk is stronger than the wishes addressed to the god, which are less emphatic and pressing. This demonstrates the importance of praising Marduk and how the poet avoided being so imperative towards the god, possibly a rhetorical strategy to be more convincing through hierarchical politeness.[416]

Despite the fragmentary state of these lines, it is still possible to identify different elements of their poetics that contribute to the hymn's poetic artistry and rhythm. In lines 84 and 85, the poet uses a chiastic construction:

84 [… || *k*]*al* (|) *nišī* | *libēlma*
85 [… || *li*]*rē* | *kal* (|) *dadmē*

(*Ludlul* V:84–85)

This chiastic construction is used in two lines that seem to have synonymous parallelism, with petitions for Marduk to govern over all the people.[417] Thus, the chiastic construction is a form of bringing variation to the synonymous parallelism. Chiasmus can also create merism and in these lines it can reinforce the idea that Marduk should indeed be the one ruling over everything, contributing to the totalizing notions of this hymn.[418] In line 89, the poet uses the term *maqta*, "fallen," which is also used in *Ludlul* I:14 in a probable allusion to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. This contributes to the ring structure of *Ludlul* and

[416] A similar strategy is used in Neo-Assyrian letters addressing the king, where the scribes tend to use more precative verbal forms than imperatives (see Piccin 2021a: 197).
[417] For taking Marduk as the subject, see Oshima 2014: 336.
[418] On the link between chiasmus and merism, see Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 147.

emphasizes the merciful character of Marduk who rescues the fallen. Line 88 has assonance with the sound /e/, but due to the fragmentary state of the lines it is difficult to identify other phonologic figures.

2.3.2.2.4. *Ludlul* V:93–112

The following stanza of the prayer is also considerably broken:

93 [*šadî*ʔ] | *u tâmāti* || [...]
94 [...] *bursangâšin*[*a*ʔ...]
95 [...] (|) *ūmī* (|) *palêšu* || [...] ...
96 [...] ... | *napšatu* || [...] | *balāṭu*
97 [...] ... *ūmī* [... || *liš*]*tēlipū*ʔ | *šuršūšu*
98 [...] | *esagi*[*l* ...] ... || *liṣarriš* | *papallu*
99 [...*nazi*]*maruttaš* | [...] | *u napišta*ʔ | *balāṭa*
100 [...] ... *napšatu* [...] ...
101 [...] ... [...] ...
102 [... *bē*]*lu*ʔ [...] ... || *itūru* | *ālšu*
103 [...*niš*]*ī* || *ṣalmat* (|) *qaqqadi* | *libēlma*ʔ
104 [... *ša*ʔ *zarpā*]*nītu*ʔ || *rēmu* | *ša marūtuk*
105 [... *esag*]*il*ʔ | *u bābilu* || ... | *šarḫu*
106 [...] ... || *linnabi* | *ina damqiti*
107 [*ina esagil* | *ēkal* (|) *ilī* || *l*]*alê* (|) *balāṭi* | *lišbi*
108 [...] ... (|) *šamê* | *lirši*
109 [...] ... | *nizmassu*
110 [...] | *eli baʾūlātīšu*
111 [...] | *Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan*
112 [... *šu*]*meri* | *u akkadî* || *muma*ʔʔ*er* (|) *māti*

[The mountains?] and seas [...]
[...] their offerings? [...]
[...] the days of his reign [...]
[...] vitality [...] life
[...] the days [...] may its roots be made? to sprout?.
[...] Esagil [...] may the shoot sprout out.
[...] Nazimaruttaš [...] and the breath of life?, life
[...] vitality [...]
[…]
[...] the lord? [...] his city returned,
[...] may he rule? (over) the people, the black-headed ones,
[... of?] Zarpānītu?, the mercy of Marduk,
[...] Esagil? and Babylon […] proud
[...] may he be called upon for goodness,

[In Esagil, the palace of the gods,] may he be satisfied with the abundance of life,
[...] may he get x of heaven,
[...] (*may he achieve*) his desire,
[...] over his subjects,
[...] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,
[...] of Sumer and Akkad, the ruler of the land.

(*Ludlul* V:93–112)

Even though the context of these lines is difficult to establish, there is a repetition of the roots *b–l–ṭ* (*Ludlul* V:96, 99, 107) and *n–p–š* (*Ludlul* V:96, 99, 100), which refer to life. This emphasis reflects the positive outcome of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's experience, who indeed regained his life through Marduk's action. This again highlights Marduk's role but it also sets a positive tone for an audience that might be undergoing a moment of distress. Moreover, the three-time repetition of these roots is particularly emphatic, as three-time repetitions are used in other Akkadian compositions for emphasis.[419] The use of *damiqti*, "goodness," in line 106 also contributes to the positive tone of the stanza. Lines 97 and 98 have grammatical parallelism in their penultimate and last poetic feet with precative verbal forms ([*liš*]*tēlipū* and *liṣarriš*) followed by the subject (*šuršūšu* and *papallu*).[420] Both lines have synonymous parallelism as they use natural imagery of roots and shoots probably to allude to the Esagil's foundation,[421] and to ideas of growth and sprouting. Lines 107 and 108 have parallel predicative verbal forms in the last foot (*lišbi* and *lirši*). Lines 96–98 have a final rhyming /u/ sound and lines 106–108 an /i/ sound.

This section maintains the use of precative verbal forms and they are probably for the benefit of the Babylonian king Nazimaruttaš, mentioned in *Ludlul* V:99.[422] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, is mentioned in line 111 but this stanza probably only concerns the king,

[419] See Piccin 2021a: 211.
[420] This grammatical parallelism is not fully confirmed as [*liš*]*tēlipū* is reconstructed based on the precative of line 98.
[421] See Oshima 2014: 338.
[422] See Oshima 2014: 338–339.

as other Marduk-centered compositions tend to refer to the human king at the end.[423] These petitions would still be addressed to Marduk and are a reflection of his power over the king of Babylon and his subjects. Lines 98 and 107 are partially quoted in Si 4+5 iv 13 and 12 respectively, a Nabonidus's inscription.[424] Column iv of this inscription has a set of petitions for the king addressed to the deities, which points to the petitionary character of *Ludlul* V:98 and 107. This could indicate a parallel use of these formulae in both compositions.

2.3.2.2.5. *Ludlul* V:113–118

The following stanza of the hymn continues the set of petitions with precative verbal forms:

113 [*ša*ˀ *maru*]*šta*ˀ | *īmuru* || *lippaṭir* | *aranšu*
114 [...] || *mānaḫtašu* | *lištapšiḫ*
115 [*ilšu*ˀ ...] || *ištartašu* | *likabbissu*
116 [... *n*]*išū* || *lišeʾāˀ* | *šulmāniš*
117 [...] ... || *šarrašu* | *likabbissu*
118 [*ṭūb* (|) *šīri*] | *u*ˀ *ḫūd* (|) *libbi* || *libaʾʾi* | *ūmīšam*

[The one who?] experienced [distress?], may his transgression be absolved,
[...] may his weariness be assuaged,
[May his god?...], may his goddess honour him,
[...] may the people seek? in peace,
[...] may his king honour him,
May he daily look for [sweetness of flesh] and? joy of heart.

(*Ludlul* V:113–118)

As mentioned in §2.3.2.1, I understand these lines as a set of petitions for anyone undergoing distress, reflecting the rhetorical purpose of the hymn. This set of petitions at the end of *Ludlul* has an important role to play as the poet through the introductory hymn

[423] See, for example, the *Marduk Prophecy* iii:25′–30′ and *Enūma eliš* VII:148–150.
[424] For an edition of this royal inscription, see Frazer and Adalı 2021: 231–262. This quote was identified in eBL's edition of *Ludlul* V (Hätinen 2022c).

and the personal experience of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan has shown that ultimately Marduk can be merciful. These petitions are thus more reassuring for a suffering audience, as they know that Marduk can in fact be compassionate. Simultaneously, the introductory hymn, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's story, and the closing hymn are a reminder to Marduk of his compassion, as Piccin and Worthington argue for *Ludlul* I:1–40.[425] This reminder contributes to the petitions' success because if Marduk is reminded of his compassion, he can more easily move from anger to relenting and accede to the requests.

These petitions' poetics also contribute to the general literariness of the hymn. The second cola of lines 113 and 114 have a chiastic construction:

113 [*ša*ʔ *maruš*]*ta*ʔ | *īmuru* || *lippaṭir* | *aranšu*
114 [...] || *mānaḫtašu* | *lištapšiḫ*

(*Ludlul* V:113–114)

Moreover, the two verbs used in these lines have a passive meaning, contributing to their parallelism. Assuming a correct reconstruction of line 116, the second cola of *Ludlul* V:115–118 also have parallelism and chiasmus between them, creating parallelism between lines 115 and 117, and 116 and 118:

115 [*ilšu*ʔ ...] || *ištartašu* | *likabbissu*
116 [... *n*]*išū* || *lišeʾāʔ* | *šulmāniš*
117 [...] ... || *šarrašu* | *likabbissu*
118 [*ṭūb* (|) *šīri*] | *u*ʔ *ḫūd* (|) *libbi* || *libaʔʔi* | *ūmīšam*

(*Ludlul* V:115–118)

Moreover, lines 115 and 117 use the same verbal form: *likabbissu*, "may he/she honour him." The last feet of lines 116 and 118 are also parallel because both have adverbs. These lines thus show a high degree of parallelism and intricate poetics that emphasize the petitions to Marduk. Chiasmus, as mentioned before, can create a merism

[425] Piccin and Worthington 2015: 114–115, 121–122.

and, in these petitions, it can give a sense of completion: all the petitions have been asked.[426]

In *Ludlul* V:113, the poet uses the noun *aranšu*, "his transgression," with the verb *paṭāru*, "to release." In *Ludlul* I, the poet uses the same terms:

24 *ina ūm* (|) *išertīšu* | *uptaṭṭarū* || *eʾiltu* | *u annu*
On the day of his justice, debt and transgression are absolved.
(*Ludlul* I:24)

In the opening hymn, Marduk is described as the one who absolves debt and transgression and he is now asked to do so in Tablet V. This contributes to the ring structure of the composition and it is another element of reassurance for the human audience, because they know that Marduk can be merciful as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's experience shows.

2.3.2.2.6. *Ludlul* V:119–120

The last two lines define the purpose of *Ludlul* as a whole:

119 [*nišū*ʔ *... i*]*na*ʔ *zamā*[*ri*] | *ša šubši-mešrê-šakkan* || *idlulā* | *dalī*[*līšu*]ʔ
120 [*... marūtuk*ʔ] || *tanittaka* | *ṭābat*
[The peopleʔ] sang his praisesʔ throughʔ the song of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,
[… Marukʔ], your praise is sweet.
(*Ludlul* V:119–120)

Line 119 uses a *figura etymologica* as the verbal form *idlulā* and its accusative object *dalī*[*līšu*] derive from the stem *d–l–l*. This emphatic use is linked to the employment of this same stem in *Ludlul* I:1 and *Ludlul* V:82. This repetition emphasizes the rhetorical purpose of the composition, which starts and ends with hymns to Marduk. This also

[426] On chiasmus and merism, see Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 147.

contributes to the ring structure of the composition, as in the introductory hymn, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan wanted to teach the *nišū*, "people," and now the people, like him, proclaim Marduk's greatness and mercy. The *zamāri ša Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan*, "song of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan," can be understood as *Ludlul* as a whole,[427] and thus this also shows that the purpose of the composition was to exalt Marduk because the people praise him through this song. The last line also defines the rhetorical purpose of praising Marduk. In fact, the Akkadian expression *tanittaka ṭābat*, "your praise is sweet," corresponds to the Sumerian za_3-mi_2-zu du_{10}-ga-am_3, which is used in several Sumerian hymns.[428] Therefore, these last lines confirm the rhetorical purpose of *Ludlul* as a composition to praise Marduk,[429] and define the end of the praise to the god by both Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and the people of Babylon. The last line might also include a vocative directly addressing Marduk through his name, but this is reconstructed.

[427] See Lenzi 2023: 183.
[428] See Lenzi 2023: 305–306; 2015: 72–73.
[429] See Oshima 2014: 342.

2.4. Summary

In this chapter, I first identified and analysed the two *Ludlul* hymns' speakers, audiences, and purposes (§2.1). The speakers are distinct, as *Ludlul* I:1–40 is spoken by Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, whereas *Ludlul* V:71–120 is spoken by the Babylonians. The audiences are the same since both hymns are addressed to Marduk and the wider community. I identified three main purposes: praising Marduk; teaching the wider community about Marduk's ultimate mercy; and helping to alleviate suffering through showing Marduk's mercy and how to obtain it.

I then produced a poetic analysis of *Ludlul* I:1–40 (§2.2.2) and *Ludlul* V:71–120 (§2.3.2). The following five tables outline respectively the prosodic, phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures identified in each hymn.

Prosodic Figures	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120**
Metre	Five feet: 1; 3; 11; 24; 27; 29; 31; 37 Four feet: 2; 4; 5–10; 12; 14–18; 20–22; 25–26; 28; 30; 32–36; 38–40 Three feet: 13; 19; 23	Six feet: 107; 118 Five feet: 72; 74 Four feet: 71; 73; 75–79; 81–82; 113 Three feet: 80 Lines 83–106, 108–112, 114–117, and 119–120 are too fragmentary
Strophic patterns	Quatrain: 1–4; 5–8; 9–12; 13–16; 17–20; 21–24; 25–28; 29–32; 33–36; 37–40	Triplet: 77–79; 80–82 Couplet: 71–72; 73–74; 75–76; 119–120

		Lines 83–118 are too fragmentary
G-stress pattern	–	78
Prosodic parallelism	1–4; 13–16; 21–22; 33–34; 35–36	71–72; 73–74
Anacrusis	11	–

Table 8 - Prosodic figures identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120

Phonologic Figures	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120**
Assonance	/a/: 7–8; 9–10; 11–12; 13–14; 16; 17–18; 19–20; 21–22; 29–30; 33–34; 35–36; 37–38 /e/: 1–2; 3–4; 5–6; 15 /i/: 23–24; 27–28; 29–30; 31–32; 35–36; 39–40 /u/: 1–2; 3–4; 5–6; 7–8; 9–10; 11–12; 13–14; 15–16; 21–22; 23–24; 25–26; 31–32; 33–34; 35–36; 37–38	/a/: 73–74; 75–76; 77–78; 81–82; 99; 107; 113; 119–120 /e/: 75–76; 77; 80–81; 85; 88; 107–108; 111–112 /i/: 71–72; 74; 106; 107–108; 117–118; 119–120 /u/: 73–74; 75; 77–79; 80–82; 97–98; 102; 104; 113; 117–118; 119–120
Consonance	/b/: 7–8; 9–10; 11–12; 13–14; 29; 31; 33–34; 35–36 /d/: 27 /k/: 17–18; 33–34	/b/: 71–72; 75; 105–106; 107–108; 117–118 /d/: 119 /k/: 111–112; 119–120

	/l/: 1; 15–16; 29–30; 31–32; 35–36; 39–40 /m/: 31–32 /p/: 16; 26 /r/: 17–18 /s/: 8; 15–16 /ṣ/: 27 /š/: 9–10; 11–12 /t/: 8; 11–12; 13–14; 17–18 /ṭ/: 21–22 /z/: 21	/l/: 73; 75; 82; 84; 87; 97–98; 103; 107–108; 119 /m/: 71; 112 /n/: 71–72; 106; 119 /p/: 74; 77–78; 81–82; 95–96; 97–98; 99–100; 113–114 /q/: 71–72 /r/: 75–76; 80; 113 /š/: 119 /t/: 73–74; 81; 120 /ṭ/: 75–76
Alliteration	2; 4; 14	73
Homeoteleuton	9; 11; 12; 15	74; 79
Homeoptoton	8; 16; 18; 34; 37–38	–
Rhyme	5–7; 21–22	77–79; 96–98; 106–108

Table 9 - Phonologic figures identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120

Syntactic Figures	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120**
Grammatical parallelism	2; 4; 5–6; 5 and 7; 6 and 8; 21–22; 23 and 25; 24 and 26; 27–28; 30 and 35; 32 and 36; 33–34; 35–36	71–72; 73–74; 75–76; 78; 97–98; 107–108; 115 and 117; 116 and 118
Hymnic parallelism	1–4; 9–12; 29–32	–

Gender-matched parallelism	19–20; 21–22	73–74; 75–76
Chiasmus	5–6; 7–8; 9–10; 30 and 32; 33; 34; 35–36	73–74; 79; 84–85; 113–114; 115–116; 117–118
Rhetorical question	35–36	71–74
Repetition	*bēl nēmeqi ila muštāla*: 1; 3 *eziz mūši muppašir urri*: 2; 4 *ša nakbat qātīšu lā inaššû šamāʾū*: 9; 11 *rittušu rabbat ukkašu mīta*: 10; 12 (slight variant) *apkallu mimma libbi ilī ibarri*: 29; 31 *ayyu*: 32; 36 *marūtuk*: 3; 11; 31 *ʾ–g–g*: 5; 37 *ʾ–l*: 1; 3; 16; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32 *ʾ–m*: 5; 24 *ʾ–z–z*: 2; 4; 7 *b–ʾ–l*: 1; 3; 29 *b–l–ṭ*: 22; 38 *k–b–t*: 8; 17; 33; 34; 36	*esagil*: 98; 105; 107 *marūtuk*: 73; 75; 82; 104; 120 *šubši-mešrê-šakkan*: 111; 119 *zarpānītu*: 74; 76; 104 *ʾ–l*: 87; 107; 115 *ʾ–m*: 95; 97; 118 *ʾ–m–r*: 71; 76; 113 *ʾ–r–ṣ*: 77; 88 *b–ʾ–l*: 84; 102; 103; 110 *b–l–ṭ*: 73; 75; 96; 99; 107 *b–š–ʾ*: 72; 82 *d–l–l*: 82; 119 (x2) *k–b–t*: 115; 117 *k–r–ṣ*: 80 (x2) *l–b*: 72; 118 *m–n*: 71; 72; 73 *n–p–š*: 74; 81; 96; 99; 100 *n–š*: 84; 103; 116; 119

	k–r–š: 8; 14 *l–b*: 29; 31; 33; 35 *l–m–d*: 32; 39 *m–ʾ–t*: 10; 12; 38 *m–ḫ–ṣ*: 27; 35 *m–n*: 29; 30; 31; 35 *p–š–ḫ*: 22; 35 *q–t–ʾ*: 33; 36 *r–ʾ–b*: 7; 25 *r–š–ʾ*: 23; 25 *s–ḫ–r*: 8; 16; 20	*š–k–n*: 77; 81 *š–m–š*: 71; 78 *š–m–y*: 77; 88; 108 *ṭ–ʾ–b*: 118; 120
Anaphora	–	–
Anadiplosis	–	–
Epanadiplosis	–	–
Hyperbaton	–	–
Anastrophe	1; 9; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 17; 18; 20; 21; 22; 24; 26; 32; 36; 37; 38; 39	71; 72; 74; 77; 79; 80; 85; 89; 97; 98; 102; 106; 113; 116; 118; 119

Table 10 - Syntactic figures identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120

Semantic Figures	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120**
Epithet	1–4; 29; 31	–
Vocative	–	120
Merism	2; 4; 5–6; 19–20; 28	77; 88; 115

Enumeration	25–28	77–79
Climax	–	82
Simile	5; 6; 19; 20; 37	–
Metaphor	2; 4; 5; 7	–
Synonymous parallelism	30 and 32	80–82; 84–85; 97–98
Antithetical parallelism	2; 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	–
Pun	–	71

Table 11 - Semantic figures identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120

Morphologic Figures	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120**
Polyptoton	23 and 25	–
Figura etymologica	–	80; 119

Table 12 - Morphologic figures identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120

This wide variety of poetic devices and their overlap are an expression of the units' eloquence and literariness, and this in itself can be seen as a form of praise to Marduk, since the hymns' sophistication can reflect Marduk's own sophistication and power.[430] The poetics also emphasizes Marduk's mercy and praise, two of the rhetorical purposes.

[430] See, for example, how Piccin and Worthington (2015: 118) take the formal complexity of *Ludlul* I:1–40 as an expression of Marduk's own complexity.

For example, the ring structure of the whole composition with two hymns framing the protagonist's narration emphasizes Marduk's move from wrath to mercy and his praise by both Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and the Babylonians (see §2.3.2.1). In *Ludlul* I:1–40, certain examples of merism (*Ludlul* I:2, 4, 5–6, 19–20) and chiasmus (*Ludlul* I:5–6, 7–8, 9–10, 33, 34) highlight the antitheses between Marduk's wrath and mercy, ultimately contributing to the praise of the god's all-encompassing power. In *Ludlul*'s final hymn, the rhetorical questions (*Ludlul* V:71–74), enumeration (*Ludlul* V:77–79), climax (*Ludlul* V:82), and *figura etymologica* (*Ludlul* V:119) are examples of poetic devices deployed to emphasize Marduk's praise and mercy shown to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. These different examples in both hymns contribute to the praise of Marduk and the emphasis on his mercy and show a link to the hymns' speakers, audiences, and purposes.

3 Poetic and Rhetorical Analysis of Akkadian Šuila-Prayers

This chapter follows a similar structure to chapter 2. I first offer an analysis of the three selected Akkadian šuila-prayers' rhetorical context (§3.1). I then focus on each šuila specifically, starting with Marduk 2 (§3.2), then Ištar 1 (§3.3), and finally Šamaš 1 (§3.4). For each šuila, I offer a transcription and translation and a poetic analysis. In the summary (§3.5), the poetic devices identified in all three prayers will be presented in five tables, each corresponding to one of the five categories of poetic figures.

3.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

The three selected šuila-prayers use a first-person speaker, similarly to *Ludlul*, but in most manuscripts the individual speaking is not identified. Because of the petitionary character of the prayers, it is possible generally to identify the speaker as a supplicant who presents a set of petitions to the deities. In manuscript CBS 1701 (o. 1′), preserving the šuila Marduk 2, the speaker is identified as Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (r. 667–648 BC), the brother of Aššurbanipal and the king of Babylonia.[431] This ruler is also identified as the speaker in CBS 1519 (o. 17), a manuscript preserving the šuila Šamaš 1.[432] The tablet SU 1951.45+ (o. 19), also preserving the šuila Šamaš 1, identifies Aplūtu, an unknown man from Ḫuzirina or a king.[433] These references demonstrate the use of the same prayer by different individuals, suggesting that the speaker changes depending on who is using the prayer.[434] In fact, two manuscripts, Sm 512 (l. 1′), preserving the šuila Marduk 2, and K 16376+ (l. 18′), preserving the šuila Šamaš 1, include a general self-presentation formula that can be used by anyone: *anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna ištaršu annannītu*, "I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so, whose personal god is so-and-so, whose personal goddess is so-and-so."[435]

Regarding the audiences, each šuila has its own divine addressee: Marduk in the šuila Marduk 2; Ištar in the šuila Ištar 1; and Šamaš in the šuila Šamaš 1. The rubric of each prayer indicates the divine addressee as each has the structure: ka.inim.ma šu.il$_2$.la$_2$

[431] CBS 1701 = Lutz 1919: no. 108. On Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and his reign, see Zaia 2019: 247–268.
[432] CBS 1519 = Myhrman 1911: no. 12.
[433] SU 1951.45+ = Gurney and Finkelstein 1957: no. 61. On Aplūtu, see Smith 2011: 367, 374.
[434] The use of specific names can point to specific occasions when the prayer was employed or the specific name can stand for any person (Mayer 1976: 48).
[435] Sm 512 = King 1896: no. 54; K 16376+ = Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 23. On self-presentation formulas in šuila-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 46–52. The manuscript K 10243 (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 27) might have preserved this formula in o. 11, but currently only the sign TUM is preserved, possibly indicating the feminine ending of *annannītu*. As my rhetorical analysis follows the principle of *intentio operis*, I will not focus on whether the supplicant was the actual speaker of the prayer, but on this topic, see Mayer 1976: 59–66.

DN.kam, "it is the wording of a šuila-prayer to DN."[436] The names of the deities are also mentioned within the prayer: Marduk 2:3, 10, 22; Ištar 1:1, 5, 23; and Šamaš 1:3, 4, 17, 34. In the blessing stanza of each prayer, the supplicant also mentions other gods who should bless the main deity to whom the šuila is addressed: Ea (Marduk 2:25), Enlil (Marduk 2:25), *ilū ša kiššati*, "the gods of totality" (Marduk 2:26; Ištar 1:43; Šamaš 1:36), and *ilū rabûtu*, "the great gods" (Marduk 2:27; Ištar 1:44; Šamaš 1:37). In the petitions of the šuila Šamaš 1, Bunene (Šamaš 1:32) and Aya (Šamaš 1:33) are also mentioned. These deities are always the subject of precative verbal forms addressed to the main god of the prayer and thus these other deities are not addressed directly. Nevertheless, they are still asked to bless the main deity and are, therefore, part of the divine audience.

The rhetorical purposes of the šuila-prayers are closely linked to the set of petitions presented in the prayers. These petitions generally address the "reconciliation with the divine sphere, dissolution of guilt, recovery from physical illness, a favorable future, and favorable social relations."[437] These petitions are thus meant to change the current situation of the supplicant through the action of the addressed deities. The negative circumstances of the supplicant are particularly important in the *attalû*, "eclipse," formula, a set of phrases mentioning a negative omen that took place:[438]

> *ina lumun attalî sîn ša ina araḫ annanna ūmi annanna iššakna*
> *lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti*
> *ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ*
>
> On account of the evil of a lunar eclipse that took place on the month so-and-so (and) the day so-and-so,
> The evil of signs (and) portents, bad (and) unfavourable,
> that are in my palace and in my land.

Regarding the selected rhetorical units, this is the exact formula preserved in Sm 512 (ll. 2′–4′), a manuscript containing the šuila Marduk 2, in K 16376+ (ll. 19′–21′), a tablet

[436] DN = divine name. On the šuila rubric, see Frechette 2012: 107–120; Mayer 1976: 23–26.
[437] Frechette 2012: 157. On the petitions in šuila-prayers, see also Mayer 1976: 210–290.
[438] On the *attalû* formula, see Mayer 1976: 100–102.

containing the šuila Šamaš 1, and possibly in K 10243 (o. 12–14), also preserving the šuila Marduk 2. The manuscript CBS 1701, containing the šuila Marduk 2, preserves in o. 3′–6′ the *attalû* formula but mentions a specific month, *Kislīmu* (o. 3′), and a day, not fully preserved but probably the fourteenth. It also adds the following line:

o. 6′ [*pal*]*ḫāku adrā*[*ku*] *šutādurāku*
I am frightened, afraid, (and) terrified.

(CBS 1701 o. 6′, Marduk 2)

The expression *palḫāku adrāku* (*u*) *šutādurāku*, "I am frightened, afraid, (and) terrified," is also preserved in SU 1951.45+ (o. 26), a manuscript containing the šuila Šamaš 1, and CBS 1519 (o. 20), preserving the same prayer. These two tablets do not refer to a lunar eclipse as the negative omen but rather to other events. SU 1951.45+ mentions the breaking of a peg of a chariot and red ants:

o. 22 *ina lumun mim*[*ma*] *ḫuṣāb narkabtīya ša iššeb*[*ru*]
o. 23 *ina lumun kul*[*ba*]*bī sāmūti ša ina bītīya innam*[*rū*]
On account of the evil of any peg of my chariot which was broken,
On account of the evil of red ants which appeared in my house.

(SU 1951.45+ o. 22–23, Šamaš 1)

CBS 1519 also mentions the breaking of different elements of a chariot:

o. 18 *ina lumun lū nīru lū mašaddu lū azmarû*
o. 19 *lū mimma ḫuṣāb narkabtīya iššebirma*
On account of the evil, either the yoke, or the shaft, or the lance,
Or any peg of my chariot was broken.

(CBS 1519 o. 18–19, Šamaš 1)

The *attalû* formula in its traditional wording or any other references to other omens point to the unfavourable circumstances surrounding the supplicants. The šuila-prayers were thus part of ritual actions meant to avert the negative consequences of these omens by

restoring a proper relationship with the gods who could act in favour of the supplicant.[439] Therefore, the prayers were also meant to have an effect on the supplicant himself by reminding him of the ability of the deities to change his circumstances. The rhetorical effects of the poetics on the supplicant, who is suffering, thus also have to be considered, as calming him is part of the purposes.

Zgoll showed how the structure of the šuila-prayers and their accompanying rituals models the structure of a human audience, where a petitioner aims to obtain help from a superior.[440] This comparison provides insight into the key purposes of the šuila-prayers. Like in a human audience, the supplicant attempts to convince the deity to intervene within a relationship of reciprocity between a superior, the deity, on the one hand, and a subordinate, the supplicant, on the other.[441] The šuila-prayers thus have a petitionary character, that is, they aim, through a set of petitions, to persuade the deities to take action and change the supplicant's situation. The prayers' rhetorical purposes are, therefore, twofold: calming the supplicant and persuading the deities to help him.

[439] On the possibilities of protection against negative omens and for further literature, see Ulanowski 2021: 69–74. On the evil of lunar eclipses, see Rochberg 2018: 287–315.
[440] Her study is based on a comparison with the human audiences in the *Poor Man of Nippur*. For this comparison, see Zgoll 2003a: 190–197. See also Lenzi 2024b: 202–210; 2010: 311; Zernecke 2011a: 314.
[441] On reciprocity between deity and supplicant, see Frechette 2012: 158–160.

3.2. Šuila Marduk 2

3.2.1. Transcription and Translation

1 *gašru* | *šūpû* || *etel*[442] | *eridu*

2 *rubû* | *tizqāru* || *bukur* | *nudimmud*

3 *marūtuk* | *šalbābu* || *murīš* | *e-engura*[443]

4 *bēl* | *esagil* || *tukulti*[444] | *bābili*

5 *rāʾim* | *ezida* || *mušallim* | *napišti*[445]

6 *ašarēd* | *emaḫtila* || *mudeššû* | *balāṭi*

7 *ṣūlul* (|) *māti* || *gāmil* (|) *nišī* | *rapšāti*[446]

8 *ušumgal* | *kališ* | *parakkī*

9 *šumka* | *kališ* || *ina pī* (|) *nišī* | *ṭāb*[447]

10 *marūtuk* | *bēlu* | *rabû* || *ilu* | *rēmēnû*[448]

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[442] IM 135104.A, r. 1 (= von Weiher 1988: no. 78): *etel*(nir.gal$_2$); VAT 9823+, o. i 29 (= Ebeling 1923: no. 23 and 25): *e-tel*; K 2538+, o. 1 (= Oshima 2011: pl. XXVIII): *e-tel*; K 10243, o. 1 (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 27): [*e*]-ˈ*tel*ˈ; BM 32909, o. 1 (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 26): *e-tel-lu*; SU 1951.113, o. 1 (= Gurney and Finkelstein 1957: no. 55): *e-tel-li*; IM 135200, l. 8′ (= von Weiher 1983: no. 11): *e*-ˈ*tel*ˈ; K 10354+, l. 6′ (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 28–29): *i-lit-ti*; K 15748, r. 1′ (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 30): *e-tel*; K 3392, r. 14′ (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 83): *e-tel*-[*lu*]; IM 76966+, r. 28′ (= von Weiher 1983: no. 18): *etel*(nir.gal$_2$). K 10354+ is currently the only manuscript preserving the term *ilittu*, "offspring."

[443] IM 135104.A, r. 2: <*e$_2$*>-*engur-ra*; VAT 9823+, o. i 31: *e$_2$-engur-ra*; K 2538+, o. 3: *e$_2$-engur-ra*; K 10243, o. 3: [*e$_2$*]-ˈ*engur*ˈ-*ra*; SU 1951.113, o. 3: *e$_2$-engur-ra*ˈ(RI); K 10354+ , l. 8′: <*e$_2$*>-*engur*-ˈ*ra*ˈ. BM 32909 omits the term *e-engura*.

[444] VAT 8235, o. 4 (= Ebeling 1923: no. 59): *tukul-ti*; IM 135104.A, r. 3: *tuk-li*; VAT 9823+, o. i 32: *tukul-ti*; K 2538+, o. 4: *tukul-ti*; BM 32909, o. 4: *tu-kul-tu$_2$*; SU 1951.113, o. 4: *tukul-ti*; IM 135200, l. 10′: *tukul-ti*; K 10354+, l. 9′: *tukul-ti*; BM 40621, o. 21 (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.40621, accessed 26/03/2026): *tukul-ti*. IM 135104.A is currently the only manuscript preserving the term *tuklu*, "help."

[445] BM 32909 omits the term *napišti*.

[446] BM 32909 omits the term *rapšāti*.

[447] VAT 8235, o. 9: *ṭa-a-bi*; IM 135104.A, r. 5: *ṭa-a-bi*; VAT 9823+, o. i 37: *ṭa-a-bu*; K 2538+, o. 7: *ṭa-a-ab*; K 10243, o. 9: [*ṭa*]-*a-ba*; BM 32909, o. 9: *ṭāb*(du$_{10}$.ga); SU 1951.113, o. 8: ˈ*ṭāb*(du$_{10}$.ga)ˈ; IM 135200, l. 13′: *ṭa*-[*a-bi*].

[448] IM 135104.A (r. 5) and K 2538+ (o. 8) include only the first colon of this line, omitting the epithet *ilu rēmēnû*. Nevertheless, these tablets do not follow the expected poetic line division as some poetic lines are split between two different lines on the tablet, suggesting that the scribes did not fully observe the poetic tradition regarding this šuila.

(CBS 1701, Sm 512, and K 10243 include the *attalû* formula between these lines)[449]

11 *ina qibītīka*[450] | *kitti*[451] | *lubluṭ*[452]

12 *lušlimma* | *luštammara* | *ilūtka*[453]

13 *ēma* | *uṣammaru* | *lukšud*[454]

14 *šuškin* | *kitti* | *ina pīya*[455]

15 *šubši* | *amāt* (||) *damiqti* | *ina libbīya*

16 *tīru* | *u nanzāzu* || *liqbû* | *damiqtī*[456]

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[449] CBS 1701 = Lutz 1919: no. 108; Sm 512 = King 1896: no. 54.

[450] VAT 8235, o. 11: [*ina*] ⌜*qi*⌝-*bi-ti-ka*; IM 135104.A, r. 5: *ina qi₂-bit-ka*; VAT 9823+, o. i 39: [ina] ⌜*qi₂*⌝-⌜*biti*⌝-⌜*ka*⌝; K 2538+, o. 8: *ina qabû*(du₁₁.ga) *qibīti*(inim)-*ka*; K 2558+, o. 5′ (= King 1896: no. 9): *ina qi₂-bi-ti-ka*; BM 32909, o. 11: *ina qi₂-bi-ti-ka*; Sm 512, l. 5′: [*ina*] *qibīti*(du₁₁.ga)-*ka*; SU 1951.113, o. 10: [*ina qi₂*]-*bit-ka*; CBS 1701, o. 9′: [ina] ⌜*qi₂*⌝-*bi*-⌜*ti*⌝-*ka*; IM 135200, l. 14′: *ina qibīti*(du₁₁)⌜*bi?*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝-*ka*; VAT 19215, l. 3′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/VAT.19215, accessed 26/03/2026): *ina qi₂-*<*bi*>*-ti-ka*. K 2538+ is currently the only manuscript preserving the construct chain *ina qabû qibītīka*, "By the saying of your command."

[451] VAT 8235, o. 11: *kit-ti*; IM 135104.A, r. 5: *kit-tu₂*; VAT 9823+, o. i 39: ⌜*kit*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝; K 2538+, o. 8: *kit*ᴵ(E₂)-*ti*; Rm 517, o. 11 (= Pinches 1891: 21, 21*/1): *ki?-it?-tu₂?*; K 2558+, o. 5′: *ṣir*-⌜*ti*⌝; BM 32909, o. 11: *kit-tu₂*; Sm 512, l. 5′: *kit-ti*; SU 1951.113, o. 10: *kit-ti*; CBS 1701, o. 9′: *kit*-⌜*ti*⌝; IM 135200, l. 14′: ⌜*kit?*⌝-[*ti?*]; VAT 19215, l. 3′: *kit*-⌜*ti*⌝. K 2558+ is currently the only manuscript preserving the term *ṣirtu*, "lofty."

[452] VAT 8235, o. 11: *lu-ub-luṭ*; IM 135104.A, r. 5: *lu-ub-luṭ*; VAT 9823+, o. i 39: ⌜*lu*⌝-*ub₂-luṭ*; K 2538+, o. 8: *lu-ub₂-luṭ*; BM 32909, o. 11: *lu-ub-*<*luṭ*>; Sm 512, l. 5′: ⌜*lu*⌝-[*ub-luṭ*]; SU 1951.113, o. 10: *lu-ub*ᴵ(KU)-*luṭ*; CBS 1701, o. 9′: [*lu*]-⌜*ub*⌝-*luṭ*; BM 46399, o. 2′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.46399, accessed 26/03/2026): [*lu*]-⌜*ub*⌝-⌜*luṭ*⌝.

[453] BM 32909 omits the term *ilūtka*. Piccin (2021a: 254) and Greenwood (2011: 317) take lines 11 and 12 as one line, as does, for example, the manuscript VAT 8235 o. 11. Nevertheless, the manuscript VAT 9823+ o. i 40–41 takes them as two separate lines. I follow this witness as this understanding is more in accord with traditional Akkadian metrical divisions. Moreover, line divisions seem to be taken into consideration by the scribe of VAT 9823+, since in o. i 45, he uses a cuneiform marker to indicate that the line on the tablet contains two poetic lines, in this case lines 17 and 18.

[454] VAT 8235, o. 12: *lu-*⌜*uk*⌝-*šu-ud*; IM 135104.A, r. 6: *lu-uk-šu-ud*; VAT 9823+, o. i 41: *lu-uk-šu-ud*; K 2538+, o. 10: *lu-uk-šu-ud*; K 10243, o. 15: [*lu-uk-šu*]-⌜*ud*⌝; BM 32909, o. 13: *lu-uk-*<*šu-ud*>; Sm 512, l. 7′: *lu*-[*uk-šu-ud*]; SU 1951.113, o. 11: *lu-*⌜*uk*⌝-*šu-ud*; CBS 1701, o. 11′: *lu-uk-*⌜*šu*⌝-*ud*; IM 135200, l. 16′: *lu-uk-šu-ud*; BM 46399, o. 3′: *lu-uk-*⌜*šu*⌝-[*ud*].

[455] VAT 8235, o. 13: *ina pi-ia*; VAT 9823+, o. i 42: *ina pī*(ka)-*ia*; K 2538+, o. 10: *ina pi-ia*; BM 32909, o. 14: *ina* ⌜*pī*(ka)⌝-⌜*ia₂*⌝; SU 1951.113, o. 12: *ina pī*(ka)-*ia-a*; CBS 1701, o. 12′: *ina pi-ia*; IM 135200, l. 16′: *ina pi-ia*; BM 46399, o. 4′: *ina* ⌜*šap*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝-⌜*ia*⌝. BM 46399 is currently the only manuscript preserving the term *šaptīya*, "my lips."

[456] VAT 8235, o. 15: *liq-bu-u₂ damiqtī*(sig₅)^{ti3}; IM 135104.A, r. 7: *liq-bu-u damqitu*(sig₅)^{tu2}; VAT 9823+, o. i 44: *liq-bu-u* ^{munus}*damiqtī*(sig₅)^{ti3}; K 2538+, o. 11: *liq-bu-u damiqtī*(sig₅)^{ti}; K 2558+, o. 10′: *liq-*⌜*bu*⌝-[*u₂*]; BM 32909, r. 1: *liq-*<*bu-u₂ damiqtī*(sig₅)^{ti}>; SU 1951.113, o. 14: *liq-bu-u damiqtī*(sig₅)^{mu}; CBS 1701, o. 14′: *liq-bu-u₂ damīqtu*(sig₅)^{tu2}; IM 135200, l. 18′: *liq-bu-u₂ damiqtī*(sig₅)^{ti3}; BM 46399, o. 6′: *liq-*⌜*bu*⌝-[*u₂*]

17 *ilī* | *lizziz* | *ina imnīya*

18 *ištarī* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*[457]

19 *ilu* | *mušallimu* || *ina idīya*[458] | *lū kayyāna*

20 *šurkamma* | *qabâ* || *šemâ*[459] | *u magāra*

21 *amāt* | *aqabbû* || *kīma*[460] *aqabbû* | *lū magrat*[461]

22 *marūtuk* | *bēlu* | *rabû* || *napištī* | *qīša*[462]

23 *balāṭ*[463] | *napištīya* | *qibi*[464]

24 *maḫarka* | *namriš* || *atalluka* | *lušbi*[465]

25 *enlil* | *liḫdūka* || *ea* | *lirīška*[466]

26 *ilū* | *ša kiššati* | *likrubūka*

27 *ilū* | *rabûtu* || *libbaka* | *liṭibbū*

1 Powerful, resplendent, pre-eminent of Eridu,

ʳ*damīqti*(sig$_5$)¹ʳ^{ti3}¹; Sp-III.853, l. 2′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/Sp-III.853, accessed 26/03/2026): *liq-*ʳ*bu*¹-ʳ*u$_2$*¹.

[457] CBS 1701, o. 15′–16′ uses the numbers 15 and 150 as logograms for *imnu* and *šumēlu*.

[458] VAT 8235, o. 18: *ina idi*(a$_2$)-*ia*; IM 135104.A, r. 8: *ina idīya*(a$_2$)^{mu}; VAT 9823+, o. i 47: *ina idi*(a$_2$)-*ia*; K 2538+, o. 11: *i-*ʳ*da*¹-*a-*ʳ*a*¹; K 2558+, o. 13′: *ina idīya*(a$_2$)^{mu}; BM 32909, r. 4: *ina idīya*(a$_2$)^{mu}; SU 1951.113, o. 16: *ina idīya*(a$_2$)^{mu}; BM 46399, o. 9′–10′: *i-*ʳ*da*¹-[*a-a*] / *ina re-ši-*[*ia*]; Sp-III.853, l. 4′: [*ina*] ʳ*idīya*(a$_2$)¹^{mu}.

[459] BM 46399 omits the term *šemâ*.

[460] VAT 8235, o. 20: ʳ*kīma*(gin$_7$)¹; VAT 9823+, o. i 49: *kīma*(gin$_7$); K 2538+, o. 16: *e-ma*; K 2558+, o. 15′: *ki-ma*; BM 32909, r.6′: *e-ma*; SU 1951.113, o. 18: ʳ*kīma*(gin$_7$)¹; VAT 14301, l. 2′ (= Jakob 2017: no. 12): *e-ma*. CBS 1701, r. 3 has an ill-formed sign before *-ma*, so it is impossible to state whether it preserves *ēma*, "whatever," or *kīma*, "like."

[461] BM 32909 omits *lū magrat*.

[462] VAT 8235, o. 21: *napištī*(zi)ʳ^{ti}¹ ʳ*qi$_2$*¹-ʳ*i*¹-*ša$_2$*; VAT 9823+, o. i 50: *na-piš-ti qi$_2$-šam*; K 2538+, o. 17: *napištī*(zi)^{ti} *qi$_2$-šam*; K 2558+, o. 16′: *napištī*(zi)^{ti3} *qi$_2$-šam*; BM 32909, r. 7: *napištu*(zi)^{tu2} *qi$_2$-šam*; SU 1951.113, o. 19: *napištī*(zi)^{ti} *qi$_2$-*ʳ*šam*¹; CBS 1701, r. 4: *napištī*(zi)ʳ^{ti3}¹ *qi$_2$-*ʳ*šam*¹; VAT 14301, l. 3′: ʳ*napištī*(zi)¹^{ti} *qi$_2$-*[*i-ša$_2$*]; BM 46399, o. 13′: [*lu*]-ʳ*ub*¹-*luṭ lu-uš-*ʳ*lim*¹-[*ma*]. BM 46399 is currently the only manuscript preserving the expression *lubluṭ lušlimma*, "may I live, may I become well," possibly a scribal error because of the use of these verbs in lines 11 and 12.

[463] When *balāṭu* and *napištu* are found in close proximity, I usually translate the former as "life" and the latter as "vitality," but in this line, *balāṭu* is in a construct state with *napištu*, "life." Therefore, I am taking *balāṭu* as meaning "good health" in accordance with CAD's view of this term as also referring to the "good health (held and dispensed by the gods)" (CAD B: 46–48), since this seems to be the meaning in this line.

[464] BM 32909 omits the first-person possessive suffix and the verb *qibi*. Piccin (2021a: 254) and Greenwood (2011: 319) take lines 22 and 23 as one line, based again on VAT 8235 o. 21. Nevertheless, I follow again VAT 9823+ o. i 50–51, as this division is more in accord with traditional Akkadian metrical divisions.

[465] BM 32909 omits *lušbi*.

[466] SU 1951.113 does not include this line.

2 Exalted prince, son of Nudimmud,

3 Sagacious Marduk, who gives the E-engur cause to rejoice.

4 Lord of Esagil, the trust of Babylon,

5 Beloved of Ezida, who sustains life,

6 Foremost of Emaḫtila, who makes life abundant.

7 Protection of the land, who spares the numerous people,

8 Monarch of the sanctuaries everywhere,

9 Your name everywhere is sweet in the mouth of the people.

10 Marduk, great lord, merciful god!

11 By your true command, may I live,

12 May I become well, may I praise your divinity,

13 So that whatever I wish, may I achieve.

14 Establish truth in my mouth,

15 Create a good word in my heart,

16 So that courtier and attendant may speak well about me.

17 May my god stand on my right side,

18 May my goddess stand on my left side,

19 So that the god who sustains (me) may be constantly at my side.

20 Give me speaking, listening, and acceptance,

21 So that the word which I speak, when I speak, may be accepted.

22 Marduk, great lord, grant me my life,

23 Command the good health of my life,

24 So that before you, I may enjoy walking about splendidly.

25 May Enlil become joyful about you, may Ea rejoice over you,

26 May the gods of totality bless you,

27 May the great gods sweeten your heart.

3.2.2. Poetic Analysis

3.2.2.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Abusch and Greenwood divide the prayer into three main stanzas: the address in lines 1–9; the petition in lines 13–21; and the blessing in lines 25–27.[467] However, both scholars take lines 10–12 and 22–24 as "capsule šuila-prayers,"[468] "summary statements of invocation, prayer, and thanksgiving."[469] My understanding of the šuila's structure is not in accord with this view as I do not take lines 10–12 and 22–24 as "capsule šuila-prayers," but rather as part of the three stanzas: the address in lines 1–10; the petition in lines 11–24; and the blessing in lines 25–27.

Stanza	Lines in šuila Marduk 2	Chapter section
Address	1–10	§3.2.2.2.1
Petition	11–24	§3.2.2.2.2
Blessing	25–27	§3.2.2.2.3

Table 13 - Stanzaic division of šuila Marduk 2

Regarding line 10, manuscripts CBS 1701, Sm 512, and K 10243 separate it from lines 11–12 by the *attalû* formula, suggesting that ancient scribes understood line 10 as part of

[467] See Greenwood 2011: 313; Abusch 1983: 9. On the šuila-prayers' tripartite structure, see my comments in §1.4.1.2.
[468] Greenwood 2011: 313; Abusch 1983: 9–10.
[469] Abusch 1983: 10.

the introductory hymn or address.[470] The metre of lines 11–13 is the same, as they all have three poetic feet, an example of metrical parallelism that suggests grouping these lines into a triplet. The repetition of first-person precative verbal forms in lines 11–13 is another form of parallelism that contributes to the cohesion of this triplet. I group lines 22–24 together like Abusch and Greenwood, but I take them as the last triplet of the petition section, because lines 22 and 23 are direct requests as the imperative verbal forms show. Line 24 uses a first-person precative to express the purpose of the requests in the previous two lines. This verbal pattern is also visible in two triplets (Marduk 2:14–16, 22–24) and one couplet (Marduk 2:20–21). Lines 11–13 and 17–19 are also formed by precative verbal forms and the last precative in each triplet, based on the understanding of the other strophes, can express purpose.[471]

The poetic strophic pattern in this rhetorical unit is triplets, three-line strophes.[472] The three-time repetition of a word, expression, or idea is particularly emphatic in Akkadian.[473] Therefore, this pattern can also be considered emphatic and generally contributes to the rhetorical effectiveness of the šuila, as well as highlighting the third verse in each triplet, an aspect that will be explored in the micro-level analysis. The use of a set pattern can also be regarded as calming for both the supplicant and the deity as it creates balance.[474]

Zgoll's model of a human audience applied to the structure of the šuila-prayers emphasizes the prayer's rhetorical goals as the movement from initial praise in the

[470] The *attalû* formula is usually situated within a section of lamentation before the petitions and after the address. See Mayer 1976: 35, 100–102.
[471] On the precative as an expression of purpose, namely after an imperative verbal form, see Kouwenberg 2010: 212.
[472] This had already been noted by Abusch (1983: 4).
[473] See Piccin 2021a: 211.
[474] Hurley and O'Neill 2012: 51. The possible existence of pauses between stanzas can contribute to this idea of balance. Regarding the possibility of pauses in performance at the end of lines, see West 1997: 185. On the psychological impact that the end of lines, stanzas, and poems have on a human audience, see Wassiliwizky and others 2017: 1235.

address, to the petitions, and then to the final blessing is a movement that attempts to convince the deity to act.[475] Thus the structure of the šuila Marduk 2 as a whole is also a part of the prayer's rhetoric.

3.2.2.2. Micro-Level Analysis

3.2.2.2.1. Marduk 2:1–10

The prayer opens with an enumeration of epithets addressed to Marduk:

1 *gašru* | *šūpû* || *etel* | *eridu*
2 *rubû* | *tizqāru* || *bukur* | *nudimmud*
3 *marūtuk* | *šalbābu* || *murīš* | *e-engura*
4 *bēl* | *esagil* || *tukulti* | *bābili*
5 *rāʾim* | *ezida* || *mušallim* | *napišti*
6 *ašarēd* | *emaḫtila* || *mudeššû* | *balāṭi*

Powerful, resplendent, pre-eminent of Eridu,
Exalted prince, son of Nudimmud,
Sagacious Marduk, who gives the E-engur cause to rejoice.
Lord of Esagil, the trust of Babylon,
Beloved of Ezida, who sustains life,
Foremost of Emaḫtila, who makes life abundant.

(Marduk 2:1–6)

The different levels of parallelism in these two triplets contribute to their balance. If one takes each construct state in both triplets as two separate feet, all lines have four simple poetic feet. These lines also contain other forms of parallelism besides the repetition of metrical patterns. In the first triplet, all the lines have grammatical parallelism: the first colon of each line is composed of a noun (*gašru*, *rubû*, and *marūtuk*) followed by an attributive adjective (*šūpû*, *tizqāru*, and *šalbābu*), and the second colon is composed of a

[475] See how Zgoll (2003b: 281–282) compares the structure of the šuila-prayers to Ištar to the movement within a temple that brings the supplicant closer and closer to the deity.

construct chain (*etel eridu*, *bukur nudimmud*, and *murīš e-engura*).[476] This balance is then expanded in the second triplet where all the lines are formed by grammatically parallel construct chains in each colon.[477] The second triplet also includes synonymous parallelism because of the similar ideas of life preservation in the second cola of lines 5 and 6 (*mušallim napišti* and *mudeššû balāṭi*). The parallelism in these lines extends to the verbal morphology because of the use of two D-stem active participles in the construct state (*mušallim* and *mudeššû*) whose causative and factitive meanings add more agency to Marduk in his healing role.

The employment of phonologic figures also contributes to the creation of balance and regularity in these first two triplets. Lines 1–3 have assonance of the vowel /u/, and in lines 4–6, the poet uses a rhyming /i/ at the end of each line, further developed in lines 5 and 6 because of the respective endings /ti/ and /ṭi/.[478] Another phonologic figure is the sound repetition that occurs between Ezida and the logogram ZI for *napišti* in line 5, and between Emaḫtila and the logogram TI.LA for *balāṭi* in line 6.[479] This probably was a scribal refinement that reflected the poetic artistry put into these prayers, as in performance the Akkadian term was the one recited.[480] Therefore, this figure had a weaker rhetorical impact on the audience.

These different forms of parallelism expressed through prosodic, syntactic, semantic, and phonologic figures created regularity and balance, and this would probably

[476] In the first line, *gašru*, "powerful," can be understood as a substantivized adjective, thus, mirroring the following lines.
[477] This parallel use of adjectives and construct chains describing the deity to whom the prayer or hymn is addressed is a common feature of the Akkadian poetic tradition. See, for example, this feature in the Old Babylonian hymns to Papulegara, as edited in Streck and Wasserman 2008: 335–358.
[478] This rhyme repetition in lines 5 and 6 adds another layer to the synonymous parallelism between *napišti* and *balāṭi*.
[479] This figure had already been noted by Abusch (1983: 6.).
[480] See, for example, how in CBS 1701, o. 15′–16′, the scribe uses the numbers 15 and 150 as logograms for *imnu* and *šumēlu* even though in performance the *āšipu* probably recited the Akkadian terms as they are written out syllabically in other manuscripts.

have had an aural impact as parallelism and repetition were central in performance.[481] This balance and regularity were important for the speaker, the supplicant, since they contributed to calmness at the start of the šuila. In fact, regularity in poetry can evoke happiness,[482] and contribute to the aesthetic enjoyment of the unit.[483]

This balance and regularity were also important for the intended divine audience: Marduk. These lines represent the first address to the god and, according to Zgoll's view, this corresponds, in a human audience, to the first address to the superior in order to secure his attention.[484] Therefore, the enumeration of epithets that build up Marduk's status alongside the balance and regularity created through the poetics are rhetorical strategies to secure the god's attention and intervention in favour of the supplicant.

Another emphatic poetic device is the use of a form of hymnic parallelism in the first triplet, as Marduk is first addressed with the titles *gašru šūpû*, "powerful, resplendent" (Marduk 2:1), and *rubû tizqāru*, "exalted prince" (Marduk 2:2), before the revelation of his name in line 3.[485] The use of Marduk's name in the third line follows the three-time repetition emphatic pattern in Akkadian poetry, highlighting this variation of hymnic parallelism and the deity to whom the prayer is addressed. The use of Marduk's name as a vocative in line 3 is an important semantic rhetorical figure. This poetic device aims to draw attention and evoke a response or emotion from the addressee. Moreover, the successive use of epithets is a form of accumulation through enumeration.[486] This device adds emphasis to the address by juxtaposing a series of epithets which all serve to

[481] See Wisnom 2023: 116–117. For a brief analysis of the links between parallelism, orality, and written culture, see Wisnom 2023: 115–116.
[482] On this psychological effect of rhythm regularity, see Johnson-Laird and Oatley 2022: 7.
[483] On the importance of poetic form for aesthetic enjoyment of poetry, see Obermeier and others 2013: 6–7.
[484] See Lenzi 2024b: 205; 2010: 309; Zgoll 2003a: 195. This idea of the address corresponding to a first polite contact with a superior had already been noted by Gerstenberger (1980: 97).
[485] This device had already been noted by Piccin (2021a: 253).
[486] This feature in the šuila Marduk 2 had already been noted by Piccin (2021a: 253). On accumulation, see Piccin 2021a: 100.

praise Marduk and ultimately secure his attention.[487] These poetic devices also draw the attention of the supplicant to the god and his power, a way of reassuring him.

In lines 5 and 6, the mid-line caesura sets a pause before two important attributes of Marduk: *mušallim napišti*, "who sustains life," and *mudeššû balāṭi*, "who makes life abundant."[488] These elements, linked to the preservation of life, can be understood within the role of Marduk as a god of fertility, a role visible in prayers and in Marduk's control over the winds and rain.[489] Marduk, through syncretism with Ninurta and Asalluḫi, became a canal digger and water controller deity,[490] and these features, because of their ties to water, also express Marduk's fertility role. The emphasis on these attributes alludes to the needs of the supplicant for life and acts as a reminder to Marduk of his role.[491]

The triplet of lines 7–9 breaks the balance of the first six lines, despite maintaining the enumeration of epithets:

7 *ṣūlul* (|) *māti* || *gāmil* (|) *nišī* | *rapšāti*
8 *ušumgal* | *kališ* | *parakkī*
9 *šumka* | *kališ* || *ina pī* (|) *nišī* | *ṭāb*

Protection of the land, who spares the numerous people,
Monarch of the sanctuaries everywhere,
Your name everywhere is sweet in the mouth of the people.

(Marduk 2:7–9)

The first line can be called a "pivot line," a term defined by De Zorzi as "a line which displays strong ties to the preceding and following line(s) and has the function of semantic and structural bridge stitching together text parts that may be seen as separate."[492] Line 7 has grammatical parallelism with the previous triplet: a construct chain in each colon

[487] The use of epithets with genealogical, city, and temple references are a common feature of Mesopotamian hymnic poetry, both Akkadian and Sumerian (Metcalf 2015: 24, 51).
[488] It should be noted that these epithets are commonly used for Marduk. For a list of their uses in Akkadian prayers to Marduk, see Oshima 2011: 452–453.
[489] See Jiménez 2013: 450–451.
[490] See Oshima 2006: 86.
[491] The use of epithets referring to the deities as providers of life has a long tradition in Sumerian and Akkadian hymnody (Metcalf 2015: 35–36, 74–75).
[492] De Zorzi 2022: 385.

(*ṣūlul māti* and *gāmil nišī rapšāti*). Moreover, the first colon can be understood as a continuation of the structure of the first cola of the previous triplet: a noun describing Marduk followed by a place, temples in the previous triplet and *mātu*, "land," in line 7. Simultaneously, this line is linked to the following two lines as the thought of Marduk's power and praise by everyone is expanded in these three lines. Therefore, line 7 acts as a "pivot line" creating unity between the three triplets in the address. The continuity between the triplets is also shown phonologically in the rhyme in /i/ in lines 4–8. In this regard, line 7 rhymes its ending /āti/ with the ending /āṭi/ of line 6, demonstrating again its pivot character.[493]

The third triplet maintains the enumeration of the previous lines by continuing the praise to Marduk through his epithets. In fact, the three triplets create movement between them as they progressively expand Marduk's realms, leading to a climax.[494] In the first triplet, Marduk is linked to his father Ea by mentioning his name Nudimmud (Marduk 2:2), his city Eridu (Marduk 2:1), and his temple E-engur (Marduk 2:3). The second triplet focuses on Marduk himself by mentioning his temple Esagil and his city Babylon (Marduk 2:4), and on his son Nabû by mentioning his temple Ezida in Borsippa (Marduk 2:5), and his cella Emaḫtila in Ezida (Marduk 2:6).[495] The third triplet presents Marduk as a supreme deity who rules over all the people (Marduk 2:7) and all the sanctuaries (Marduk 2:8). Therefore, the triplets progressively move from a local to a more global dimension of Marduk's action, focusing on three different generations of gods.[496] This movement thus creates a climax as the poet extols Marduk's supreme power in the third

[493] On the use of phonologic figures to create parallelism and links between poetic lines see the *Great Hymn to Šamaš*:95 and 98, as analysed by De Zorzi 2022: 388–389.
[494] See how a litany or a succession of repetitions can lead to a climax in Akkadian poetry (Piccin 2024: 280; Wisnom 2023: 129; Vogelzang 1996: 168).
[495] The Emaḫtila cella usually follows the Ezida temple in liturgical compositions (George 1993: 121).
[496] This movement had already been noted by Abusch (1983: 5) This movement shows that there is a logic behind the epithets, unlike the statement by Piccin (2021a: 253).

triplet. Despite these clear links between the triplets, lines 7–9 act as a "counterpatterning," as the metrical parallelism of the previous triplets is broken in these lines.[497] This further contributes to the climax identified in this third triplet.

This triplet also employs other poetic devices that emphasize the praise to Marduk, acting as rhetorical strategies to secure the god's attention. In line 8, the poet uses a form of hyperbaton, as he places the adverb *kališ*, "everywhere," in the middle of a construct state, an extremely rare occurrence in Akkadian.[498] This term is then repeated in line 9 in the same poetic foot, showing its importance in the triplet and the address. Both the hyperbaton and the repetition highlight Marduk's absolute power and the praise everyone ought to direct to Marduk. The poet also repeats *nišī*, "people" (Marduk 2:7, 9), again placed in the same poetic foot of the respective line. This repetition shows the importance of Marduk for the human community, a reassuring element for the supplicant, and it is also a reminder to the god of his role for the people.

The last line of the address breaks the triplet pattern, as it is a monostich, and completes the enumeration of the epithets:

10 *marūtuk* | *bēlu* | *rabû* || *ilu* | *rēmēnû*
Marduk, great lord, merciful god!

(Marduk 2:10)

This is a central line that stands between the address and the start of the petitions, representing the last salutation to Marduk before requesting his mercy. This line has internal grammatical parallelism because, excluding the divine name, each colon has a noun (*bēlu* and *ilu*) followed by an attributive adjective (*rabû* and *rēmēnû*). The poet employs again a vocative directly using Marduk's name. This vocative might stand

[497] On the term "counterpatterning," see my reference regarding *tayyārat* in *Ludlul* I:8 (§2.2.2.2.2).
[498] In traditional Akkadian syntax, the construct state should be followed by a term in the genitive. On this topic and for exceptions, see von Soden 1995: §135.

metrically in anacrusis as this seems to be a feature in different hymns.[499] This is thus an extremely emphatic attempt to secure the god's attention. The stress pattern of the second colon also shows the emphatic character of this monostich, as it has a G-pattern: ***i**lu* | *rēmē**nû***.[500] Moreover, excluding the divine name, the cola have prosodic parallelism: *marūtuk* | ***bē**lu* | *ra**bû*** || ***i**lu* | *rēmē**nû***. This monostich thus highlights one of the main requests of the supplicant in a time of distress, mercy, through the use of prosodic, semantic, and syntactic figures. This is not only important for the deity but also for the supplicant, because he is made aware of the god's mercy and can rest assured of it.

3.2.2.2.2. Marduk 2:11–24

Lines 11–13, the first triplet of the petition, are all three-foot lines with simple feet:

11 *ina qibītīka* | *kitti* | *lubluṭ*
12 *lušlimma* | *luštammara* | *ilūtka*
13 *ēma* | *uṣammaru* | *lukšud*

By your true command, may I live,
May I become well, may I praise your divinity,
So that whatever I wish, may I achieve.

(Marduk 2:11–13)

This metrical change emphasizes the start of the petition, the core of the prayer as it is the moment when the performer and the supplicant present their requests to the deity. The grammatical parallelism in these lines is indicated morphologically through the use of first-person precatives in all three lines with the patient as the subject (*lubluṭ*, *lušlimma*, *luštammara*, and *lukšud*). This shows the change of focus from the god in the address to the needs of the supplicant in the petition. The parallelism in these lines is also expressed

[499] Regarding the possibility of anacrusis for the divine names, see the discussion for *Ludlul* I:11 (§2.2.2.2.2).
[500] On the G-stress pattern, see my comments in §1.5.1.

phonologically through the repetition of the sound /lu/. In line 11, *qibītīka* and *kitti* can be an example of alliteration because of the sounds /qi/ and /ki/ at the start of each term. In line 12, the poet employs alliteration again through the repetition of /luš/ in *lušlimma* and *luštammara*. These phonologic figures contribute to the performance of the šuila as they add rhythm and emotion.[501] The framing of the first two lines by the use of the second-person possessive *-ka* referring to Marduk, an epanadiplosis, emphasizes the god, his power, and divinity.

Lines 14–19 follow a pattern of two three-foot lines and one four-foot line:

14 *šuškin* | *kitti* | *ina pīya*
15 *šubši* | *amāt* (||) *damiqti* | *ina libbīya*[502]
16 *tīru* | *u nanzāzu* || *liqbû* | *damiqtī*
17 *ilī* | *lizziz* | *ina imnīya*
18 *ištarī* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*
19 *ilu* | *mušallimu* || *ina idīya* | *lū kayyāna*

Establish truth in my mouth,
  Create a good word in my heart,
  So that courtier and attendant may speak well about me.
May my god stand on my right side,
  May my goddess stand on my left side,
  So that the god who sustains (me) may be constantly at my side.

(Marduk 2:14–19)

In these lines, the metre reflects a crescendo as the three-foot lines lead to a four-foot line in both triplets. In the triplet of lines 14–16, the first two lines address the supplicant's own speech, but line 16 then expands to the actions of the social elite. In the triplet of lines 17–18, the first two lines refer specifically to the penitent's personal deities and his right and left side, and line 19 develops this idea by combining both male and female

[501] On the effects of phonologic figures in performance, see Rozzi 2024b: 260; Schwemer 2014: 281.
[502] This line can be understood as a four-foot or a three-foot line depending on whether one takes the construct chain *amāt damiqti* as one complex foot or two simple feet. I am taking line 15 as three-foot line because of the syntactic parallelism with line 14, which is a three-foot line, and because usually a construct chain is not separated through the mid-line caesura. See, for example, how all the examples of construct chains separated into different feet in the *Babylonian Theodicy* are not separated by the mid-line caesura: lines 8, 57, 70, 252, 254, 256, 277, 291, and 294 (West 1997: 177, note 9). In the other prayers, I will also take construct states that would be divided by the caesura as one complex foot rather than two simple feet (Šamaš 1:12, 17, 31).

protective gods into one and giving a general notion of side.[503] The notion of three-time repetition for emphasis in Akkadian poetry can also be applied to these triplets as the third line in each triplet creates a crescendo.[504]

This idea of crescendo is also visible at the syntactic level. Lines 14 and 15 are grammatically parallel: Š-stem imperative verbal forms with related meaning (*šuškin* and *šubši*); direct objects with related meaning (*kitti* and *amāt damiqti*); and prepositional phrases with *ina* and a body part with a first-person singular possessive suffix (*pīya* and *libbīya*). Lines 17 and 18 are also grammatically parallel: subjects that are a merism (*ilī* and *ištarī*);[505] identical precative verbal forms (*lizziz*); prepositional phrases which are also a merism (*imnīya* and *šumēlīya*).[506] The use of parallel male (*ilī*) and female (*ištarī*) subjects in lines 17 and 18 creates gender-matched parallelism. The parallelism between these lines extends to prosody:

17 ***i**lī* | ***li**zziz* | *ina im**nī**ya*
18 ***iš**tarī* | ***li**zziz* | *ina šumē**lī**ya*

(Marduk 2:17–18)

Lines 14–15 and 17–18 are parallel across two triplets through the grammatical rhyme /īya/, creating a homeoptoton. In both triplets, the last lines (Marduk 2:16, 19) break both the grammatical and phonologic parallelism, contributing to the idea of crescendo.

The poet employs other poetic devices that are rhetorically important. In lines 14 and 15, the poet fronts the imperative verbal forms, not because they would not create trochaic endings, but to emphasize the request. In fact, the use of imperatives and the syntactic anastrophe through their fronting are a direct address to the audience, Marduk.

[503] See Abusch 1983: 12–13.
[504] On the emphatic use of three-time repetitions, see Piccin 2021a: 211.
[505] For *ilu* and *ištaru* as a merism and further references, see my comments on *Ludlul* I:28 (§2.2.2.2.2).
[506] The word pair *imnu*, "right," and *šumēlu*, "left," are a common merism in Akkadian poetry and already used in Old Babylonian literature as shown by Wasserman's (2003: 81–82) study. The parallelism between lines 17 and 18 had already been noted by Piccin (2021a: 255).

This would have been a key rhetorical device in a set of petitions as it is an attempt to secure the attention of the entity capable of answering these petitions. The fronting of the verbs *šuškin* and *šubši* also leads to the repetition of the sound /šu/ at the start of successive poetic lines, a form of alliteration. This phonologic figure also contributes to the emphasis on these petitions.

In lines 17–19, the use of merisms creates a sense of totality, reflecting the petition for the personal deity to be constantly by the supplicant's side. By referring to the god and the goddess, and the right and the left side, the supplicant is asking for his personal god to always accompany him, an important petition for the supplicant.[507] In fact, the merisms serve as an expression of the belief that a human always needed the protection of his personal deities.[508] In this triplet, the poet repeats the sound /i/ at the start of every line, and both triplets have assonance with this vowel. As previously mentioned, the phonologic figures played an important role in the performance of the šuila.

The couplet of lines 20–21 breaks the crescendo pattern of the previous triplets:

20 *šurkamma* | *qabâ* || *šemâ* | *u magāra*
21 *amāt* | *aqabbû* || *kīma aqabbû* | *lū magrat*

Give me speaking, listening, and acceptance,
So that the word that I speak, when I speak, may be accepted.

(Marduk 2:20–21)

Couplets are the basic structuring pattern in Akkadian poetry, but not in this prayer, and, thus, the use of a couplet acts as another "counterpatterning."[509] The poet uses an anastrophe, the fronting of the imperative verbal form *šurkamma*, highlighting again the

[507] The pairing of *ilu*, "god," with *imnu*, "right," and *ištaru*, "goddess," with *šumēlu*, "left," is used in VAT 13834+ o. 28 (= Lambert 2013: pl. 64), a composition describing the reception of Nabû in Babylon in the New Year festival. For an edition of the composition, see Lambert 2013: 346–349.
[508] On the importance of the presence of the personal deities, see how Šubši-mešrê-šakkan started suffering after the departure of his personal deities (*Ludlul* I:43–44). See also Greenwood 2011: 319.
[509] For the couplet as the basic structuring pattern in Akkadian poetry, see Lenzi 2019a: 53; Hecker 1974: 142.

direct address to Marduk.[510] The references to speaking and word in this couplet align with the references to this same theme in lines 14–16. In fact, these lines repeat certain roots, emphasizing their importance within the petition stanza. Lines 15 and 21 use the construct form of *amātu*, "word." Lines 16, 20, and 21 use different verbal forms deriving from the root *q–b–ʾ*, creating a verbal polyptoton, and in line 21 this root is used twice: *aqabbû*, "I speak." The use of an imperative verbal form starting with the sound /šu/ parallels the imperatives in lines 14 and 15 which also start with the same sound. The emphasis placed on the theme of speech as shown through these different poetic devices suggests that this is the main petition of the supplicant: may what he speaks be agreeable and accepted by the gods, so that the divine and human audiences, the courtiers, may benefit the sufferer.[511] The poet's focus on speech agrees with the use of the prayer itself as a form of speech. The supplicant hopes that his speech, the prayer, may be accepted by the gods so that they move from wrath to mercy, guaranteeing a balanced life for him in regards to both human and divine realms.

The poet also emphasizes the root *m–g–r* by using it in both lines of the couplet, another polyptoton. This highlights the hope that the prayer may be accepted by the deity, the ultimate rhetorical purpose of the šuila. The assonance of the vowel /a/ and the consonance of the sound /m/ in this couplet contributes to the prayer's performativity.

The last petition of the prayer is in lines 22–24:

22 *marūtuk* | *bēlu* | *rabû* || *napištī* | *qīša*
23 *balāṭ* | *napištīya* | *qibi*
24 *maḫarka* | *namriš* || *atalluka* | *lušbi*

Marduk, great lord, grant me my life,
Command the good health of my life,
So that before you, I may enjoy walking about splendidly.

[510] This imperative verbal form is further emphasized through the use of enclitic *-ma*, as noted by Piccin (2021a: 255).
[511] Petitions for *qabû*, "speaking," *šemû*, "listening," and *magāru*, "acceptance," are common in Akkadian šuila-prayers. On these petitions, see Mayer 1976: 249–252. On the centrality of speech in its link to prayer in the šuila tradition, see also Zernecke 2011a: 184–187.

(Marduk 2:22–24)

These lines follow a similar verbal pattern to the triplet of lines 14–16 and the couplet of lines 20–21 as they have imperatives followed by a first-person precative that expresses the purpose of the previous verbal forms. The poet employs again imperatives directly addressing Marduk in lines 22 and 23 and the divine name as a vocative in line 23.[512] The first colon of line 22 is a repetition of the first colon of line 10, and the vocative might thus be in anacrusis. The direct reference to Marduk's name in line 22 is the third one in the prayer and thus particularly emphatic. These different poetic devices highlight this triplet and its petitions, the last in the šuila.

The second colon of line 22 has grammatical parallelism with line 23: direct objects involving the same root *n-p-š* (*napištī* and *balāṭ napištīya*), and imperative verbal forms with related meaning (*qīša* and *qibi*). Line 23 develops line 22 by adding the term *balāṭu*, "good health," in construct state in relation to *napištu*, "life." These terms mirror Marduk's epithets in lines 5–6 (*mušallim napišti* and *mudeššû balāṭi*). Therefore, requesting these from Marduk links this petition section to the earlier address, and shows how the poet gave cohesion to the unit and deployed Marduk's attributes when writing the petitions.[513]

This triplet also employs phonologic figures. Lines 23 and 24 rhyme in /bi/ and the terms *maḫarka* and *atalluka* in line 24 have homeoptoton through the suffix *-ka*. This triplet thus continues to give rhythm to the recitation of the prayer.

[512] The imperatives are final in these lines, unlike lines 14–15, because Marduk's name has priority.
[513] These links between the address and petitions are a common feature of Akkadian šuila-prayers (Zernecke 2011a: 189–191; Mayer 1976: 45).

3.2.2.2.3. Marduk 2:25–27

The last triplet of the prayer corresponds to the final blessing that the supplicant and the performer wish for Marduk, the main recipient of the prayer:

25 *enlil* | *liḫdūka* || *ea* | *lirīška*
26 *ilū* | *ša kiššati* | *likrubūka*
27 *ilū* | *rabûtu* || *libbaka* | *liṭibbū*

May Enlil be joyful about you, may Ea rejoice over you,
May the gods of totality bless you,
May great gods sweeten your heart.

(Marduk 2:25–27)

This triplet has a metrical pattern already identified in the address and petition sections: two four-foot lines that frame a three-foot line (Marduk 2:7–9, 22–24). Line 25 mentions two of the main gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon: Enlil, the former head of the divine pantheon replaced by Marduk,[514] and Ea, the father of Marduk and the god of magic and incantation-prayers,[515] who was also referred to in lines 1–3. These references indicate how important Marduk was, and can be understood as a strategy to add more authority to the deity by relating him to two prominent gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon.[516] The caesura separates two grammatically parallel cola: divine name (*enlil* and *ea*), followed by a precative verbal form with a second-person masculine singular accusative suffix (*liḫdūka* and *lirīška*).[517] This parallelism lends more balance and authority to this line, creating an idea of totality and harmony that contributed to the exaltation of Marduk and the calming of the supplicant.[518]

[514] See George 1997: 66–67.
[515] See Galter 1983: 57–80.
[516] See Greenwood 2011: 320. The use of specific divine names in the blessing is not limited to this šuila and can be found in other incantation-prayers, as shown by Mayer (1976: 336–337).
[517] This parallelism had already been noted by Piccin (2021a: 256).
[518] Grammatical parallelism creates a sense of balance and a secure narrative flow for the speaker and audience (Steinberger 2024: 426).

Line 26, the three-foot line, has a similar purpose to the previous three-foot lines set between four-foot lines: developing an idea. Line 25 mentions two important deities and line 26 expands this idea by using the general expression *ilū ša kiššati*, "the gods of totality." Line 26 parallels the previous line by having a similar pattern with the divine subject (*enlil*, *ea*, and *ilū ša kiššati*) followed by a precative verbal form that includes a second-person masculine singular accusative suffix referring to Marduk (*liḫdūka*, *lirīška*, and *likrubūka*). The use of the suffixes in lines 25 and 26 creates a homeoptoton. Line 26 broadens the references in line 25 by expanding the deities that praise Marduk while maintaining a similar syntactic pattern.

Line 27 is grammatically parallel to the previous lines since all start with the divine subject (*enlil*, *ea*, *ilū ša kiššati*, and *ilū rabûtu*) and end with a precative verbal form (*liḫdūka*, *lirīška*, *likrubūka*, and *liṭibbū*). Phonologically, this triplet has consonance of the sound /l/ and assonance of the sound /i/ because of the precatives and the references to *ilū*, "gods," *libbu*, "heart," and Enlil, whose name in Akkadian assimilates the /n/ into the /l/ creating the form Ellil.[519] Lines 25 and 27 also have partial prosodic parallelism:

25 ***en***lil | li***ḫdū***ka || ***e***a | li***rīš***ka
27 ***i***lū | ra***bû***tu || ***lib***baka | li***ṭib***bū

(Marduk 2:25, 27)

Nevertheless, line 27 is also distinct from the previous lines by including a different direct object: *libbaka*, "your heart," and not a second-person masculine singular accusative suffix on the verbal form. This object is further emphasized through the alliteration with the verbal form. This line continues from the previous line by using a general term for the deities, revealing a pattern of generalization instead of specification. This could represent another rhetorical strategy to extol Marduk since, first, the performer

[519] See Jacobsen 1989: 270.

mentions two important gods who should bless Marduk and, then, expands this praise to all the deities showing that Marduk has power not only over two important gods, but over all the gods. Lines 26 and 27 have an anaphora as each starts with the noun *ilū*, "gods." The last line and its verb, *liṭibbū*, "may they sweeten," also reveal the goal of the prayer and of the praise offered by the other gods to Marduk: to move Marduk's mood, his *libbu*, "heart," from wrath to compassion so that he guarantees a balanced and stable life for the supplicant.[520]

The poet links the address and the blessing of this šuila by repeating a reference to the god Ea (Marduk 2:2, 25) and the root *ṭ–ʾ–b* (Marduk 2:9, 27). This reflects the ring character of the unit, which is also framed by praise, from the supplicant in the address and from the other gods in the blessing. This poetic device can also have a rhetorical impact as the whole prayer is marked by praise to the deity to whom it is addressed, a way of persuading Marduk to act.[521]

[520] For *libbu*, "heart," as the seat of emotions, see Steinert 2021: 424; Jaques 2017: 200–201.
[521] On the final blessing as a way to praise the deity, see Mayer 1976: 327.

3.3. Šuila Ištar 1

3.3.1. Transcription and Translation

1 *qarittu* | *ištar* || *kanūt* | *ilāti*

2 *dipār* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti* || *šarūr* (|) *kibrāti*

3 *innini*[522] | *bukrat* (|) *sîn* || *ilitti* (|) *ningal*

4 *tūamat* (|) *ṭarri* || *šūpî* | *qurādi* | *šamši*

5 *ištar* | *anātīma*[523] || *šamê* | *tabellī*

6 *kīma enlil* | *māliki* || *taṭemmī* | *dadmī*

7 *mummu* | *bān* (||) *parṣī* | *u šuluḫḫī*[524]

8 *taklimtu*[525] (|) *ea* | *ina apsî* || *tukallî* | *riksī*[526]

9 *ēma bašmu* | *kisurrû* || *innaddû*[527] | *libittu*

10 *šūt*[528] *pâ* | *šaknū* || *tapaqqidī* | *kīma šamši*

11 *šumma* | *ina*[529] *igigī* || *ayyu* | *māḫirki*[530]

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[522] K 2396+, o. 30 (= King 1896: no. 48; Geers 1934: 220–222): [^{d}]^{r}*in*^{1}-*nin-ni*; K 155, o. 31 (= King 1896: no. 1): ^{r}^{d1}*in-nin-na*; BM 57532, o. 3 (= Mayer 1990: 488): ^{d}*i-nin-ni*.

[523] K 2396+, o. 32: *a-na-ti-ma*; K 155, o. 33: ^{r}^{d1}*a-nu*; BM 57532, o. 5: ^{d}^{r}*a*^{1}-^{r}*na*^{1}-*ti-ma*. The form *anātīma* corresponds to the name Anu with the second-person feminine singular stative suffix and the coordinator -*ma* (see Zgoll 2003b: 201). The manuscript K 155 only preserves *a-nu*, which might have been followed by *at-ti*(-*ma*), as reconstructed by Zgoll (2003b: 192), since the broken section in this line has enough space for these signs. This, as mentioned by Zgoll, confirms the interpretation of *anātīma*. The manuscript BM 57532 preserves the DIĜIR sign before *a-na-ti-ma*, suggesting that it refers indeed to Anu. Lenzi (2024b: 200, note 10), based on the reconstruction of *at-ti*(-*ma*) in manuscript K 155, suggests that *anātīma* could be a Sandhi writing. A possibly more adequate definition for the morphologic phenomenon is "crasis," as defined by Worthington (2012: 174–175), because there is a collision between the vocalic *Auslaut* and the vocalic *Anlaut*, with an elision of the *Auslaut*: *a-nu at-ti-ma* > *a-na-ti-ma*.

[524] I am taking this line as an epithet referring to Ištar, as argued by Krebernik (1997: 415). Frahm (2013: 104–112) argues that *mummu* can be understood as a creative energy which can have personal manifestations. This seems to be the case in this line, since the epithet's creative elements are shown in the other terms used in lines 7 and 8, suggesting that Ištar has these creative powers.

[525] Zgoll (2003b: 201) understands it as a locative-adverbial form.

[526] VAT 12996, o. 3′ (= Ebeling 1923: no. 250): *rik*$_{2}$*-sa*-[*ti*]; K 2396+, o. 35: *rik-si*; K 6179+, o. 8 (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 14): *rik-si*.

[527] VAT 12996, o. 4′: *in-na-du-u*$_{2}$; K 2396+, o. 36: *nadât*(šub)^{at}; K 6179+, o. 9: [*i*]-*nam-du-u*.

[528] K 6179+, o. 10: K 6179+, o. 9: *šu-ut*; BM 57532, o. 10: *ša*.

[529] K 6179+, o. 11: *i-na*; BM 57532, o. 11: *ana ina*.

[530] VAT 12996, o. 6′: ^{r}*me*$_{2}$^{1}-[*eḫ*]-*ra*-^{r}*at*^{1}-[*ki*]; K 2396+, o. 38: *ma-ḫir*-^{r}*ki*^{1}; K 6179+, o. 11: *me*$_{2}$*-ḫer-ki*.

12 *šumma*[531] | *ina anunnakī* || *ali* | *šāninki*

13 *attīma* | *ina šassūr* (|) *nišī*[532] || *lupna*[533] | *išdiḫa* | *tukannī*

14 *tuštepellī* | *šīmātamma* || *idammiq* | *lemnu*

15 *eš²ēma*[534] | *ina ilī*[535] || *supû* | *šarkūki*

16 *asḫurma* | *ina ištarāti* || *kâšīma* | *ša bâli*[536]

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*

18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki*[537] | *dumqu*

19 *kunnū* | *ina rēšīki* || *tašmû* | (*u*) *magāru* | (*u*) *salīmu*[538]

20 *itâtūki* | *šutasḫurā* || *balāṭa* | (*u*) *šulma*

21 *kī*[539] *ṭābū* | *supûki* || *kī qerub* | *šemûki*[540]

22 *napluski* | *tašmû* || *qibītki* | *nūru*

23 *rēmīnnīma* | *bēltī*[541] || *qibî* | *naḫāšī*

24 *kīniš* | *naplisīnnīma* || *leqê* | *unnīnīya*

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[531] BM 57532, o. 12 omits the term *šumma*.

[532] VAT 12996, o. 8′ omits the term *nišī*.

[533] VAT 12996, o. 8′: *lu-*ʳ*up*ˡ*-*<*na*>; K 2396+, o. 40: ʳ*lu*ˡ*-up₂-ni*; K 6179+, o. 13: *lu-up-nu*.

[534] K 6179+, o. 15: ʳ*eš*ˡ*-²e-e-ma*; BM 57532, o. 15: [*eš*]*-²e-ma*ˡ(KU).

[535] VAT 12996, o. 10′: *ina ilī*(diĝirˡ)(E₂²)ᵐᵉšˌ; K 6179+, o. 15: *ina ilī*(diĝir)ᵐᵉšˌ; BM 57532, o. 15: *ilī*(diĝir)ᵐᵉšˌ. BM 57532 omits *ina*.

[536] Zgoll (2003b: 194) understand this line as line 15b and the previous as 15a, but VAT 12996, o. 10′–11′, K 6179+, o. 15–16, and BM 57532, o. 15–16 take them as two separate lines. K 2396+, o. 42 places them within the same line of the manuscript but separates them using the two small wedges marker. I am taking *ša bâli* as a nominalized precative sentence, i.e., a relative sentence. On the use of *ša* + infinitive to create precative relative sentences, see Buccellati 1972: 1–29. Lenzi (2024b: 201) opts for a different translation based on CAD B, and takes the pronoun *kâšīma* with *ša bâli*, "to you was the beseeching." Zgoll's translation (2003b: 198) is similar to the one by Lenzi. eBL's translation as "*my* beseeching *was directed* to you" (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/Mag/2/2/SB/1, accessed 29/03/2026) is based on the translation by Ambos (2013: 201).

[537] VAT 12996, o. 13′: *šu-me-lu-uk-ki*; BM 39539+, l. 4′b (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.39539, accessed 29/03/2026): *šu-me-*ʳ*el*ˡ*-*[*ki*]; K 2396+, o. 44: ʳ*šu*ˡ*-me₂-lu-uk-ki*; K 6179+, o. 18: ʳ*šu*ˡ*-me-el-ki*.

[538] VAT 12996, o. 14′: *taš-mu-u ma-ga-ru*; BM 39539+, l. 5′: […] ʳ*taš*ˡ*-*ʳ*mu*ˡ*-*ʳ*u₂*ˡ *ma-ga-ri* [*u sa-li-mu*]; K 2396+, o. 45: [… *taš-mu*]*-*ʳ*u₂*ˡ *u ma-ga-ru sa-li-*ʳ*mu*ˡ; K 6179+, l.e. 1: *taš-mu-u u sa-li-mu*.

[539] I am taking the particle *kī* in this line as an interjection. On this role of *kī*, see von Soden 1995: §124 c. γ.

[540] VAT 12996, o. 16′: *še-mu-ki*; BM 39539+, l. 7′: *neš-*ʳ*mu*ˡ*-*[*ki*]; K 2396+, r. 1: *neš-mu-ki*; K 6179+, l.e. 3: *ša₂-mu-ki*.

[541] VAT 12996, o. 18′: [*be*]*-*ʳ*el*ˡ*-ti*; BM 39539+, l. 8′b: ʳᵈˡ*bēltī*(gašan)ᵐᵘ; BM 39200, o. 4′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.39200, accessed 29/03/2026): *bēlti*(gašan)*-ia*; K 2396+, r. 3: ᵈ*iš-tar*; K 6179+, r. 2: ᵈ*bēltī*(gašan)ʳᵐᵘˡ; BM 59916+, r. 2′ (= Mayer 1990: 489): ᵈ*bēltī*(gašan)ᵐᵘ. K 2396+ is currently the only manuscript preserving Ištar's name rather than the vocative *bēltī*, "my lady."

25 *erde* | *ūski* || *išdiḫu* | *likūna*

26 *serdâki* | *āḫuz* || *lubēl* | *ṭūb* (|) *libbi*

27 *ubil* | *abšānaki* || *pašāḫa* | *šuknī*

28 *uqeʾʾi*[542] | *rēški* || *līšira* | *salīmu*

29 *aṣṣur* | *šarūraki* || *lū tašmû* | *u magāru*

30 *ešteʾi*[543] | *namrirrīki* || *limmirū* | *zīmūʾa*

31 *asḫur* | *bēlūtki* || *lū balāṭu* | *u šulmu*[544]

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pānīki*

33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*[545]

34 *ša imnukki* | *mešrâ* | *luṣṣib*

35 *dumqa* | *lukšuda* | *ša šumēlukki*[546]

36 *qibîma* | *liššeme* | *zikrī*

37 *amāt* | *aqabbû* || *kīma*[547] *aqabbû* | *lū magrat*

38 *ina ṭūb* (|) *šīri* | *u ḫūd* (|) *libbi* || *itarrînni* | *ūmišam*

39 *ūmīya* | *urrikī* || *balāṭa* | *šurkī*[548]

40 *lubluṭ* | *lušlimma* || *luštammar* | *ilūtki*

41 *ēma* | *uṣammaru* | *lukšud*

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[542] K 2396+, r. 8: *u₂-qe₂-ʾi*; K 6179+, r. 7: *uq-qu*; BM 59916+, r. 7′: *uq-qu*. The form *uqqu* can stand for the preterite D-stem form *uqqi*, as first-millennium BC manuscripts have a general tendency to use the vowel *-u*. On this general tendency, see George 2003: 799.

[543] BM 44804, o. 5′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.44804, accessed 29/03/2026): [*eš-te*]-ʳʾiˀ; K 2396+, r. 10: *eš-te-ʾ-u₂*; K 6179+, r. 9: *e-še-ʾi*; BM 59916+, r. 8′: *eš-te-ʾ-i*.

[544] BM 59916+, r. 9′a includes the sign LA before *šulmu*, but it is probably a scribal error.

[545] Zgoll (2003b: 196) groups lines 32 and 33 together, but K 6179+, r. 10–11 and BM 59916+, r. 9′–10′ place them in different lines. K 2396+, r. 12 places them within one line but uses a marker to indicate that they are different poetic lines.

[546] Zgoll (2003b: 196) also groups lines 34 and 35 together, but K 6179+, r. 12–13 and BM 59916+, r. 10′–11′ place them in different lines.

[547] K 2396+, r. 15: *ki-ma*; BM 57532, r. 2′: ʳ*kīma*(gin₇ʾ)ˀ; BM 59916+, r. 12′: *e-ma*.

[548] K 2396+, r. 17a: *šur-ki*; K 6179+, r. 17: […] *qi₂-šam*; BM 57532, r. 4′: [...] *ur ḫe-pi₂ qi₂-*ʳ*šam*ˀ [...]; BM 59916+, r. 14′: *šur*-[*ki*]. There are two traditions regarding this verb: one using an imperative from *šarāku*, "to present," and another using an imperative from *qiāšu*, "to give." I have opted for the former because the manuscripts preserve the feminine form in accordance with the šuila's addressee, whereas the latter is not preserved with a feminine form.

42 *šamû* | *liḫdûki* || *apsû*[549] | *lirīški*

43 *ilū* | *ša kiššati*[550] | *likrubūki*

44 *ilū* | *rabûtu* || *libbaki* | *liṭibbū*[551]

1 Valiant one, Ištar, the cherished of the goddesses,

2 The torch of heaven and earth, the brilliance of the world.

3 Innini, daughter of Sîn, the offspring of Ningal,

4 The twin of the bearded one, the resplendent warrior, Šamaš.

5 Ištar, you are (like) Anu, you rule heaven,

6 Like Enlil, the adviser, you look after the inhabited world.

7 Mummu, the creator of ordinances and lustrations,

8 By the instruction of Ea, you maintain the bonds in the Apsû.

9 Wherever a boundary is formed, a mudbrick is laid down,

10 You look after the ones endowed with speech, like Šamaš.

11 If among the Igigī, who is your opponent?

12 If among the Anunnakī, where is your rival?

13 You are the one who establishes firmly poverty (and) profit (already) in the womb of the people,

14 You overturn fates so that the unfortunate one prospers.

15 I sought among the gods and supplications were presented to you,

16 I searched among the goddesses for you who ought to be beseeched.

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[549] BM 57532, r. 6′ notes that is is broken, by writing *ḫe*-[*pi*$_2$].

[550] K 2396+, r. 19a: *ša*$_2$ *kiš-ša*$_2$*-ti*; BM 57532, r. 7′: ⌜*rabûtu*(gal)⌝^{meš} *ḫe*-⌜*pi*$_2$⌝; BM 59916+, r. 17′b: *ša*$_2$ *kiš-ša*$_2$*-ti*. BM 57532 is the only manuscript currently preserving the term *rabûtu*, "great."

[551] Zgoll (2003b: 197) also groups lines 43 and 44 together, but BM 59916+, r. 17′–18′ places them in different lines. K 2396+, r. 19 places them within one line but uses again a marker to indicate that they are different poetic lines.

A male protective spirit is before you, a female protective spirit is behind you,
  Justice is on your right side, goodness is on your left side.
Attention (and) acceptance (and) peace are established in your presence,
  Your sides are surrounded with life (and) well-being.
How sweet are the supplications to you! How close is your hearing!
  Your seeing is attention, your command is light.
Have mercy on me, oh my lady, and command my prosperity,
  Look at me genuinely and take my prayer.
I followed your custom; may profit be established for me,
  I took your carrying-pole; may I lay claim to sweetness of heart.
I carried your yoke; set the cooling down (of anger),
  I attended to you; may peace come straight to me.
I observed your brilliance; may there be attention and acceptance,
  I sought constantly your shining radiance; may my appearance shine,
  I searched for your lordship; may there be life and well-being.
May I acquire the good male protective spirit which is before you,
  The female protective spirit which goes behind you, may I acquire.
May I multiply the riches which are on your right side,
  May I achieve the goodness which is on your left side.
Command that my utterance may be heard,
  So that the word which I speak, when I speak, may be accepted.
Guide me daily in sweetness of the flesh and gladness of the heart,
  Lengthen my days, grant life.
May I live, may I become well, may I praise your divinity,

41 So that whatever I wish, may I achieve.

42 May heaven become joyful about you, may the Apsû rejoice over you,

43 May the gods of totality bless you,

44 May the great gods sweeten your heart.

3.3.2. Poetic Analysis

3.3.2.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Wright divides the prayer into two equal halves, lines 1–22 and 23–24, and each half into five parts (Ištar 1:1–2, 3–10, 11–14, 15–19, 20–22, 23–24, 25–31, 32–35, 36–41, 42–44).[552] Zgoll defines three stanzas: the address in lines 1–21; the petition in lines 22–37a; and the blessing in lines 37b–38.[553] My understanding of the šuila follows Zgoll's stanzaic division, but based on my line numbering: address (Ištar 1:1–22), petition (Ištar 1:23–41), and blessing (Ištar 1:42–44).[554]

Stanza	Lines in šuila Ištar 1	Chapter section
Address	1–22	§3.3.2.2.1
Petition	23–41	§3.3.2.2.2
Blessing	42–44	§3.3.2.2.3

Table 14 - Stanzaic division of šuila Ištar 1

[552] Wright 1979: 80. Lenzi (2024b: 202) agrees with the half division.
[553] Zgoll 2003b: 205–206, 208–209. This division follows Zgoll's line numbering.
[554] This is the line numbering also adopted by eBL (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/Mag/2/2/SB/1, accessed 29/03/2026).

Line 23 has the first imperative verbal form marking the beginning of the petition stanza, and lines 42–44 have the petitions for other deities to bless Ištar, one of the traditional patterns of the blessing stanza.[555]

The address occupies half of the prayer, which shows its importance within the šuila and the link between this prayer and hymnic literature.[556] This šuila thus places emphasis on the praise to Ištar, a key rhetorical element of flattery which aims to secure the deity's attention and her action. The importance of the address is also a witness, as argued by Lenzi, to the need to create proximity between the supplicant and the deity through politeness.[557] The overall structure and movement from address, to petition, to blessing, are also part of the prayer's rhetoric, like in the šuila Marduk 2.

The poetic structuring pattern in this rhetorical unit is couplets, two-line strophes. The blessing as a triplet (Ištar 1:42–44) is a quite clear "counterpatterning," which might be an indication of a change in the structure, in this case signalling the change to the blessing stanza. Another possible triplet is in lines 29–31, as line 31 seems to parallel line 29, and does not fit with the following lines. This triplet can also indicate a structural change as lines 25–31 have the same syntactic structure which is then broken in line 32. Zgoll even identifies these as two separate sections within the petition stanza (Ištar 1:25–31, 32–41),[558] and Wright also divides them into three different parts (Ištar 1:25–31, 32–35, 36–41).[559] This šuila thus shows an overall structuring pattern with only a few exceptions. The use of a set pattern, like in the šuila Marduk 2, can have a calming effect for both the speaker and the divine audience, contributing to the rhetorical purposes of the prayer.

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[555] See Mayer 1976: 331–333. A similar formula is employed in the blessing in Marduk 2:25–27 and in Šamaš 1:35–37.
[556] See Zgoll 2003b: 207, 210.
[557] Lenzi 2024b: 206–207.
[558] Zgoll 2003b: 206. Following Zgoll's line division, lines 24–30 and 31–36/37.
[559] Wright 1979: 93–97.

3.3.2.2. Micro-Level Analysis

3.3.2.2.1. Ištar 1:1–22

The first couplet is composed of epithets to Ištar:

1 *qarittu* | *ištar* || *kanūt* | *ilāti*
2 *dipār* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti* || *šarūr* (|) *kibrāti*

Valiant one, Ištar, the cherished of the goddesses,
The torch of heaven and earth, the brilliance of the world.

(Ištar 1:1–2)

In line 1, the poet starts with an attribute followed by a vocative directly mentioning the goddess's name. These semantic figures were meant to secure the attention of the addressee and her response. The second cola of the lines are syntactically and phonologically parallel: both cola have a construct chain (*kanūt ilāti* and *šarūr kibrāti*), the parallel feet have assonance, and both lines have a rhyming grammatical ending in /āti/, creating a homeoptoton.[560] These different poetic devices create balance at the start of the prayer and contribute to its prosody and rhythm, important elements for the calming of the supplicant who is in distress. Line 2 employs a merism: *šamê*, "heaven," and *erṣeti*, "earth."[561] This merism is completed with the reference to *kibrāti*, "world," and is an expression of Ištar's power, since she encompasses this totality. In fact, both cola stand in synonymous parallelism, reinforcing the idea that the goddess brings light to everything, a metaphor for the importance of Ištar and how she can lead everyone and make everything seen.[562] These different semantic figures thus contribute to Ištar's praise.

[560] These phonologic figures had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 211).
[561] For *šamû* and *erṣetu* as a merism and further references, see my comments on *Ludlul* V:77 (§2.3.2.2.2).
[562] It is difficult to fully establish whether these epithets were taken as metaphors or as literal attributes of Ištar because of her astral aspect as Venus. However, I follow Pohl's (2022: 71) approach who took light as a semantic field for metaphors. Moreover, Streck (1999: 180) also takes epithets such as *šamši ša ilī*, "sun of the gods," and *nūru ša ilī*, "light of the gods," as metaphors. Metcalf (2019: 24) also argues that the

They are also important for the supplicant because they emphasize the goddess's power to illuminate the world and thus the supplicant's life.[563] The use of four epithets in enumeration creates an accumulation that contributes to the flattering of Ištar and the politeness of the address.

The second couplet of the prayer continues the epithet enumeration by referring to Ištar's genealogy:

3 *innini* | *bukrat* (|) *sîn* || *ilitti* (|) *ningal*
4 *tūamat* (|) *ṭarri* || *šūpî* | *qurādi* | *šamaš*

Innini, daughter of Sîn, the offspring of Ningal,
The twin of the bearded one, the resplendent warrior, Šamaš.

(Ištar 1:3–4)

This enumeration of epithets, like in the šuila Marduk 2, constitutes a form of accumulation that emphasizes the addressee, Ištar, and contributes to securing her attention. Line 3 has another vocative referring to Ištar's byname Innini or Innina, another direct address to the deity and designated to evoke a response. The construct chains in the second colon of line 3 (*ilitti ningal*) and in the first colon of line 4 (*tūamat ṭarri*) parallel the construct chains in the second cola of lines 1 and 2. Line 3 has consonance with the consonant /n/. Lines 3 and 4 have assonance with the vowel /i/, also playing with the assonance of the previous lines.

In lines 5–10, Ištar's power is compared to the power of other deities:

5 *ištar* | *anātīma* || *šamê* | *tabellī*
6 *kīma enlil* | *māliki* || *taṭemmī* | *dadmī*
7 *mummu* | *bān* (||) *parṣī* | *u šuluḫḫī*
8 *taklimtu* (|) *ea* | *ina apsî* || *tukallî* | *riksī*

Sumerian epithet ^{d}utu kalam-ma, "sun of the land," applied to the goddess Bau, for example, does not have a literal meaning, but it rather implies divine benevolence towards humans. Following Streck's terminology (1999: 38–39), these metaphors are *Substantivmetaphern* by apposition as they are nominal epithets describing Ištar.

[563] The link between Ištar and light is also found in other šuila-prayers, such as the šuila Ištar 2 (Zernecke 2011a: 172–173). This is also part of an older religious tradition, as in the Sumerian hymn Inana B, the goddess is called u$_4$ dalla, "resplendent light" (Inana B:1). For an edition of this hymn, see Zgoll 1997. This view of Ištar is also attested in the Old Babylonian Akkadian *Hymn to Ištar as Venus*, as edited by George (2009: 76–77).

9 *ēma bašmu | kisurrû || innaddû | libittu*
10 *šūt pâ | šaknū || tapaqqidī | kīma šamši*

Ištar, you are (like) Anu, you rule heaven,
  Like Enlil, the adviser, you look after the inhabited world.
Mummu, the creator of ordinances and lustrations,
  By the instruction of Ea, you maintain the bonds in the Apsû.
Wherever a boundary is formed, a mudbrick is laid down,
  You look after the ones endowed with speech, like Šamaš.

(Ištar 1:5–10)

These similes comparing Ištar to the triad Anu, Enlil, Ea, and her twin Šamaš are an expression of the goddess's might, because she encompasses all the other deities' powers.[564] In line 5, the poet employs the vocative Ištar, again trying to secure the goddess's attention just before expressing how powerful she is. These similes and references to the power of other deities are a compliment to Ištar, and thus another way of securing her attention and benevolence through flattery and politeness.[565] In fact, the poet refers to three high deities (Anu, Enlil, and Ea) and their respective realms (heaven, the inhabited world, and the Apsû). These references create a merism, as Ištar is taking over the powers and realms which represent the totality of the world according to the Mesopotamian understanding.[566] The poet is therefore using the gods and the merism as an expression of Ištar's all-encompassing power, which is not only flattering for the goddess but also calming for the supplicant as he is reassured of the goddess's power. Line 10 and its reference to speech emphasize this human attribute which is key for the prayer itself, as it is a form of speech.

The couplet of lines 5–6 employs chiasmus:

[564] See Zgoll 2003b: 214. The references to Anu and Ea are not considered similes as they do not include the *kīma* or *kī* prepositions, but are still a comparison of Ištar's power to the power of these gods.
[565] A similar strategy is found in the Old Babylonian *Ammiditāna's Hymn to Ištar*:34, *ana anim | šarrīšunu || malâm | ašbassunu*, "She is sitting (with) them on an equal basis as Anu, their king." In this line, Ištar is compared to Anu, showing how this rhetorical strategy is already found in the Old Babylonian period. For an edition of this hymn, see Pohl 2022: 176–184.
[566] As a parallel, see how Inana/Ištar is raised to supreme deity in the late bilingual *Exaltation of Ištar*, edited by Hruška (1969: 473–522), by taking on the rituals of Anu, Enlil, and Ea. A new edition is being prepared as a PhD project by Felix Müller at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. On the rise of Ištar in this composition, see also Zgoll 2025: 280.

5 *ištar* | *anātīma* || *šamê* | *tabellī*
6 *kīma enlil* | *māliki* || *taṭemmī* | *dadmī*

(Ištar 1:5–6)

Lines 5–10 have assonance of the vowel /i/, a sound that is also repeated at the end of all lines except line 9, giving some cohesion to this part of the address.

These references to other deities culminate in two rhetorical questions:

11 *šumma* | *ina igigī* || *ayyu* | *māḫirki*
12 *šumma* | *ina anunnakī* || *ali* | *šāninki*

If among the Igigī, who is your opponent?
If among the Anunnakī, where is your rival?

(Ištar 1:11–12)

Rhetorical questions can have a structural effect by opening or closing stanzas.[567] In this case, the rhetorical questions mark the end of the section of the address referring to Ištar's might in comparison to other deities. Rhetorical questions can also be used to secure the audience's attention,[568] and in lines 11 and 12 this is paired with the direct address to Ištar through the use of the second-person possessive suffix. The two rhetorical questions have full grammatical parallelism: conditional marker *šumma*; preposition *ina* followed by a broad category of gods (*igigī* and *anunnakī*); an interrogative particle (*ayyu* and *ali*); and an active participle with a second-person feminine singular possessive suffix (*māḫirki* and *šāninki*).[569] This suffix at the end of each lines creates a homeoptoton. The repetition of *šumma* at the start of both lines creates an anaphora. The use of the word pair *igigī* and *anunnakī* can be seen as a merism, emphasizing Ištar's power over all the gods. These lines also contain partial prosodic parallelism:

11 ***šum**ma* | *ina **i**gigī* || ***a**yyu* | *mā**ḫir**ki*
12 ***šum**ma* | *ina a**nun**nakī* || ***a**li* | *šā**nin**ki*

[567] See Watson 1984: 341–342.
[568] See Piccin 2021a: 93; Watson 1984: 341.
[569] This parallelism had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 215) and Wright (1979: 89).

(Ištar 1:11–12)

Wright points out that these lines are the climax of the address,[570] and the parallelism and merism can contribute to their rhetorical impact. They are also an expression of a movement of generalization, as initially the poet mentions specific deities in lines 3–10 and then broader categories of deities in lines 11–12. Like in the šuila Marduk 2, this movement can be a strategy to extol the goddess because it expresses that Ištar is not only as powerful as other great gods, but is actually more powerful than all the deities.[571] This accumulation regarding Ištar's power and climax in these rhetorical questions are thus meant to praise the goddess and consequently secure her attention and intervention.

Lines 13 and 14 mark the start of a new section within the address stanza:

13 *attīma* | *ina šassūr* (|) *nišī* || *lupna* | *išdiḫa* | *tukannī*
14 *tuštepellī* | *šīmātamma* || *idammiq* | *lemnu*

You are the one who establishes firmly poverty (and) profit (already) in the womb of the people,
You overturn fates so that the unfortunate one prospers.

(Ištar 1:13–14)

The independent personal pronoun *atti* with the enclitic *-ma* are very emphatic. According to Zgoll, they parallel the previous vocatives of lines 1, 3, and 5, and are an answer to the previous rhetorical questions (Ištar 1:11–12).[572] Because of the number of metrical words in this line, it is possible that *attīma* might be in anacrusis,[573] further highlighting it. The use of this vocative is another attempt to draw the attention of the goddess to the address and the prayer as a whole. The use of the nouns *lupnu*, "poverty," and *išdiḫu*, "profit,"

[570] Wright 1979: 89.
[571] The use of rhetorical questions to highlight divine superiority is not limited to this prayer, and can be found, for example, in *Ammiditāna's Hymn to Ištar*:21, 23: *ayyum* | *narbîyaš* || *išannan* | *mannum* / *ištar* | *narbîyaš* || *išannan* | *mannum*, "Which one? Who equals her greatness? / Ištar! Who equals her greatness?"
[572] Zgoll 2003b: 215.
[573] For the possibility of vocatives as anacrusis in Akkadian poetry, see my comments on *Ludlul* I:11 (§2.2.2.2.2).

can be seen as a merism. Even though these terms are not attested together in any other text,[574] the usage in line 13 suggests that Ištar is the one who provides both poverty and wealth, implying that she provides everything. Therefore, this merism expresses the goddesses's power as she is the one who decides whether someone will be rich or poor already "in the womb of the people," *ina šassūr nišī*. This is important for the supplicant who knows that the goddess can intervene in his favour.

Lines 13 and 14 show alliteration between the last term of line 13 and the first term of line 14 as they both start with the sound /tu/. Both lines have assonance with the vowel /i/, which was already present since line 5, and consonance with the sound /m/, particularly line 14. These phonologic figures contribute to the prayer's rhythm, performativity, and balance, important elements for the calming of the supplicant. Lines 14 has also internal grammatical parallelism because in the first and third feet, the poet employs a verbal form (*tuštepellī* and *idammiq*).

As pointed out by Zgoll, this couplet marks the start of the second half of the address, where the poet focuses on Ištar and her relationship with humankind, whereas in the first half the poet focused on the goddess's relationship with other deities.[575] This parallels the merism in line 2, where Ištar is called *dipār šamê u erṣeti*, "the torch of heaven and earth," as the address first starts with the heaven, the deities (Ištar 1:1–12), and then the earth, humanity (Ištar 1:13–22). The reference to *nišū*, "people," in line 13 points to this focus on humankind in the second half of the poem.[576]

Lines 15 and 16 show parallelism and another merism:

15 *eš²ēma | ina ilī || supû | šarkūki*
16 *asḫurma | ina ištarāti || kâšīma | ša bâli*

[574] The noun *lupnu*, "poverty" is paired with *mešrû*, "riches," in administrative texts, such as in Sb 24514 o. 7 (= Scheil 1930: no. 6), Sb 24520 o. 9 (= Scheil 1930: no. 12), and Sb 24521 o. 9 (= Scheil 1930: no. 13). For other examples, see CAD L: 251.
[575] Zgoll 2003b: 210.
[576] See Zgoll 2003b: 216.

I sought among the gods and supplications were presented to you,
I searched among the goddesses for you who ought to be beseeched.

(Ištar 1:15–16)

The first cola of both lines follow the order: first-person singular preterite verbal form with an enclitic *-ma* (*eš²ēma* and *asḫurma*), preposition *ina*, and a plural form for deities, masculine in line 15 (*ilī*) and feminine in line 16 (*ištarāti*).[577] The use of *ilī* and *ištarāti* is a merism and expresses again totality, emphasizing Ištar's power, as the supplicant states that he has sought among all deities and all the petitions are for Ištar.[578] The employment of male (*ilī*) and female (*ištarāti*) nouns also creates gender-matched parallelism further contributing to the merism. These lines refer to the supplicant's diligence as the actions are led by him, and this is highlighted by the anastrophic fronting of the first-person verbal forms.

Lines 17 and 18 also have grammatical parallelism and two merisms:

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*
18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki* | *dumqu*

A male protective spirit is before you, a female protective spirit is behind you,
Justice is on your right side, goodness is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:17–18)

Both cola in both lines have the following parallel syntactical structure: noun referring to a position with a locative adverbial ending and a second-person feminine singular possessive suffix (*pānukki*, *arkatuk*, *imnuk*, and *šumēlukki*) followed by a nominative subject (*šēdu*, *lamassu*, *mīšaru*, and *dumqu*).[579] Therefore, the parallelism is not only between the lines but also between the cola within the lines. This parallelism is also

[577] This parallelism had already been noted by Wright (1979: 90).
[578] For *ilu* and *ištaru* as a merism and further references, see my comments on this merism in *Ludlul* I:28 (§2.2.2.2.2).
[579] Manuscripts BM 39539+ (l. 4′b) and K 6179+ (o. 18) are the only witness that breaks this parallelism as they do not preserve the adverbial locative for *šumēlukki*, but rather the form *šumēlki*.

chiastic because in *arkatuk* and *imnuk*, the poet apocopated the possessive suffix, creating chiasmus with *pānukki* and *šumēlukki*:[580]

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*
18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki* | *dumqu*

(Ištar 1:17–18)

This chiasmus plays with the two merisms in these lines, as *pānu*, "front," and *arku*, "back," create a merism in line 17, and *imnu*, "right side," and *šumēlu*, "left side," create another merism in line 18.[581] Moreover, these four nouns referring to positions also act as an overall merism because they refer to all the sides of the goddess: front, back, right side, and left side.[582] The grammatical parallelism within line 17 is accompanied by gender-matched parallelism as the first colon refers to a male protective spirit, *šēdu*, and the second colon to a female protective spirit, *lamassu*. The consonance of the sound /k/ and the assonance of the vowel /u/ also contribute to the parallelism between the lines.

Lines 19–20 continue the references to the sides of Ištar:

19 *kunnū* | *ina rēšīki* || *tašmû* | (*u*) *magāru* | (*u*) *salīmu*
20 *itâtūki* | *šutasḫurā* || *balāṭa* | (*u*) *šulma*

Attention (and) acceptance (and) peace are established in your presence,
Your sides are surrounded with life (and) well-being.

(Ištar 1:19–20)

Two manuscripts (VAT 12996, o. 14′; K 6179+, o. 19) only preserve two subjects on the second colon of line 19, which contributes to the parallelism with line 20, which only has two accusative objects. The first cola have a chiastic structure with the stative verbal forms and the locations:[583]

19 *kunnū* | *ina rēšīki* || *tašmû* | (*u*) *magāru* | (*u*) *salīmu*
20 *itâtūki* | *šutasḫurā* || *balāṭa* | (*u*) *šulma*

[580] This chiasmus has already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 218).
[581] For *imnu* and *šumēlu* as a merism and further references, see my comments on Marduk 2:17–18 (§3.2.2.2.2). For *pānu* and *arku* as a word pair to refer to totality and thus a merism, see CAD P: 88–89.
[582] For the use of these nouns together, see 1883,0118.46, o. 11 (= Harper 1914: no. 1240).
[583] This chiasmus had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 218).

(Ištar 1:19–20)

This chiasmus, like the one in lines 17–18, can have a totalizing effect, referring to how Ištar is completely enveloped in positive terms, which are important for the supplicant, who needs the goddess to listen and accept his prayer, as well as bring well-being and peace to his life.[584] These lines thus act as a rhetorical reminder for both the goddess and the supplicant of what Ištar is able to do.[585] They also expand the location merism of the previous couplet, highlighting how Ištar is completely surrounded by positive elements. These elements are an enumeration in these couplets, contributing to the idea of totality.[586]

Lines 21 and 22 each contains grammatical parallelism:

21 *kī ṭābū* | *supûki* || *kī qerub* | *šemûki*
22 *napluski* | *tašmû* || *qibītki* | *nūru*

How sweet are the supplications to you! How close is your hearing!
Your seeing is attention, your command is light.

(Ištar 1:21–22)

Line 21 has internal syntactic parallelism with the interjection *kī* followed by a stative verbal form (*ṭābū* and *qerub*) and a noun with a second-person feminine singular possessive suffix (*supûki* and *šemûki*). Line 22 also has syntactic parallelism between its cola, because both have a noun with a second-person feminine singular possessive suffix (*napluski* and *qibītki*) followed by a noun in the nominative (*tašmû* and *nūru*).[587] The possessive suffix *-ki* creates a chiastic construction between the lines, emphasizing Ištar and her attributes:

21 *kī ṭābū* | *supûki* || *kī qerub* | *šemûki*
22 *napluski* | *tašmû* || *qibītki* | *nūru*

[584] On chiasmus as an expression of a merism, see Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 147.
[585] The address in the šuila-prayers is both a reminder to the deity and the supplicant that the deity can help (Mayer 1976: 44).
[586] On the totalizing effects of enumeration, see Rozzi 2024b: 276; Piccin 2021a: 101; Wasserman 2021: 66.
[587] The parallelism in both lines had already been noted by Wright (1979: 91).

(Ištar 1:21–22)

Both lines emphasize the root *š–m–ʾ* because *šemûki*, "your hearing" (Ištar 1:21), or its variant *nešmûki*, "your hearing" (Ištar 1:21), and *tašmû*, "attention," (Ištar 1:22) stem from this root, creating a polyptoton. The poet also employs this root in line 19 because of the use of the noun *tašmû*. Therefore, through the repetition of this root, the poet highlights the need for Ištar to hear the prayer, as this is the main rhetorical purpose of the unit.[588] The light metaphor in the second colon of line 22 links this statement to line 2 of the prayer, where other similar metaphors were employed.[589]

3.3.2.2.2. Ištar 1:23–41

The couplet in lines 23 and 24 marks the beginning of the petition stanza of this šuila:

23 *rēmīnnīma* | *bēltī* || *qibî* | *naḫāšī*
24 *kīniš* | *naplisīnnīma* || *leqê* | *unnīnīya*

Have mercy on me, oh my lady, and command my prosperity,
Look at me genuinely and take my prayer.

(Ištar 1:23–24)

The petition opens with a fronting of an imperative followed by a vocative, two devices which draw the attention of the addressee. The vocative occupies the second foot, paralleling the vocative of line 1, which also occupies the second foot. This creates a structural link between the two longest stanzas of the prayer. The imperative *rēmīnnīma*, "have mercy on me," parallels the imperative *qibî*, "command," in line 23, and the second cola of lines 23 and 24 are also parallel as they have an imperative verbal form (*qibî* and *leqê*) followed by an accusative object with a first-person singular possessive suffix

[588] On the link between the repetition of the root *š–m–ʾ* and the petitions of the supplicant in this šuila, see Zgoll 2003b: 220.
[589] The metaphor in line 22 is a *Nominalsatzmetapher* because it is a verbless clause.

(*naḫāšī* and *unnīnīya*).[590] The fronting of the imperatives in the two cola of line 23 and the second colon of line 24 creates a series of anastrophes that emphasize the first requests. The first cola of these lines have a chiastic construction because of the placing of the imperatives:

23 *rēmīnnīma* | *bēltī* || *qibî* | *naḫāšī*
24 *kīniš* | *naplisīnnīma* || *leqê* | *unnīnīya*

(Ištar 1:23–24)

The verbs in line 24 are also chiastic:

24 *kīniš* | *naplisīnnīma* || *leqê* | *unnīnīya*

(Ištar 1:24)

These different poetic devices add emphasis to the supplicant and the first petitions, which are extremely purposeful through the use of imperative verbal forms.[591] These lines show consonance through the repetition of the /n/ and assonance through the repetition of the vowels /e/ and /i/. These lines also have partial prosodic parallelism as all feet have a trochaic stress, except for the third foot of each line which is stressed in the last syllable:

23 *rēmīn**nī**ma* | ***bēl**tī* || *qi**bî*** | *na**ḫā**šī*
24 ***kī**niš* | *naplisīn**nī**ma* || *le**qê*** | *unnī**nī**ya*

(Ištar 1:23–24)

Lines 25–31 form their own group within the petition stanza as they all open with a first-person singular preterite verbal form and the second cola contain the petition:

25 *erde* | *ūski* || *išdiḫu* | *likūna*
26 *serdâki* | *āḫuz* || *lubēl* | *ṭūb* (|) *libbi*
27 *ubil* | *abšānaki* || *pašāḫa* | *šuknī*
28 *uqeʾʾi* | *rēški* || *līšira* | *salīmu*
29 *aṣṣur* | *šarūraki* || *lū tašmû* | *u magāru*
30 *ešteʾi* | *namrirrīki* || *limmirū* | *zīmūʾa*
31 *asḫur* | *bēlūtki* || *lū balāṭu* | *u šulmu*

[590] This parallelism had already been noted by Wright (1979: 93).
[591] Lenzi (2024b: 210–211) argues that the use of imperatives in the petition stanza is not a sign of urgency but rather of politeness and the audience structure of the šuila-prayers. However, I also understand these verbal forms as rhetorical strategies to secure attention because of their directeness in contrast to the precatives' indirectness.

I followed your custom; may profit be established for me,
I took your carrying-pole; may I lay claim to sweetness of heart.
I carried your yoke; set the cooling down (of anger),
I attended to you; may peace come straight to me.
I observed your brilliance; may there be attention and acceptance,
I sought constantly your shining radiance; may my appearance shine,
I searched for your lordship; may there be life and well-being.

(Ištar 1:25–31)

The first cola of these lines express the merits of the supplicant, which then lead to the petitions in the second cola, thus acting as a justification for Ištar to act on the supplicant's behalf.[592] The first cola of all the lines, except line 26, are parallel with a first-person preterite verbal form (*erde*, *ubil*, *uqeʾʾi*, *aṣṣur*, *ešteʾi*, *asḫur*) followed by an accusative object with a second-person feminine singular possessive suffix (*ūski*, *abšānaki*, *rēški*, *šarūraki*, *namrirrīki*, *bēlūtki*), a form of anastrophe because of the change in the traditional Akkadian word order.[593] They also all start with a stress on the first syllable, with the exception of line 26. This syntactic and stress repetition and the fronting of the verbal forms enumerate the merits of the supplicant, creating the idea that he has done everything according to the will of the gods.[594] This emphasizes the merits and plays a key role in convincing the goddess to act on behalf of the supplicant because she now knows that he has followed the divine ordinances. This also refers back to lines 15 and 16 of the address where the speaker's diligence had already been shown and where the first-person verbal form was also fronted.

The first colon of line 26 inverts the syntactic order of the other lines in this section, creating chiasmus with the first colon of line 25 and with the second cola:[595]

25 *erde* | *ūski* || *išdiḫu* | *likūna*
26 *serdâki* | *āḫuz* || *lubēl* | *ṭūb* (|) *libbi*

[592] Zgoll 2003b: 222.
[593] This parallelism had already been noted by Wright (1979: 94).
[594] A similar enumeration of a sufferer's god-fearing behaviour is found in *Ludlul* II:23–32.
[595] This chiasmus had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 226).

(Ištar 1:25–26)

Because of the positioning of the nouns and verbal forms, the chiasmus not only works within the lines, but also between the lines. Lines 27 and 28 also have chiasmus between their second cola and within line 27 between its cola:

27 *ubil* | *abšānaki* || *pašāḫa* | *šuknī*
28 *uqeʾʾi* | *rēški* || *līšira* | *salīmu*

(Ištar 1:27–28)

These poetic devices not only show the artistry of the poet, but also emphasize the movement from the merits to the petitions, as chiasmus can highlight correlation.[596] Therefore, the chiasmus contributes to showing how the merits should justify the petitions.

Lines 28 and 29 are linked back to the address because of their use of the terms *salīmu*, "peace" (Ištar 1:28), *tašmû*, "attention" (Ištar 1:29), and *magāru*, "acceptance" (Ištar 1:29), which are also employed in line 19, a part of the address. Line 31 repeats the nouns *balāṭu*, "life," and *šulmu*, "well-being," from line 20.[597] Moreover, the second cola of lines 29 and line 31 are parallel because they both use the precative particle *lū*, followed by the nouns with the conjunction *u* (*tašmû u magāru* and *balāṭu u šulmu*).[598] This further emphasizes the link to lines 19 and 20 which are also parallel. In the address, Ištar was reminded that she could provide these different aspects to the supplicant, and now the supplicant asks for them in the petition stanza.[599] The repetition is thus a clear rhetorical device that aims to guarantee the goddess's intervention in favour of the supplicant.

The terms *namrirrīki*, "your shining radiance," and *limmirū*, "may they shine," in line 30 are cognate, creating a polyptoton. This contributes to the inner parallelism and

[596] On this effect of chiasmus, see Smith 1981: 18–19.
[597] These repetitions had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 227).
[598] This parallelism had already been noted by Wright (1979: 95).
[599] These links between address and petition are a key element of Akkadian šuila-prayers (Mayer 1976: 43).

emphasizes how the goddess's light can also change the supplicant's appearance which should also shine just like Ištar.

These links to the address continue in Ištar 1:32–33:

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pānīki*
33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*

May I acquire the good male protective spirit which is before you,
The female protective spirit which goes behind you, may I acquire.

(Ištar 1:32–33)

The poet also mentions *šēdu* and *lamassu* in line 17 as being in front of and behind Ištar, and now the supplicant asks the goddess for these spirits to protect him using the same gender-matched parallelism. This repetition has thus the same effect as the ones in lines 28, 29, and 31. Lines 32 and 33 have complete chiasmus between them:

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pānīki*
33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*

(Ištar 1:32–33)

This chiasmus emphasizes the verb *lurši*, "may I acquire," which is in epanadiplosis as it opens and ends the couplet. These poetic figures highlight the petition and the need of the supplicant for protective spirits. The chiasmus also emphasizes the merism between *pānu*, "front," and *arku*, "back," which has a totalizing effect.[600] The supplicant wants to be completely protected by these spirits who accompany Ištar and the different poetic devices emphasize this request. The chiasmus between *ša pānīki* and *ša arkīki* creates a vowel and consonantal sound repetition between the ending of line 32 and the beginning of line 33.

Like lines 32 and 33 which linked back to line 17, lines 34 and 35 link back to line 18:

34 *ša imnukki* | *mešrâ* | *luṣṣib*

[600] On this merism, see my comments on Ištar 1:17 (§3.3.2.2.1).

35 *dumqa* | *lukšuda* | *ša šumēlukki*

May I multiply the riches which are on your right side,
May I achieve the goodness which is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:34–35)

These are two parallel three-foot lines whose use of *imnukki*, "on your right side" (Ištar 1:34), and *šumēlukki*, "on your left side" (Ištar 1:35), directs the speaker and the divine audience back to line 18 where these terms were also employed. Moreover, *dumqu*, "goodness," is used in both lines 18 and 35, and paired with *šumēlukki* in both instances. These repetitions continue the rhetorical strategy already mentioned of linking the address to the petitions in order to guarantee Ištar's intervention. In fact, the goddess is reminded of her attributes in the address and in the petitions these attributes are requested for the benefit of the supplicant. One would expect line 34 to request *mīšaru*, "justice," as this is the substantive employed in line 18 with *imnukki*. However, the supplicant petitions for *mešrû*, "riches." Only the manuscript K 2396+ preserves line 34 fully, and it has *meš-ra-a* (r. 13), but it does not preserve line 18.[601] Therefore, it is impossible to know whether the scribe matched the terms between these lines. The other manuscripts do not preserve line 34 fully, thus it is currently impossible to know whether there were two variants of the prayer, one using *mīšaru* and another *mešrû*. Nevertheless, *mīšaru* and *mešrû* still show a connection through consonance. It is therefore still possible to link these terms.[602]

Like line 18, lines 34 and 35 employ a merism with the pair *imnu* and *šumēlu*, which is further emphasized through chiasmus:

34 *ša imnukki* | *mešrâ* | *luṣṣib*
35 *dumqa* | *lukšuda* | *ša šumēlukki*

(Ištar 1:34–35)

[601] I have collated the tablet through a photograph.
[602] This link through consonance had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 228) and Wright (1979: 96). Regarding the use of phonologic figures to create cohesion within a text, see the sound repetition in *Maqlû* III:122–123, as analysed by Rinderer (2024: 308–309).

This merism and chiasmus thus have a totalizing effect, like in lines 32–33. Moreover, these two couplets, like lines 16 and 17, create an overall merism through the reference to all the sides of Ištar: front, back, right side, and left side. As the goddess is accompanied by protective deities, riches, and goodness on all sides, so does the supplicant wish the same for himself; he wishes to be totally and completely protected and well. The framing of lines 34 and 35 by the second-person possessive suffix *-ki* creates an epanadiplosis which emphasizes the addressee.

In lines 36–37, the poet focuses on speech:

36 *qibîma* | *liššeme* | *zikrī*
37 *amāt* | *aqabbû* || *kīma aqabbû* | *lū magrat*

Command that my utterance may be heard,
So that the word which I speak, when I speak, may be accepted.

(Ištar 1:36–37)

The root *q–b–ʾ* is repeated three times, an emphatic element in Akkadian poetry as previously mentioned.[603] The difference in verbal form between *qibîma* and *aqabbû* also creates a polyptoton. The terms *zikru*, "utterance," and *amātu*, "word," are also employed in reference to speech further highlighting this theme. The precatives *liššeme* and *lū magrat* are employed as a response to the speech, that is, the supplicant wishes that his word may be heard and accepted. This focus on speech, like in the šuila Marduk 2, is in accordance with the prayer itself as a form of speech and the šuila-prayers' rhetorical purposes.[604] The supplicant wishes that his prayer may be accepted in order for the gods to relent. This couplet is also linked back to the address because of the use of the root *š–m–ʾ* in *liššeme*, "may it be heard." In fact, Ištar's ability to listen mentioned in the address (Ištar 1:21) is now requested by the supplicant. Moreover, *magāru*, "acceptance," is also part of the attributes of the goddess in the address (Ištar 1:19), paralleling the precative in

[603] On this feature, see my comments on Marduk 2:14–19 (§3.2.2.2.2).
[604] On these petitions in Akkadian šuila-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 249–252.

line 37; her command, *qibītu*, referred to in line 22, is now again emphasized through the imperative *qibîma*.[605] Therefore, this couplet continues the rhetorical strategy of linking the petitions back to the address. The use of an imperative and three simple poetic feet in line 36 is particularly emphatic for this petition, since imperatives are direct addresses and three-foot lines slow the rhythm.[606]

Lines 38–39 continue the petitions:

38 *ina ṭūb* (|) *šīri* | *u ḫūd* (|) *libbi* || *itarrînni* | *ūmišam*
39 *ūmīya* | *urrikī* || *balāṭa* | *šurkī*

Guide me daily in sweetness of the flesh and gladness of the heart,
Lengthen my days, grant life.

(Ištar 1:38–39)

The use of *ūmišam*, "daily," at the end of line 38 and the use of *ūmīya*, "my days," at the start of line 39 is an instance of anadiplosis. This contributes to the parallelism between the lines and emphasizes this term within the petitions. The supplicant moves from spatial protection in lines 32–35 to temporal protection in lines 38–39. The assonance of the sound /i/ in lines 38–39 also contributes to the parallelism and performativity. Line 39 has inner grammatical parallelism, because each colon has an accusative object (*ūmīya* and *balāṭa*) followed by a second-person feminine singular imperative (*urrikī* and *šurkī*).

Lines 40 and 41 conclude the petition stanza:

40 *lubluṭ* | *lušlimma* || *luštammar* | *ilūtki*
41 *ēma* | *uṣammaru* | *lukšud*

May I live, may I become well, may I praise your divinity,
So that whatever I wish, may I achieve.

(Ištar 1:40–41)

[605] The lexical links between this couplet (Ištar 1:36–37) and the address had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 220).
[606] On three-foot lines as slowing the rhythm, see George 2003: 163.

The root *b–l–ṭ* is used in lines 39 (*balāṭa*) and 40 (*lubluṭ*), creating a polyptoton. Lines 40 and 41 have different phonologic figures that contribute to their rhythm and recitation. The precatives *lubluṭ*, *lušlimma*, and *luštammar* in line 40 have alliteration of the sound /lu/, and the last two even go further in the alliteration with the repetition of the /luš/ sound.[607] The noun *ilūtki* in line 40 and the precative *lukšud* in line 41 also contribute to this sound repetition because of the syllable /lu/. Both lines have consonance with the sounds /l/ and /m/. The change from the imperatives in the previous couplet to the first-person precatives in this couplet is an expression of the hierarchical relationship in the prayer between the deity and the supplicant. The second colon of line 40 already points to the blessing because the supplicant is promising to praise the deity if he can live and be healthy. The change in the normal word order in the second colon of line 40, an anastrophe, emphasizes the accusative object as the last term in the line. The noun *ilūtki*, "your divinity," refers directly to Ištar and this is an attempt to secure the goddess's attention for the last petition. The use of three simple feet in the last line of the petition stanza can be emphatic because it slows the rhythm, highlighting the end of the stanza and the last petition. In fact, the last request is more general in comparison to the previous ones, and acts as an overarching petition encompassing all the other requests presented before.[608]

3.3.2.2.3. Ištar 1:42–44

The last triplet of the šuila corresponds to the final blessing:

42 *šamû* | *liḫdûki* || *apsû* | *lirīški*
43 *ilū* | *ša kiššati* | *likrubūki*

[607] The repetition of the sound /lu/ had already been noted by Zgoll (2003b: 229).
[608] In the šuila Marduk 2, the same petitions are presented in lines 11–13, the first triplet of the petition stanza, showing how the same requests can be used in different moments of the prayer.

44 *ilū* | *rabûtu* || *libbaki* | *liṭibbū*

May heaven become joyful about you, may the Apsû rejoice over you,
May the gods of totality bless you,
May the great gods sweeten your heart.

(Ištar 1:42–44)

This follows one of the traditional closing formulas for šuila-prayers,[609] and with the exception of the subjects in line 42, all the lines are the same as in the blessing in Marduk 2:25–27. Line 42 has inner grammatical parallelism as each colon has a subject (*šamû* and *apsû*) followed by a precative with a second-person feminine singular accusative suffix (*liḫdûki* and *lirīški*). It also has prosodic parallelism: *ša**mû*** | *liḫ**dû**ki* || *aps**û*** | *li**rīš**ki*. The subjects *šamû*, "heaven," and *apsû* form a merism as they represent spatial opposites, and thus allude to the idea of totality. In fact, the reference to *kiššatu*, "totality," in line 43 completes this merism. The supplicant wishes that all the gods everywhere praise Ištar. Line 43 expands on line 42 by referring to *ilū ša kiššati*, "the gods of totality," which as previously mentioned completes the merism. Line 43 also follows the syntactic order of line 42 by starting with the subject (*šamû*, *apsû*, and *ilū ša kiššati*) followed by the precative with the possessive suffix referring to Ištar (*liḫdûki*, *lirīški*, and *likrubūki*). The use of the suffixes at the end of lines 42 and 43 creates a homeoptoton.

In line 44, the syntactic order of the previous lines is maintained as the subject (*ilū rabûtu*) is followed by the verb (*liṭibbū*). However, like in the šuila Marduk 2, the object *libbaki*, "your heart," is added to this line in-between the subject and verb. The use of the general title *ilū rabûtu*, "great gods" maintains the merism of the stanza, as all the gods should praise Ištar. Like in the šuila Marduk 2, the use *ilū* at the start of lines 43 and 44 creates an anaphora. The final verb *liṭibbū*, "may they sweeten," indicates the purpose of the prayer: to sweeten the heart of Ištar so that she relents and fulfils the supplicant's petitions.

[609] See Mayer 1976: 331–332.

The blessing is linked back to the address creating a ring composition. The term *šamû* is used in lines 2 and 5 of the address, and *apsû* is employed in line 8 of the address. The root *ṭ–ʾ–b*, used in the last verb of the blessing, is also employed in line 21 of the address. This contributes to the ring character of the šuila which is thus framed by praise from the individual in the address and from the other gods in the blessing. Like in the šuila Marduk 2, this structure contributes to the rhetoric of the unit as the prayer is defined by the praise of Ištar, a strategy to convince her to act on behalf of the supplicant.

3.4. Šuila Šamaš 1

3.4.1. Transcription and Translation

1 *šurbû* | *gitmālu* || *apil* | *namraṣīt*[610]

2 *nūru* | *eddēššû* || *pētû* (|) *pān* (|) *nišī* | *mukallim* (|) *nūri*

3 *šamaš* | *muštēšir* (|) *mīti* | *u balṭi* || *bār* (|) *kal* (|) *mimma šumšu*[611]

4 *šamaš* | *nūr* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti*[612] || *šarūr* (|) *mātāti*

5 *bēl* | *sippar* || *ṣulūl* | *e-babbar*[613]

6 *talīm* | *marūtuk* || *tuklat* | *bābili*

7 *ana nūrīka* | *upaqqā* | *tenēšētu*[614]

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[610] CBS 1519, o. 1 (= Myhrman 1911: no. 12): ^{d}*namraṣīt*(dili.im$_2$.babbar.ra); BM 41745, o. 1 (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.41745, accessed 30/03/2026): ^{d}*namraṣīt*(dili.^{r}im$_2$^{1}.[babbar]); BM 38619, r. 8 (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.38619, accessed 30/03/2026): ^{d}<*namraṣīt*(dili.im$_2$.babbar) >*ḫe-pi$_2$ eš-šu$_2$*; BM 38711+, o. 25′ (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.38711, accessed 30/03/2026): ^{d}*namraṣīt*(^{r}dili^{1}.[im$_2$.babbar]); K 16376+, l. 1′ (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 23): ^{d}*namraṣīt*([dili.im$_2$].babbar); 1879,0708.184, o. 1 (= Loretz and Mayer 1978: no. 22): ^{d}*namraṣīt*(dili.im$_2$.babbar); K 15951+, l. 5′ (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/K.15951, accessed 30/03/2026): ^{r}d^{1}*namraṣīt*(dili.im$_2$.babbar); IM 76966+, r. 10′a (= von Weiher 1983: no. 18; von Weiher 1998: no. 238): ^{d}*namraṣīt*(dili.im$_2$.babbar); K 5980+, o. 7′ (= King 1896: no. 10): AŠ.AN.AMAR.UTU. Most manuscripts preserve the Sumerogram ^{d}DILI.IM$_2$.BABBAR, “lonely white runner,” for the name Namraṣīt, “bright at rising,” but the manuscript K 5980+ preserves the Sumerogram AŠ.AN.AMAR.UTU. This variant could have been caused by an error of attraction as the previous prayer preserved on the manuscript was addressed to Marduk, ^{d}AMAR.UTU (o. 6′). On errors of attraction in Akkadian, see Worthington 2012: 109–111. Hätinen (2021: 73–74), however, has convincingly proposed a new reading for the name preserved in K 5980+ as DILI.^{d}AMAR.BABBAR, “unique white divine calf.” On Dilimbabbar/Namraṣīt as a name of Sîn, see Hätinen 2021: 71–78. In the manuscript BM 38619, the scribe notes a new break when one would expect the divine name.

[611] BM 38619, r. 10: [^{d}*šamaš*(utu) *muš*]-^{r}*te*^{1}-*šir šar*(lugal) *mīti*(uš$_2$) *u* ^{lu2}*mīti*(uš$_2$) *u* ^{lu2}*balāṭi*(ti) *ba*-^{r}*a*^{1}-^{r}*ra*^{1} ^{r}*kal*^{1} ^{r}*mim*^{1}-^{r}*ma*^{1} ^{r}*šum*^{1}-^{r}*šu*^{1}. The addition of LUGAL UŠ$_2$ *u* seems to be a scribal error of dittography, i.e., writing twice what the scribe should have written once, alongside an error of sign similarity because of the similarities between the signs LUGAL and LU$_2$. On dittography in Akkadian, see Worthington 2012: 106. On errors of sign similarity in Akkadian, see Worthington 2012: 92–93. This error of dittography had already been noted by Lenzi (2024a).

[612] CBS 1519, o. 4: *šamê*(an) *u erṣeti*(ki); BM 41745, o. 4: ^{r}*šamê*(an)^{1}[^{e} *u*] *erṣeti*(ki)^{ti3}; BM 38619, r. 11: *šamê*(an)^{e} *u erṣeti*(ki)^{ti3}; SU 1951.215, o. 6′ (= Gurney and Hulin 1964: no. 22): *šamê*(an) *u* ^{r}*erṣeti*(ki)^{1}; K 2106+, r. 23 (= King 1896: no. 6): *šamê*(an)^{e}; K 5980+, o. 9′a: *šamê*(an)^{e} *u erṣeti*(ki)[^{ti3}]; K 2824, o. 3′ (= Langdon 1927: pl. 30): *šamê*(an) *u erṣeti*(ki); 1879,0708.184, o. 4: [*erṣeti*(ki)]^{r}^{ti3}^{1}; IM 76966+, r. 12′b: *šamê*(an)^{e} *u erṣeti*(ki)^{ti3}; SU 1951.52+, o. 4 (= Gurney and Finkelstein 1957: no. 60): *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš}; SU 1951.45+, o. 4 (= Gurney and Finkelstein 1957: no. 61): *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš}. The last two Ḫuzirina manuscripts replace *šamê u erṣeti* by *ilī*.

[613] BM 41745 omits this line.

[614] IM 76966+, K 2824, CBS 1519, BM 38619, and BM 41745 omit this line.

8 *ana qibītīka*[615] | *utaqqû*[616] || *ilū* | *igigī*[617]

9 *nišū*[618] | *rapšātu* | *ṣalmāt* (|) *qaqqadi* || *idallalā*[619] | *qurdīka*

10 *eṭla* | *ēda*[620] || *tappâ* | *tušaršī*[621]

11 *ana lā išari* | *tanamdin* | *apla*

12 *edlūti* | *sikkūr*[622] (||) *šamê* | *tupatti*[623]

13 *ana lā nāṭili* | *tašakkan*[624] | *nūra*

14 *tuppa* | *arma* || *lā petâ* | *tašassi*

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[615] CBS 1519, o. 7: [*ana qi*$_2$]-*bi-ti-ka*; SU 1951.45+, o. 8: ⌜*a*⌝-⌜*na*⌝ *qi*$_2$-⌜*bi*⌝-*ti-ka*; K 2106+, r. 27: [qi$_2$]-*bi-ti*-⌜*ka*⌝; K 2824, o. 6′: *ana qi*$_2$-*bi-tuk-ka*; IM 76966+, r. 13′c: *ana qi*$_2$-⌜*bi*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝-*ka*; SU 1951.52+, o. 8: *ana qi*$_2$-*biti-ka*.

[616] CBS 1519, o. 7: *u*$_2$-*taq-qu-u*$_2$; BM 38342, o. 2′b (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/BM.38342, accessed 30/03/2026): [*u*$_2$]-⌜*taq*⌝-⌜*qu*⌝-*u*$_2$; BM 38619, r. 14: ⌜*u*$_2$⌝-⌜*taq*⌝-*qu-u*$_2$; SU 1951.45+, o. 8: ⌜*u*$_2$⌝-*taq-qu-u*$_2$; K 2824, o. 6′: *u*$_2$-*taq-qu-u*$_2$; 1879,0708.184, o. 8: ⌜*u*$_2$⌝-*taq-qu-u*$_2$; IM 76966+, r. 14′a: *u*$_2$-*taq-qu-u*$_2$; SU 1951.52+, o. 8: [*u*$_2$]-⌜*paq*⌝-*qa*. SU 1951.52+ is the only manuscript currently preserving the verbal form *upaqqa*, "he is attentive," which might also be an error of dittography as the scribe had already used this verbal form in o. 7.

[617] CBS 1519, o. 7: *ilū*(diĝir)^{me} ^{d}*i*$_2$-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; BM 38619, r. 14: *ilū*(diĝir)^{meš} ^{d}⌜*i*$_2$⌝-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; SU 1951.45+, o. 8: *ilū*(diĝir)$^{⌜meš⌝}$ […]; K 2824, o. 6′: ⌜*ilū*(diĝir)⌝^{meš} ^{d}*i*$_2$-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; K 16376+, l. 8′: *ilū*(diĝir)^{meš} ^{d}*i*$_2$-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; 1879,0708.184, o. 8: *ilū*(diĝir)^{meš} ^{d}*i*$_2$-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; K 15951+, l. 12′: [*ilū*(diĝir)]$^{⌜me⌝}$ ^{d}*i*$_2$-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; IM 76966+, r. 14′a: *ilū*(diĝir)^{me} ^{d}*i*$_2$-*gi*$_3$-*gi*$_3$; SU 1951.52+, o. 8: *ilū*(diĝir)^{meš} *rabûtu*(gal)^{meš}. SU 1951.52+ is the only manuscript currently preserving *ilū rabûtu*, "great gods." BM 41745 omits this line.

[618] SU 1951.52+, o. 9 adds *ilu*(diĝir) *u šarru*(lugal), "god and king," before *nišū*, "people."

[619] CBS 1519, o. 8: *i-dal-la-la*; BM 38342, o. 3′: *i-dal-la*-[*la*]; BM 38619, r. 15: *i-dal-la-lu*; SU 1951.45+, o. 9: *i-da*$^{!}$(DU)-*la*$_2$-<*la*$_2$>; K 2824, o. 7′: *i*-⌜*dal*⌝-⌜*la*⌝-*lu*; K 16376+, l. 9′: [*i*]-⌜*dal*⌝-*la-la*; 1879,0708.184, o. 9: *i-dal-la-la*; IM 76966+, r. 14′b: [*i*]-*dal-la*$_2$-<*la*$_2$>; SU 1951.52+, o. 9: *i-da-la-la*.

[620] IM 76966+ omits the sign DILI for *ēda*.

[621] CBS 1519, o. 9: *tu-šar-ši*; BM 38342, o. 4′a: ⌜*tu*⌝-⌜*šar*⌝-*ši*; BM 38619, r. 16: ⌜*tu*⌝-⌜*šar*⌝-*ši*; SU 1951.52+, o. 10: ⌜*tu*⌝-⌜*šar*⌝-[*ši*]; K 5980+, o. 12′a: *tu*-[*šar-ši*]; K 2824, o. 8′: *tu-šar-ši*; K 16376+, l. 10′: *tu-šar-ša*$_2$; 1879,0708.184, o. 10: *tu-šar-ši*; K 15951+, l. 14′: [*tu*]-*šar-ši*; IM 76966+, r. 15′a: *tu-šar-ši*. K 16376+ is the only manuscript currently preserving a durative form; all other manuscripts preserve a preterite form which I am taking as a gnomic preterite because of the parallelism with other durative forms. On the gnomic preterite, see my comments on the transcription of *Ludlul* I:14 (§2.2.1). BM 41745 omits this line.

[622] As already noted by Smith (2011: 372), one would expect the plural form *sikkūrī* in accordance with the plural form of the adjective *edlūti*, but all manuscripts preserve the singular construct state form *sikkūr* as well as the masculine plural form *edlūti*. Nevertheless, grammatically singular construct states can stand for plurals in Akkadian (see Kouwenberg 2017: 187–188; von Soden 1995: §64 l).

[623] CBS 1519, o. 11: *tu-pat-ti*; BM 38342, o. 5′a: *tu-pat-ti*; BM 38619, r. 18: *tu-pat-*⌜*ti*⌝; SU 1951.52+, o. 12: *tu-pat-te*; SU 1951.45+, o. 12: *ta-*⌜*pat*⌝-⌜*ti*⌝; K 2824, o. 10′: *tu-pat-ti*; K 16376+, l. 12′: *tu-pat-ti*; K 15951+, l. 16′: [*tu*]-*pat-ta*; IM 76966+, r. 16′: *tu-pat-tu*$_2$. I am taking the preterite form preserved in most manuscripts as a gnomic preterite.

[624] CBS 1519, o. 12: *ta-šak-kan*; Rm 798, o. 1′a (= https://www.ebl.lmu.de/library/Rm.798, accessed 30/03/2026): [*ta-šak*]-⌜*kan*$^{?}$⌝; BM 38619, r. 19: [*ta*]-⌜*šak*⌝-*kan-na*; SU 1951.52+, o. 13: ⌜*ta*⌝-*šak-kan*; SU 1951.45+, o. 13: ⌜*ta*⌝-*ša*$_2$-*kan*; K 2824, o. 11′a: *tašakkan*(gar)^{an}; K 16376+, l. 13′: *ta-šak-kan*; IM 76966, r. 16′: *tašakkan*(gar) NU$^{!}$.

15 *ina*[625] *libbi* | *immeri*[626] || *tašaṭṭar* | *šīra*[627]

15a *tašakkan* | *dīna*[628]

16 *dayyān* | *ilī* || *bēl* | *igigī*[629]

17 *šamaš* | *bēl*[630] (|) *šīmat* (||) *māti* | *attāma*[631]

(K 16376+ ll. 18′–21′, SU 1951.45+ o. 19–26, and CBS 1519 o. 17–22 include a self-presentation, *attalû* formula, and lament between these lines)

18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*

19 *līširā* | *idātūya* || *lidmiqā* | *šunātūya*[632]

[625] SU 1951.52+, o. 15 omits *ina*.

[626] CBS 1519, o. 14: *immerī*(udu.nita$_2$)^{meš}; BM 38342, o. 6′b: ⌜*immeri*⌝(⌜udu.⌜nita$_2$⌝); SU 1951.52+, o. 15: *immerī*(udu.nita$_2$); K 2106+, r. 34: *immerī*(udu.nita$_2$); K 16376+, l. 15′: [*immeri*]([udu].⌜nita$_2$⌝); IM 76966+, r. 17′a: *immerī*(udu.nita$_2$); SU 1951.45+, o. 15: *immerī*(⌜udu⌝.⌜nita$_2$⌝); K 2824, o. 12′: *immerī*(udu.nita$_2$). The use of the sign MEŠ in CBS 1519 can indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically.

[627] CBS 1519, o. 14: *šīra*(uzu); Rm 798, o. 2′a: *šīra*(uzu); SU 1951.52+, o. 15: *šīrī*(uzu)^{meš}; K 16376+, l. 15′: *šīra*(uzu); IM 76966+, r. 17′a: *šīra*(uzu); K 2824, o. 12′: *šīrī*(uzu)^{meš}; SU 1951.45+, o. 15: *šīrī*(uzu)$^{⌜meš⌝}$. Like for *immeru*, the use of the sign MEŠ can indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically. This line is not preserved in BM 38619, but the break in r. 21 might have room for it.

[628] Only SU 1951.45+, o. 15 and K 2824, o. 12′ include the phrase *tašakkan dīna*. For this reason, I have opted to include this sentence as line 15a.

[629] SU 1951.45+, o. 16 preserves another line before line 16: [d]⌜*šamaš*⌝(⌜utu⌝) *muš-te-šir māti*(kur) *bēl*(en) *šīmāti*(nam)^{meš} *gišḫurī*(giš.ḫur)^{me} ⌜*at*⌝-[*ta*], "Šamaš, the one who leads the land aright, y[ou] are the lord of destinies (and) plans."

[630] K 2106+, r. 36: *bēl*(en); K 2824, o. 14′: ⌜*bēl*⌝(⌜en⌝); IM 76966+, r. 18′a: *bēl*(en); SU 1951.45+, o. 18: ⌜*mu*⌝-*šim*; CBS 1519, o. 16: *bēlu*(en) *mu-šim*.

[631] Manuscripts K 16376+ and SU 1951.52 preserve variants of this line. K 16376+, l. 17′: [d*šamaš*(utu)] *bēl*(en) *šīmāti*(nam)^{meš} *gišḫurī*(giš.ḫur)^{meš} *at-ta-ma*, "[Šamaš], you are the lord of destinies (and) plans." SU 1951.52+, r. 1–2: d*šamaš*(utu) *muš-te-*⌜*šir*⌝ *mātāti*(kur.kur) *at-ta* / *bēl*(en) *šīmāti*(nam)^{meš} *gišḫurī*(⌜giš⌝.ḫur)^{meš} *at-ta-ma*, "Šamaš, you are the one who leads the lands aright / you are the lord of destinies (and) plans." These lines parallel SU 1951.45+ o. 16.

[632] K 2106+ r. 38–39, K 5980+ o. 16′–17′, SU 1951.52+ r. 4–5, and CBS 1519 o. 24–25 divide this line into two lines in the manuscript, while K 16376+ l. 23′ and BM 38342 l. 9′ use only one manuscript line. I follow the latter as this maintains the four-foot metrical division and keeps the parallelism with line 18.

20 *šunat*[633] | *aṭṭulu*[634] || *ana damqāti* | *šukna*[635]

21 *išariš*[636] | *lullik* || *tappâ* | *lukšud*

22 *ina*[637] *ūmīya* | *lū damiqtu*

23 *šutlimamma* | *egirrê* | *dumqi*[638]

24 *ina sūqi* | *lū magir* | *qabûya*[639]

25 *ilu* | *u šarru* | *lišāqirū*[ʾ]*inni*[640]

26 *kabtu* | *u rubû* || *ša qabîy*[*a*] | *līpušū*[641]

27 *ina*[642] *ulṣi* | *u rīšāti* || *lubil* | *ūma*

28 *kittu* | *lizziz* | *ina imittīya*

29 *mīšaru* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*

30 *littallak*[643] | *ilu*[644] || *mušallimu* | *ina idīya*

31 *ayy ipparku* | *rābiṣ* (||) *šulmi* | *ina arkīya*

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[633] CBS 1519, o. 26: *šunat*(maš$_2$.ge$_6$); Rm 798, o. 5′b: *šunat*(maš$_2$.ge$_6$); SU 1951.45+, r. 1: *šunāti*(˹maš$_2$˺.ge$_6$)^{meš}; K 2106+, r. 40: *šunat*(maš$_2$.ge$_6$); K 5980+, o. 18′a: *šunāti*(˹maš$_2$˺.ge$_6$)^{me}; K 16376+, l. 24′: *šunat*(˹maš$_2$˺.ge$_6$); IM 76966+, r. 19′b: *šunat*(˹maš$_2$˺.ge$_6$); SU 1951.52+, r. 6: *šunat*(maš$_2$.ge$_6$). The use of the signs MEŠ and ME in SU 1951.45+ and K 5980+ respectively can indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically.

[634] CBS 1519, o. 26: *aṭ-ṭu-lu*; Rm 798, o. 5′b: *aṭ-ṭu-*˹*lu*˺; K 2106+, r. 40: *aṭ-ṭu-la*; K 5980+, o. 18′a: *aṭ-ṭu-la*; K 16376+, l. 24′: *aṭ-ṭu-*˹*la*˺; IM 76966+, r. 19′b: *aṭ-ṭul*; SU 1951.52+, r. 6: *a-na-ṭa-*˹*al*˺. SU 1951.52+ is the only manuscript currently preserving the durative form *anaṭṭal*, "I see."

[635] CBS 1519, o. 26: *šuk-na*; K 16376+, l. 24′: *šuk-na*; IM 76966+, r. 19′b: *šuk-nu*; SU 1951.52+, r. 6: *ter-ri*. SU 1951.52+ is the only manuscript currently preserving a verbal form of *târu*, "to turn."

[636] CBS 1519, r. 1: ˹*i*˺-*ša$_2$-riš*; SU 1951.52+, r. 7: *sur-riš*; SU 1951.45+, r. 2: *i-ša$_2$-*˹*riš*˺; K 2106+, r. 41: *i-ša$_2$-riš*; K 16376+, l. 25′: ˹*i*˺-˹*ša$_2$*˺-˹*riš*˺; IM 76966+, r. 19′c: *i-ša$_2$-riš*. The spelling in SU 1951.52+ is probably a mistake for *i-ša$_2$-riš* (see Mayer 1976: 507).

[637] K 2106+, r. 42 replaces *ina* by *ša*.

[638] K 2106+ r. 42–43, K 16376+ ll. 26′–27′, SU 1951.52+ r. 8–9, SU 1951.45+ r. 3–4, and CBS 1519 r. 2–3 divide lines 22 and 23 into separate manuscript lines. K 5980+ o. 19′, which is broken, might have placed them within the same manuscript line. Nevertheless, in this case I will follow the former manuscripts as the metre and the parallelism are not as clear as in the case of line 19.

[639] IM 76966+, r. 10′ adds *an-nu* at the end, which can be a gloss, explaining the line, as suggested in eBL (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/%C5%A0ui/1/3/SB/1, accessed 30/03/2026).

[640] Only SU 1951.52+ (r. 11–12) and SU 1951.45+ (r. 6–7) include lines 25 and 26, which are omitted in the other manuscripts.

[641] SU 1951.52+, r. 12: *li-pu-uš*.

[642] IM 76966+, r. 21′a omits *ina*.

[643] IM 76966+, r. 22′a omits the verb *littallak*, but adds *lu ka-a-a-an*, "may constantly be," at the end of the line.

[644] SU 1951.52+, r. 15a: *ilu*(diĝir); SU 1951.45+, r. 11: *ilu*(diĝir); Ashm-1924.2399, r. 4′ (= Gurney 1989: no. 94): *ilu*(diĝir); K 2106+, r. 47: ˹*ilu*˺(˹diĝir˺); IM 76966+, r. 22′a: *ilū*(diĝir)^{me}. The use of the signs ME in IM 76966+ can indicate that the previous sign should be read logographically.

32 *līt*amūka | *bunene* || *sukkalka*[645] | *damiqtī*

33 *aya* | *ḫīrtu* | *narāmtaka* || *šilim* | *liqbīka*[646]

34 *šamaš* | *ašarēd* (|) *ilī*[647] | *attā* || *rišâ* | *rēma*[648]

35 *šamû* | *liḫdûka* || *erṣetu*[649] | *lirīška*

36 *ilū* | *ša kiššati* | *likrubūka*[650]

37 *ilū* | *rabûtu* || *libbaka* | *liṭibbū*[651]

1 Most exalted, perfect, son of Namraṣīt,

2 Constantly renewing light, who brings happiness to the people (lit. who opens the face of the people), who brings deliverance (lit. who shows the light).

3 Šamaš, who leads aright the dead and the living, who sees absolutely everything,

4 Šamaš, the light of heaven and earth, brilliance of the lands.

5 Lord of Sippar, protection of the Ebabbar,

6 Favourite brother of Marduk, the trust of Babylon.

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645 IM 76966, r. 23′: *sukkal*(sukkal)-*ka*; SU 1951.52+, r. 16: ⌜*sukkal*(sukkal)⌝-*ka*; CBS 1519, r. 10: ⌜*sukkal*(sukkal)⌝-*ka*. Mayer (1976: 509) had already noted that the sign KA used to indicate the possessive suffix could be taken with *damiqta* and read INIM "word." Lenzi (2024c) suggests that maybe in an earlier version of this šuila there were two KA signs in a row and the second one was later dropped: one indicating the possessive suffix and another one indicating the Sumerogram INIM.

646 SU 1951.52+ omits this line.

647 CBS 1519, r. 12: [*šamê*(an)]⌜e⌝; Rm 798, r. 15: *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš}; SU 1951.52+, r. 17: MEŠ$^{!}$ *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš}; K 2106+, r. 51: *ilī*(diĝir)^{meš}; IM 76966+, r. 24′a: *ilī*(diĝir)$^{<meš>}$. CBS 1519 is the only manuscript currently preserving the term *šamû*, "heaven."

648 K 5980+ possibly omits this line. SU 1951.52+ preserves another line after this: (r. 18) ⌜*ilu*⌝(⌜diĝir⌝) *libba*(ša$_3$)-*ka li-ṭi-ib ka-bat-ta-ka* ⌜*lip*$^{?}$⌝-[*pa-šir*], "May the god sweeten your heart, [may] your mood [become reconciled]." The restoration ⌜*lip*$^{?}$⌝-[*pa-šir*] is based on Mayer's suggestion (1976: 509, note 129).

649 SU 1951.52+, r. 19: *erṣeti*(ki)^{ti3}; K 5980+, o. 24′a: *erṣeti*(ki)^{ti3}; CBS 1519, r. 13: ⌜*apsû*⌝(⌜abzu⌝)$^{?}$; Rm 798, r. 6: ⌜*apsû*⌝(⌜abzu⌝); IM 76966+, r. 24′b+: *apsû*(abzu).

650 SU 1951.52+ omits this line.

651 K 5980+ and SU 1951.52+ preserve a variant closing line. K 5980+, o. 25′: ^{d}*a-num* ^{d}*en-lil$_2$ u* ^{d}*e$_2$-a li-*⌜*šar*⌝-[*bu-u be-lut-ka*], "May Anu, Enlil, and Ea magnify [your lordship]." SU 1951.52+, r. 20: ⌜^{d}⌝*a-num* ^{d}*enlil*(bad) ^{d}*e$_2$-a li-šar-bu-*[*u be-lut-ka*], "May Anu, Enlil, and Ea magnify [your lordship]." The restoration for both these manuscripts is based on Mayer's suggestion (1976: 509, note 130).

7 Humankind is attentive to your light,

8 The Igigī gods pay attention to your command,

9 The numerous, black-headed people praise your heroic acts.

10 You provide the lonely young man with a companion,

11 You give a son to the impotent.

12 You open the locked bolts of heaven,

13 You set light for the blind.

14 You read an unopened, enclosed tablet,

15 You inscribe a flesh-omen on the insides of a sheep,

15a You set a judgement.

16 Judge of the gods, lord of the Igigī,

17 Šamaš, you are the lord of the land's destiny.

18 Decree my destiny, make my way good,

19 May my signs become favourable, may my dreams become good.

20 Turn the dream I saw into something good,

21 May I prosper, may I acquire a companion.

22 May there be goodness during my days,

23 Grant me a good ominous utterance.

24 May my speech be accepted in the street,

25 May god and king respect me.

26 May the important one and prince do what I say,

27 So that I may spend the day in pleasure and rejoicing.

28 May truth stand at my right side,

29 May justice stand at my left side.

30 May a protecting god constantly go at my side,

31 May a guardian for good not cease to be behind me.

32 May Bunene, your vizier, speak well of me to you,

33 May Aya, your beloved wife, say to you "Be at peace!"

34 Šamaš, you are the foremost of the gods, have mercy.

35 May heaven become joyful about you, may earth rejoice over you,

36 May the gods of totality bless you,

37 May the great gods sweeten your heart.

3.4.2. Poetic Analysis

3.4.2.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Smith divides this prayer into three stanzas: the address in lines 1–17; the petition in lines 18–43; and the blessing in lines 44–46.[652] Smith's edition includes the self-presentation, *attalû* formula, and lament of manuscript SU 1951.45+ (o. 19–26), and he further divides the prayer into smaller groupings: the address is divided into "god's name, honorific titles and attributes" in lines 1–6 and "praise for the god's nature and special skills" in lines 7–17; the petition is divided into "self-introduction" in lines 18–19, "lament" in lines 20–25, and "plea" in lines 25–43. I have excluded the self-introduction and lament from both my edition and analysis because they are not the same in the three manuscripts that preserve these lines, and they are employed for specific contexts, lacking a direct link to the overall prayer.[653] My understanding of the šuila follows Smith's overall division into address (Šamaš 1:1–17), petition (Šamaš 1:18–34), and blessing (Šamaš 1:35–37).

[652] Smith 2011: 368. This division follows Smith's line numbering.
[653] I have also discussed these formulas in the identification of the speakers, audiences, and purposes of the šuila-prayers (see §3.1).

Stanza	Lines in šuila Šamaš 1	Chapter section
Address	1–17	§3.4.2.2.1
Petition	18–34	§3.4.2.2.2
Blessing	35–37	§3.4.2.2.3

Table 15 - Stanzaic division of šuila Šamaš 1

Line 18 employs an imperative marking the beginning of the petitions, and lines 35–37 have the requests for other deities to bless Šamaš, a similar pattern to the one used in Marduk 2:25–27 and Ištar 1:42–44. The address occupies almost half of the prayer, showing, like in the šuila Ištar 1, its importance and a link to hymnic literature. The focus on the address is also a rhetorical strategy to secure Šamaš's attention through praise. Like in the other šuila-prayers, the overall structure and movement from address, to petition, to blessing, are also part of the prayer's rhetoric.

The overall strophic pattern in this prayer is couplets, two-line strophes. Nevertheless, the unit has one monostich, two or three triplets, and possibly one quatrain. Line 34 is a monostich at the end of the petitions because it is not parallel with the previous lines and it is a "counterpatterning," since it marks the end of the petition stanza. The blessing in lines 35–37, as in the other two šuila-prayers, is a triplet, and in this šuila, as in Ištar 1, acts as a "counterpatterning," indicating a stanzaic change. The address contains one triplet in lines 7–9, as these are the only lines in the address which employ third-person finite verbal forms and, following Smith's suggestion, they mark a change in the subdivision of the address. Lines 14–15a can also be considered a triplet but line 15a seems to be an extension of line 15 rather than a line by itself. Lines 24–27 are

difficult to divide but the parallelism between lines 24 and 27 through the opening preposition *ina* creates a frame for a quatrain. Moreover, four manuscripts (K 2106+, K 5980+, IM 76966, and CBS 1519) omit lines 25 and 26, showing a direct link between lines 24 and 27. This šuila thus shows an overall structuring pattern with only a few exceptions. The use of a set pattern, like in the other šuila-prayers, can have a calming effect for both the speaker and the addressee, contributing to the rhetorical purposes of the prayer.

3.4.2.2. Micro-Level Analysis

3.4.2.2.1. Šamaš 1:1–17

The address starts with an enumeration of epithets addressed to Šamaš:

1 *šurbû* | *gitmālu* || *apil* | *namraṣīt*
2 *nūru* | *eddēššû* || *pētû* (|) *pān* (|) *nišī* | *mukallim* (|) *nūri*

Most exalted, perfect, son of Namraṣīt,
Constantly renewing light, who brings happiness to the people (lit. who opens the face of the people), who brings deliverance (lit. who shows the light).

(Šamaš 1:1–2)

These epithets emphasize the god's importance, building his credentials, and are thus a way to secure the god's attention by flattering him and politely addressing him. In line 2, the repetition of the term *nūru*, "light," creates an epanadiplosis, highlighting the link between the sun-god and light, a key aspect of Šamaš's roles.[654] The name used for Sîn in line 1, Namraṣīt, "bright at rising," also alludes to light, and lines 1 and 2 have

[654] On Šamaš as provider of light, see Krebernik 2011: 505. See also the importance of *nūru* in epithets of Šamaš in CAD N/2: 348–349. These epithets are part of an older Mesopotamian tradition linking Šamaš to light, as found in r. 11′–12′ of BM 78666 (= Alster and Jeyes 1990: 11), a bilingual hymn to Utu: ki-a dagal^{l}-la u$_4$ dul-e-de$_3$ / *erṣetum* | *rapaštum* | *uttawwaršu*, "On the wide earth, he makes bright." For an edition of this hymn, see Alster and Jeyes 1990: 7–10.

consonance of the sound /n/. The second colon of line 1, has a G-stress pattern, the rarest pattern: ***a**pil* | *namra**ṣīt***. If the first epithet of Šamaš in line 2 is taken as one colon, it also has this pattern: ***nū**ru* | *eddēš**šû***.[655] These prosodic figures emphasize the opening of the prayer, a key moment for both the speaker and the divine audience.

Line 2 evidences parallelism between the second and third epithets as they are both composed of an active participle in the construct state (*pētû* and *mukallim*) followed by nouns in the genitive (*pān nišī* and *nūri*). These poetic devices create balance at the start of the prayer and contribute to its rhythm, creating a sense of calmness for the supplicant. These epithets are also a reminder to the god that he can change someone's circumstances, bringing happiness and deliverance. This plays an important role in the prayer as the supplicant wishes for happiness and deliverance which Šamaš can provide.

The second couplet includes the first vocatives of the prayer:

3 *šamaš* | *muštēšir* (|) *mīti* | *u balṭi* || *bār* (|) *kal* (|) *mimma šumšu*
4 *šamaš* | *nūr* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti* || *šarūr* (|) *mātāti*

Šamaš, who leads aright the dead and the living, who sees absolutely everything,
Šamaš, the light of heaven and earth, brilliance of the lands.

(Šamaš 1:3–4)

The first foot of each line opens with a direct calling to the sun-god using his name, a vocative that aims to secure the god's attention. Because of the lines' difficult metrical division, it is possible to argue for taking these divine names in anacrusis.[656] The poet further emphasizes the focus on the god Šamaš through the consonance between the divine name and the term *šumšu*, "its name," in line 3, which can be considered a pun through homonymy.

[655] On the G-stress pattern, see my comments in §1.5.1 and Wisnom 2015: 494, 500.
[656] On anacrusis for divine names and vocatives, see my discussion regarding *Ludlul* I:11 (§2.2.2.2.2).

Lines 3 and 4 include two merisms. In line 3, the poet employs the word pair *mīti*, "the dead," and *balṭi*, "the living," two opposites that respectively express human non-existence and existence.[657] These are complemented by the expression *bār kal mimma šumšu*, "who sees absolutely everything," which points to an idea of totality. In fact, the use of *kalû*, "all," reinforces this totalizing description.[658] Therefore, these epithets express Šamaš's absolute power as a god who is able to see everything and thus guide both the living and the dead. These epithets are not only flattering to Šamaš, but also allude to his capacity to help the supplicant, an element of pacification for the speaker and a reminder for the god. In line 4, the poet employs the merism between *šamû*, "heaven," and *erṣetu*, "earth," a semantic figure that expresses Šamaš's power and thus contributes to his praise.[659]

In an incantation to Šamaš in the exorcistic ritual *šēp lemutti*, "the foot of evil," preserved in K 2987.B+ o. col. ii 8′–14′, these two merisms are also used in parallelism:

8′ *šiptu šamaš* | *bēlu* | *rabû* || *dayyānu* | *ṣīru* | *pāqid*
9′ *kiššat* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti* || *muštēšir* (|) *mīti* | *u balṭi*

Incantation: Šamaš, great lord, exalted judge, who takes care,
Of the totality of heaven and earth, who leads aright the dead and the living.

(K 2987.B+ o. col. ii 8′–9′)[660]

This attests to the epithets' shared use across different prayers and incantations to Šamaš, a common trope that can be employed by poets in various contexts.[661]

[657] On the use of this word pair as a merism, see CAD M/2: 141.
[658] On the importance of *kalû* in totalizing descriptions, see my discussion regarding *Ludlul* V:77–82 (§2.3.2.2.2).
[659] This merism is not present in manuscripts SU 1951.52+ and SU 1951.45+ as these replace *šamê u erṣeti* by *ilī*, "gods." This is still an expression of Šamaš's power as he is the light for all the other gods.
[660] For an edition of this tablet, see Wiggermann 1992: 1–37.
[661] The epithet *muštēšir mīti u balṭi*, "who leads aright the dead and the living," is also used for Marduk in K 3175+ o. i 15 (= Hehn 1906: 392–393), a prayer to Marduk edited by Hehn (1906: 368–373). This demonstrates how epithets could be used for different deities depending on the prayers' addressees.

The use of the term *nūru* in line 4 of the šuila Šamaš 1 links this couplet to the previous one and emphasizes again the god's link to light. Moreover, lines 2 and 4 include metaphors within the semantic field of light, underscoring the god's power and how he can lead everyone and reveal everything.[662]

Lines 3 and 4 also have grammatical parallelism, as they are both composed by a vocative to Šamaš, followed by one construct chain with two terms in the genitive linked by the coordinator *u* (*muštēšir mīti u balāṭi* and *nūr šamê u erṣeti*), and followed by another construct chain (*bār kal mimma šumšu* and *šarūr mātāti*). This parallelism contributes to the rhythm of the couplet and also links lines 3 and 4 to the construct chains of line 2, creating internal cohesion at the start of the prayer. Moreover, lines 3–4 have consonance with the sounds /m/, /r/, and /š/, and assonance with the sounds /a/, /e/, and /u/.

Lines 5–6 continue the enumeration of Šamaš's epithets:

5 *bēl* | *sippar* || *ṣulūl* | *e-babbar*
6 *talīm* | *marūtuk* || *tuklat* | *bābili*

Lord of Sippar, protection of the Ebabbar,
Favourite brother of Marduk, the trust of Babylon.

(Šamaš 1:5–6)

These epithets refer to Šamaš's city, temple and his link to Marduk, expressing the extent of the god's power and his closeness to one of the major gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon, Marduk.[663] Moreover, there is a movement of specification, as in the previous couplet the poet mentioned heaven, earth, and the lands, and in this couplet he mentions Sippar and Ebabbar. There is thus an increased connection with humans and the cult. The cola of these lines are all syntactically parallel as each one has a construct chain.

[662] These metaphors are *Substantivmetaphern* by apposition. On metaphors of light, see my discussion on Ištar 1:2 (§3.3.2.2.1).
[663] The use of epithets with genealogical, city, and temple references are a common motif of Sumerian and Akkadian hymnic poetry (Metcalf 2015: 24, 51).

The first triplet of the poem is lines 7–9:

7 *ana nūrīka* | *upaqqā* | *tenēšētu*
8 *ana qibītīka* | *utaqqû* || *ilū* | *igigī*
9 *nišū* | *rapšātu* | *ṣalmāt* (|) *qaqqadi* || *idallalā* | *qurdīka*

Humankind is attentive to your light,
The Igigī gods pay attention to your command,
The numerous, black-headed people praise your heroic acts.

(Šamaš 1:7–9)

Lines 7 and 8 have full grammatical parallelism as they both start with the preposition *ana*, followed by a noun with a second-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*nūrīka* and *qibītīka*), followed by a D-stem plural durative (*upaqqā* and *utaqqû*), and a plural subject (*tenēšētu* and *ilū igigī*). The use of *ana* at the start of lines 7 and 8 creates an anaphora. In line 7, the similar ending of *nūrīka* and *upaqqā* leads to a form of homeoteleuton. The reference again to *nūru*, "light," links this strophe to the previous ones and underlines again Šamaš's role as a provider of light. The reference to *tenēšētu*, "humankind," and *ilū igigī*, "the Igigī gods," in lines 7 and 8 creates a merism as both humans and deities pay attention to Šamaš, that is, the sun-god has power over all creatures, both human and divine.[664] This merism thus contributes to the praise of Šamaš and his flattering, strategies to secure divine attention. Moreover, the use of a feminine verbal form in line 7 (*upaqqā*) and a masculine verbal form in line 8 (*utaqqû*) in accordance with the subjects is a form of gender-matched parallelism. This further emphasizes the merism. The noun *ilū* in line 8 can be seen as a padding or otiose word, a term employed to complete the four-foot metre, since the reference to the Igigī already

[664] The reference to the Igigī gods in line 8 can be considered a reference to the gods as a whole as argued by Smith (2011: 371), because a clear identification of this group in the sources is difficult and they are mostly used as a parallel term for the Anunnakī (see Kienast 1980: 41). Moreover, manuscript SU 1951.52+ replaces *igigī* by the adjective *rabûtu*, "great," expressing the general idea of deities.

includes the idea of deities.[665] Nevertheless, the poet did use shorter and longer metrical lines in the prayer, and thus there might be other reasons for the employment of *ilū*.

Line 9 is not syntactically parallel to lines 7 and 8, but its use of a plural durative verbal form (*idallalā*) and a noun with a second-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*qurdīka*) link it to the previous two lines. Moreover, this line continues the idea of totality already expressed in lines 7 and 8, since it refers to the *nišū rapšātu ṣalmāt qaqqadi*, "the numerous, black-headed people," that is, the entire humanity. Therefore, this line expands the merism initiated in the previous lines, an expression of Šamaš's power and the respect people show him. Line 7 is omitted in five manuscripts (IM 76966, K 2824, CBS 1519, BM 38619, and BM 41745) which thus develop the parallelism between lines 8 and 9 further since the merism between gods and humanity is limited to these lines. The praise mentioned in line 9 is indeed enacted in the address of the prayer. This triplet has assonance with the vowels /a/, /i/, and /u/, and consonance with the sound /q/, contributing to its cohesion and performativity.

Lines 10–15a are three closely parallel couplets:

10 *eṭla* | *ēda* || *tappâ* | *tušarši*
11 *ana lā išari* | *tanamdin* | *apla*
12 *edlūti* | *sikkūr* (||) *šamê* | *tupatti*
13 *ana lā nāṭili* | *tašakkan* | *nūra*
14 *tuppa* | *arma* || *lā petâ* | *tašassi*
15 *ina libbi* | *immeri* || *tašaṭṭar* | *šīra*
15a *tašakkan* | *dīna*

You provide the lonely young man with a companion,
  You give a son to the impotent.
You open the locked bolts of heaven,
  You set light for the blind.
You read an unopened, enclosed tablet,
  You inscribe a flesh-omen on the insides of a sheep.
  You set a judgement.

(Šamaš 1:10–15a)

[665] On padding or otiose words in Akkadian poetry, see Lambert 2013: 25; 1960: 320, note 93.

The first line of each couplet (Šamaš 1:10, 12, 14) is composed of accusative objects (*eṭla ēda tappâ*, *edlūti sikkūr šamê*, and *tuppa arma lā petâ*) followed by a second-person masculine singular verbal form (*tušarši*, *tupatti*, and *tašassi*). Lines 11 and 13 are also gramatically parallel as they open with the preposition *ana*, followed by the negative adverb *lā* and a noun in the genitive (*išari* and *nāṭili*), and then a second-person masculine singular durative verb (*tanamdin* and *tašakkan*), and an accusative object (*apla* and *nūra*). Line 15 does not open with the preposition *ana* nor does it have the negative adverb *lā*, but it starts with a preposition (*ina*), followed by genitive nouns (*libbi immeri*), and then a second-person masculine singular durative verb (*tašaṭṭar*) and an accusative object (*šīra*). Therefore, line 15 is parallel to lines 11 and 13. Line 15a, as an extension of line 15, is composed of a second-person masculine singular durative verb (*tašakkan*) and an accusative object (*dīna*), paralleling the second and third feet of lines 11, 13, and 15.

In terms of stress, lines 10, 12, and 14 are almost parallel, and lines 11, 13, and 15 are also almost parallel:

10 ***eṭ***la | ***ē***da || tap***pâ*** | tu***šar***ši
11 ana lā ***i***šari | ta***nam***din | ***ap***la
12 ed***lū***ti | sik***kūr*** (||) ša***mê*** | tu***pat***ti
13 ana lā ***nā***ṭili | ta***šak***kan | ***nū***ra
14 ***tup***pa | ***ar***ma || lā pe***tâ*** | ta***šas***si
15 ina ***lib***bi | ***im***meri || ta***šaṭ***ṭar | ***šī***ra

(Šamaš 1:10–15)

This further highlights the parallelism between the couplets and adds rhythm to the prayer, contributing to its performativity. Line 15a follows the stress pattern of the second and third feet of lines 11 and 13 and the third and fourth feet of lines 15: *ta**šak**kan **dī**na*.

Lines 10–14 include a set of antitheses between the objects and Šamaš's actions: he gives a friend to a lonely man, he gives offspring to an impotent person, he opens the locked bolts of heaven, he gives light to a blind, and he reads an enclosed tablet. These are thus expression of Šamaš's power, as he is able to do what is difficult or impossible.

These lines act as a reminder to the god that he can intervene in the supplicant's favour, as he does in all these situations, and are also calming for the speaker who is aware that Šamaš has power to change difficult circumstances. The poetic devices employed in these lines highlight the god's power. The fronting of the adjective *edlūti*, "closed," in line 12 is an anastrophe, since the adjective normally follows the noun it qualifies. This anastrophe emphasizes the opposition between the adjective *edlūti*, "closed," and the verb *tupatti*, "you open," which occupies the last foot of the line. This syntactic figure thus underlines the antithesis between the closedness of heaven's bolts and Šamaš's action of opening them, which contributes to the praise of the god's power. In lines 11 and 13 the positioning of the verb is also an anastrophe as it takes the penultimate position.[666] This syntactical variation sets the difficult or impossible circumstances, the impotent and the blind, apart from what Šamaš brings, a son and light. Therefore, the syntax highlights the antithesis and the verb in the middle with the sun-god as the subject acts as a changer, emphasizing again Šamaš's power. The reference to *nūru*, "light," in line 13 creates internal cohesion within the address because of the previous references to this term and highlights the importance of this term in the prayer.

These lines also contain a series of chiasmi with the objects and verbs:

10 *etla | ēda || tappâ | tušarši*
11 *ana lā išari | tanamdin | apla*
12 *edlūti | sikkūr (||) šamê | tupatti*
13 *ana lā nāṭili | tašakkan | nūra*
14 *tuppa | arma || lā petâ | tašassi*
15 *ina libbi | immeri || tašaṭṭar | šīra*

(Šamaš 1:10–15)

[666] The verb in the penultimate position is a common feature of Akkadian poetry (Jiménez 2017: 75; George 2013: 43).

These different chiasmi not only evidence the poetic artistry but also contribute to the antithetical ideas that traverse these lines, thus contributing again to the highlighting of Šamaš's actions and power.

Lines 15 and 15a do not present opposites but do highlight Šamaš's role in divination and judgement.[667] These are important roles because the sun-god can decide whether to inscribe positive or negative omens and, as a judge, can decide the future of the supplicant.[668] These epithets thus point to the god's power over the life of the supplicant and how he can intervene in his favour. As Šamaš is able to give a friend to a lonely man (Šamaš 1:10), give offspring to an impotent person (Šamaš 1:11), open the locked bolts of heaven (Šamaš 1:12), give light to a blind (Šamaš 1:13), and read an enclosed tablet (Šamaš 1:14), so can he set positive omens and judge the supplicant in a favourable way. The poet shows the parallelism between lines 14 and 15 in the reference to *tuppu*, "tablet," in line 14, since the liver in divinatory contexts is sometimes described as "the tablet of the gods."[669]

The last couplet of the address concludes the praise to Šamaš:

16 *dayyān* | *ilī* || *bēl* | *igigī*
17 *šamaš* | *bēl* (|) *šīmat* (||) *māti* | *attāma*

Judge of the gods, lord of the Igigī,
Šamaš, you are the lord of the land's destiny.

(Šamaš 1:16–17)

In line 16, the use of the term *dayyānu*, "judge," links it back to the previous line which ended in *dīna*, "judgement." This repetition is a polyptoton as both nouns are cognate. This emphasizes Šamaš's role as a judge and as the one who can set a favourable

[667] On Šamaš's role in divination and for further literature, see Ulanowski 2021: 54–69. On Šamaš's role as a judge and for further literature, see Maul 1994: 60–71; Janowski 1989: 30–98.
[668] See, for example, how in the *bīt salāʾ mê* ritual, the triad Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluḫi are considered the judges who decide the outcome of the ritual (Ambos 2013: 65).
[669] See Ulanowski 2021: 37; Pongratz-Leisten 2014: 39.

judgment for the supplicant. In line 16, the poet employs grammatical parallelism between the two cola by using a construct chain in each. These cola are thus two epithets that express the sun-god's importance and contribute to his praise and flattery.

Line 17 also includes one construct chain (*bēl šīmat māti*) and two vocatives (*šamaš* and *attāma*). The vocatives are directly addressed to Šamaš and strategies to secure the god's attention in the last line before moving to the petitions. The addition of the enclitic *-ma* to the independent personal pronoun *attā* adds force to the vocative. In this line, the poet uses the divine name for the third time, a particularly emphatic usage because, as previously mentioned, three-time repetitions in Akkadian have a resounding effect.[670] This further highlights the last line of the address, the final attempt to secure Šamaš's attention before moving to the petitions which the supplicant hopes will be heard.

In this couplet there are significant variants whose poetic devices I would like to consider. SU 1951.45+ (o. 18) and CBS 1519 (o. 16) include a D-stem active participle from the verb *šiāmu*, "to decree," before the term *šīmtu* in line 17. Therefore, in these manuscripts, the scribes added another morphologic figure as *mušimmu* and *šīmtu* derive from the same root, *š–ʾ–m*, creating a *figura etymologica*. This emphasizes Šamaš's role in determining the fate of the supplicant, an aspect of key importance for the change of the supplicant's circumstances. SU 1951.45+ adds a line before line 16:

o. 16 *šamaš* | *muštēšir* (|) *māti* || *bēl* (|) *šīmāti* | *gišḫurī* | *at*[*tā*]
Šamaš, the one who leads the land aright, y[ou] are the lord of destinies (and) plans.

(SU 1951.45+ o. 16)

The manuscript K 16376+ (l. 17′) preserves a similar line after line 16, omitting line 17:

l. 17′ [*šamaš*] | *bēl* (|) *šīmāti* || *gišḫurī* | *attāma*
[Šamaš], you are the lord of destinies (and) plans.

[670] On the emphatic use of three-time repetitions, see Piccin 2021a: 211.

(K 16376+ l. 17′)

The tablet SU 1951.52+ also preserves similar lines after line 16 and, like K 16376+, omits line 17:

r. 1 *šamaš* | *muštēšir* (||) *mātāti* | *attā*
r. 2 *bēl* | *šīmāti* || *gišḫurī* | *attāma*

Šamaš, you are the one who leads the lands aright,
You are the lord of destinies (and) plans.

(SU 1951. 52+ r. 1–2)

These different variants still include various vocatives using the divine name and the second-person masculine singular independent personal pronoun. They also refer to Šamaš's power over the destinies and the lands, highlighting how he is the one who can decide the fate of humankind in general and the supplicant in particular. Therefore, the poetic devices in these variants are still part of the rhetorical strategy of securing divine attention and intervention.

3.4.2.2.2. Šamaš 1:18–34

The couplet of lines 18 and 19 marks the beginning of the petition stanza:

18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*
19 *līširā* | *idātūya* || *lidmiqā* | *šunātūya*

Decree my destiny, make my way good,
May my signs become favourable, may my dreams become good.

(Šamaš 1:18–19)

Each line has internal grammatical parallelism. Each colon of line 18 is composed of an accusative object with a first-person singular possessive suffix (*šīmtī* and *alaktī*), followed by a second-person masculine singular imperative verbal form (*šīm* and *dummiq*). Each colon of line 19 is composed of a third-person feminine plural precative

verbal form (*līširā* and *lidmiqā*), followed by a feminine plural subject with a first-person singular possessive suffix (*idātūya* and *šunātūya*), which creates a homeoptoton. In the case of line 19, the parallelism extends to the stress pattern of each colon: ***līš**irā* | *idā**tū**ya* || ***lid**miqā* | *šunā**tū**ya*.

The use of the root *d–m–q* in both lines as a polyptoton (*dummiq* and *lidmiqā*) contributes to the parallelism within the couplet and emphasizes the need the supplicant has for goodness. The couplet also has chiasmus between the lines because of the positioning of nouns and verbs:

18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*
19 *līširā* | *idātūya* || *lidmiqā* | *šunātūya*

(Šamaš 1:18–19)

The chiasmus can have a structuring function as these lines open a new stanza as well as emphasize the first petitions.[671] The use of masculine verbal forms in line 18 (*šīm* and *dummiq*) and feminine verbal forms in line 19 (*līširā* and *lidmiqā*) creates gender-matched parallelism. This contributes to the chiasmus and to a totalizing view of the petitions; the supplicant wishes for all the petitions to be fulfilled.[672]

The first colon of line 18 has a *figura etymologica* because both the verb and the object derive from the root *š–ʾ–m*. This root had already played an important role in the previous lines as Šamaš is the one who decrees the destinies of the land (Šamaš 1:17). Therefore, line 18 acts as a "pivot line," introducing the new stanza but still referring to the previous one.[673] It also fulfils the epithets of the address because now the supplicant asks Šamaš to decree his destiny and previously called him *bēl šīmat māti*, "the lord of the land's destiny." The poet also links line 19 to the address through the reference to

[671] On this structuring function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 205; 1981: 146. On the emphatic function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.
[672] On the totalizing effect of gender-matched parallelism, see Watson 1984: 125.
[673] On the definition of "pivot lines," see my comments on Marduk 2:7 (§3.2.2.2.1) with reference to De Zorzi 2022: 385.

signs and dreams as these can allude to omens and, as stated in lines 15 and 15a, Šamaš can determine omens and judgements. Therefore, the poet uses the address as a reminder for the god who can then enact his attributes in the petitions.[674]

Regarding phonologic figures, there is consonance with the sound /m/ in line 18, playing with the consonance of the same sound in line 17, and assonance between both lines with the vowel /i/. In line 19, all terms end in an /a/ sound. These poetic devices contribute to the parallelism and also the performativity of these petitions.

In lines 20–21, the poet continues with the petitions:

20 *šunat* | *aṭṭulu* || *ana damqāti* | *šukna*
21 *išariš* | *lullik* || *tappâ* | *lukšud*

Turn the dream I saw into something good,
May I prosper, may I acquire a companion.

(Šamaš 1:20–21)

This couplet parallels the previous in the use of injunctive verbal forms as line 20, like line 18, employs an imperative verb (*šukna*), and line 21, like line 19, employs two precative verbs (*lullik* and *lukšud*). The first word of line 20, *šunat*, is the same noun as the last term in line 19, *šunātūya*, creating an anadiplosis. The first term of line 20, *šunat*, and the last one, *šukna*, have sound-play with the consonants /š/ and /n/ and the vowels /u/ and /a/. These petitions are also linked to the attributes in the address. In line 20, dreams can be ominous signs, and, as previously mentioned, Šamaš can determine omens (Šamaš 1:15).[675] Therefore, the supplicant asks the sun-god for favourable ominous dreams. The term *damqāti* employed in line 20 links back to the previous couplet as the root *d–m–q* is used in lines 18 and 19. In line 21, the poet uses the noun *tappû*, "companion," also used in line 10. Since Šamaš can give a companion to a lonely man (Šamaš 1:10), the supplicant now asks for one (Šamaš 1:21). The motif and word

[674] On the links between address and petition in Akkadian šuila-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 43.
[675] On dreams as omens and for further literature, see Butler 1998.

repetitions are important for the internal cohesion of the prayer and show how the different stanzas are linked. They are also part of the šuila's rhetorical strategies because they first remind the god of his attributes in the address and then ask the god to enact these attributes in the petition stanza.

Lines 22 and 23 continue the set of petitions but unlike the previous two couplets, the precative form (*lū damiqtu*) comes before the imperative (*šutlimamma*):

22 *ina ūmīya* | *lū damiqtu*
23 *šutlimamma* | *egirrê* | *dumqi*

May there be goodness during my days,
Grant me a good ominous utterance.

(Šamaš 1:22–23)

The parallelism between these lines is less clear but the last term in each line derives from the root *d–m–q*, already employed in lines 18, 19, and 20. The repetition of this root highlights the supplicant's need for goodness in his life. The fronting of the imperative verbal form in line 23 is an anastrophe that emphasizes the request to Šamaš, further highlighted by the use of a three-foot line. Line 23 has consonance with the sound /m/, contributing to performativity and rhythm. The term *egirrû* (Šamaš 1:23), usually translated as "reputation," can have the meaning of an "oracular utterance."[676] This understanding of the term links line 23 back to the address and Šamaš's role in divination (Šamaš 1:15), as well as to the previous petitions (Šamaš 1:18–20). These different references to omens are important because, as mentioned in §3.1, the *attalû* formula employed in three manuscripts alludes to negative omens. Therefore, these specific usages of this prayer align with the petitions presented, which play a key role.

Lines 24–27 are a quatrain that refers to the social acceptance of the supplicant:[677]

24 *ina sūqi* | *lū magir* | *qabûya*

[676] See CAD E: 44–45.
[677] Smith (2011: 376) compares and opposes these lines to *Ludlul* I:73–98, where Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan suffers social ostracization.

25 *ilu* | *u šarru* | *lišāqirū*ʾ*inni*
26 *kabtu* | *u rubû* || *ša qabîy*[*a*] | *līpušū*
27 *ina ulṣi* | *u rīšāti* || *lubil* | *ūma*

May my speech be accepted in the street,
May god and king respect me.
May the important one and prince do what I say,
So that I may spend the day in pleasure and rejoicing.

(Šamaš 1:24–27)

Lines 25 and 26 have grammatical parallelism as they both start with a word pair (*ilu u šarru* and *kabtu u rubû*) and end in a precative verbal form (*lišāqirū*ʾ*inni* and *līpušū*). Lines 24 and 27 frame this quatrain as they both start with the preposition *ina*, followed by a noun or nouns in the genitive (*sūqi* and *ulṣi u rīšāti*) and a precative verbal form (*lū magir* and *lubil*). Both lines 24 and 27 end in a noun, but in line 24 it is the subject (*qabûya*), whereas in line 27 it is the accusative object (*ūma*). The use of a word pair in line 27 (*ulṣi u rīšāti*) parallels the use of word pairs in lines 25 (*ilu u šarru*) and 26 (*kabtu u rubû*). The use of the infinitive *qabû*, "to speak," in lines 24 (*qabûya*) and 26 (*qabîy*[*a*]) also contributes to the quatrain's parallelism. Lines 24 and 25 have a form of chiasmus because of the inversion of the syntactic order between subject and verb:

24 *ina sūqi* | *lū magir* | *qabûya*
25 *ilu* | *u šarru* | *lišāqirū*ʾ*inni*

(Šamaš 1:24–25)

This poetic device contributes to the quatrain's parallelism and creates a sense of simultaneity between the petitions.[678]

The use of word pairs, particularly in lines 25 and 26, creates a form of enumeration that adds a sense of accumulation and totality. The supplicant wishes that everyone accepts and respects him. Line 27 is a purpose line within the quatrain, explaining that if there is social acceptance, the supplicant will live "in pleasure and

[678] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.

rejoicing." The different poetic devices in this quatrain add internal cohesion, creating unity between these petitions that address similar topics. This ultimately adds emphasis to this set of petitions, a key aspect for securing Šamaš's intervention. It should be noted that the first colon of line 26 has a G-stress pattern: ***kab****tu* | *u ru****bû***.

Lines 28–29 form another set of petitions:

28 *kittu* | *lizziz* | *ina imittīya*
29 *mīšaru* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*

May truth stand at my right side,
May justice stand at my left side.

(Šamaš 1:28–29)

These lines have perfect grammatical parallelism as they both open with a subject (*kittu* and *mīšaru*), followed by the same verbal form (*lizziz*), the preposition *ina*, and a noun with a first-person singular possessive suffix (*imittīya* and *šumēlīya*). The stress pattern is also parallel, with the exception of the number of unaccented syllables in the first foot of each line:

28 ***kit****tu* | ***li****zziz* | *ina imit****tī****ya*
29 ***mī****šaru* | ***li****zziz* | *ina šumē****lī****ya*

(Šamaš 1:28–29)

These lines also have homeoptoton as they both rhyme because of the use of the first-person possessive suffix *-ya*. The word pair *kittu*, "truth," and *mīšaru*, "justice," adds to the enumeration already started in the previous quatrain, creating a sense of totality. The merism formed by *imittu*, "right side," and *šumēlu*, "left side," also contributes to the sense of totality.[679] The supplicant wishes to be fully surrounded by truth and justice, thus guaranteeing his comfort and prosperity. The gender-matched parallelism formed by the feminine noun *kittu* and the masculine noun *mīšaru* also contributes to the idea of totality.

[679] On *imittu*/*imnu* and *šumēlu* as a merism, see my comments on Marduk 2:17–18 (§3.2.2.2.2).

This couplet also has assonance with the vowel /i/, which contributes to the parallelism and the performativity.

The following couplet continues the sense of totality:

30 *littallak* | *ilu* || *mušallimu* | *ina idīya*
31 *ayy ipparku* | *rābiṣ* (||) *šulmi* | *ina arkīya*

May a protecting god constantly go at my side,
May a guardian for good not cease to be behind me.

(Šamaš 1:30–31)

The use of *idu*, "side," and *arku*, "back," despite not being a merism, parallels the use of *imittu* and *šumēlu* in the previous couplet, as they all designate a space, and more specifically a side of the supplicant. Therefore, the poet uses these terms as a way of totalizing the petitions; the supplicant wishes to be fully surrounded by comfort and success. The homeoptoton of the previous couplet continues in this one as each line ends in the first-person possessive suffix *-ya*, contributing to the parallelism between the couplets and the unifying idea of totality. These lines also continue the assonance of the /i/ vowel. The word pair *ilu*, "god," and *rābiṣu*, "guardian," also continue the enumeration started in line 25 and thus also contribute to this idea of totality and completeness.[680] The supplicant wants to make sure everyone is in his favour and by his side.

These lines also present grammatical parallelism as each one starts with an injunctive verbal form (*littallak* and *ayy ipparku*), followed by a noun (*ilu* and *rābiṣ*) and a complement describing it (*mušallimu* and *šulmi*), and finish with the preposition *ina* and a noun in the genitive case (*idīya* and *arkīya*). Moreover, the complements *mušallimu* and *šulmi* have the same stem, *š–l–m*, a polyptoton. This parallelism contributes to the internal cohesion of the couplet and contrasts with the previous couplet, since it creates a chiasmus between verbs and subjects:

[680] The terms *ilu* and *rābiṣu* are used as a word pair for negative spirits, for example, in the *Canonical Lamaštu Series* II:15 and *Udug-ḫul* II:63.

28 *kittu* | *lizziz* | *ina imittīya*
29 *mīšaru* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*
30 *littallak* | *ilu* || *mušallimu* | *ina idīya*
31 *ayy ipparku* | *rābiṣ* (||) *šulmi* | *ina arkīya*

(Šamaš 1:28–31)

This chiasmus might also be a rhetorical strategy that emphasizes totality since chiasmus can contribute to the creation of a merism as previously mentioned.[681]

Lines 32–33 continue the petitions with reference to other deities:

32 *lītamūka* | *bunene* || *sukkalka* | *damiqtī*
33 *aya* | *ḫīrtu* | *narāmtaka* || *šilim* | *liqbīka*

May Bunene, your vizier, speak well of me to you,
May Aya, your beloved wife, say to you "Be at peace!"

(Šamaš 1:32–33)

In this couplet, the poet addresses Šamaš referring to two deities particularly close to him: his vizier, Bunene, and his wife Aya. The supplicant uses these gods as intermediaries who can help him because of their closeness to Šamaš. The specification of the deities in lines 32 and 33 contrasts with the previous enumeration which employed more general terms. These are both part of the rhetorical strategy of guaranteeing protection, as the enumeration created the idea of totality and the specification is directed to the core of the sun-god, his vizier and wife, a strategy to secure his intervention. The divine references also create gender-matched parallelism, contributing to the idea of totality. The use of the roots *d–m–q* in line 32 (*damiqtī*) and *š–l–m* in line 33 (*šilim*) link these petitions to previous ones as the former was used in lines 18, 19, 20, 22, and 23, and the latter in lines 30 and 31. The repetition of these also point to the key themes of the petitions: the need of the supplicant for goodness and peace.[682] Repetition acts as a reinforcement and a

[681] See my comments on the chiasmus of Ištar 1:17–20 (§3.3.2.2.1).
[682] On petitions for life, happiness, and well-being in Akkadian incantation-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 280–289.

constant reminder to the deity of what the supplicant wishes for his life.[683] The divine name Aya has consonance and assonance with the negative *ayy* from line 31 contributing to the parallelism between the couplets.

The last line of the petition stanza can be understood as a monostich:

34 *šamaš* | *ašarēd* (|) *ilī* | *attā* || *rišâ* | *rēma*
Šamaš, you are the foremost of the gods, have mercy.
(Šamaš I:34)

In this line, the poet employs a vocative using the sun-god's name, a second-person independent pronoun, and an imperative. These poetic devices contrast with the precative forms and more indirect addresses of the previous petitions. The poet is making sure that the god hears the last petition which is simply to have mercy, the key to all other petitions.[684] The poet employs again an epithet, *ašarēd ilī*, "foremost of the gods," a poetic device to flatter the god just before the last petition, a rhetorical strategy to secure the god's attention.[685] If the divine name stands in anacrusis, a possibility already postulated for other uses of the divine name in this šuila (Šamaš 1:3, 4, 17), the poet places further emphasis on this last petition. Moreover, the divine name can act as a climax with the previous couplet, since the poet moves from the sun-god's vizier, to his wife, and then to the sun-god himself. The second colon has a quasi-alliteration between *rišâ* and *rēma*, which also contributes to the rhetorical and aural impact of this petition.

[683] On the emphatic effects of repetition, see Steinberger 2024: 243–244; Wisnom 2023: 116; Vogelzang 1996: 169–170; Watson 1984: 279.
[684] On petitions for mercy in Akkadian incantation-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 225–226.
[685] The superiority in comparison to other gods is a common motif of Sumerian and Akkadian hymnic poetry (Metcalf 2015: 73).

3.4.2.2.3. Šamaš 1:35–37

The last triplet of the prayer is the blessing stanza:

35 *šamû* | *liḫdûka* || *erṣetu* | *lirīška*
36 *ilū* | *ša kiššati* | *likrubūka*
37 *ilū* | *rabûtu* || *libbaka* | *liṭibbū*

May heaven become joyful about you, may earth rejoice over you,
May the gods of totality bless you,
May the great gods sweeten your heart.

(Šamaš 1:35–37)

This blessing follows the same traditional closing formula as the one in Marduk 2:25–27 and Ištar 1:42–44.[686] Line 35 has parallelism between the cola as each one starts with a subject (*šamû* and *erṣetu*) followed by a precative verbal form with a second-person masculine singular accusative suffix (*liḫdûka* and *lirīška*). The subjects, as in Ištar 1:42, create a merism, since heaven and earth are spatial opposites. In the šuila Ištar 1, the poet employs *šamû*, "heaven," and *apsû*, whereas in this šuila to Šamaš, the poet uses *erṣetu*, "earth," instead of *apsû*.[687] Nevertheless, in both prayers, the subjects produce the same merism. The reference to *kiššatu*, "totality," in line 36 completes this merism. The supplicant wishes that all gods and everyone everywhere praise Šamaš.

Line 36 grammatically parallels the cola of line 35 as they all start with a subject (*šamû*, *erṣetu*, and *ilū ša kiššati*) followed by a precative with a second-person masculine singular accusative suffix (*liḫdûka*, *lirīška*, and *likrubūka*). The suffix at the end of lines 35 and 36 creates a homeoptoton. As in the other two šuila-prayers analysed, the third line of the triplet follows this syntax but instead of using an accusative verbal suffix to refer to Šamaš, the poet uses the noun *libbu*, "heart," with a possessive suffix. Lines 35

[686] See §§3.2.2.2.3 and 3.3.2.2.3.
[687] Three manuscripts of the šuila Šamaš 1 (CBS 1519, Rm 798, and IM 76966+) use *apsû* instead of *erṣetu*, creating a further parallel with the šuila Ištar 1.

and 36 parallel each other also phonologically as each starts with the noun *ilū*, creating an anaphora. The use of the title *ilū rabûtu*, "great gods," in line 37 also contributes to the idea of totality started in the previous two lines. The final verb *liṭibbū*, like in the previously analysed šuila-prayers, emphasizes the goal of the prayer: to sweeten the heart of Šamaš to move him to mercy towards the supplicant.

Two manuscripts (K 5980+ and SU 1951.52+) replace the last line with the following: *anu enlil u ea lišarb*[*û bēlūtka*], "May Anu, Enlil, and Ea magnify [your lordship]." This variant specifies the gods instead of using a title like *ilū rabûtu*. Nevertheless, it also creates a sense of totality as these three high gods form a triad which correspond respectively to the three basic constituent elements of the universe: fire, wind, and water.[688] Therefore, the scribes of these manuscripts still point to the idea that everything and everyone ought to praise Šamaš.

This blessing and its links to the address form a ring composition.[689] The use of a merism with the pair *šamû*, "heaven," and *erṣetu*, "earth," in line 35 alludes back to the epithet *nūr šamê u erṣeti*, "the light of heaven and earth," in line 4.[690] Therefore, like in the šuila-prayers Marduk 2 and Ištar 1, the prayer is framed by the praise to Šamaš, a rhetorical strategy to flatter the sun-god and convince him to act in favour of the supplicant.

[688] See my comments on *Ludlul* V:77–79 and the *Hymn in Praise of Babylon and the Babylonians* (§2.3.2.2.2).
[689] Smith 2011: 369.
[690] This had already been noted by Smith (2011: 378).

3.5. Summary

In the preceding chapter, I identified and analysed the speakers, audiences, and purposes of the šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1 (§3.1). I then produced a transcription and translation and a poetic analysis of these three prayers: Marduk 2 (§3.2), Ištar 1 (§3.3), and Šamaš 1 (§3.4). I identified the speaker as a general supplicant, who in some manuscripts is a king, and the addressees as the gods Marduk, Ištar, and Šamaš in their respective prayers. The main rhetorical purpose of these poems is to petition these deities to bring about change in the supplicant's life as the *attalû* formulas refer to his suffering portended by negative omens. Therefore, these prayers have a petitionary rhetoric.

The following five tables outline the prosodic, phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures I identified in each prayer.

Prosodic Figures	**Lines in Marduk 2**	**Lines in Ištar 1**	**Lines in Šamaš 1**
Metre	Five feet: 7; 9–10; 22 Four feet: 1–6; 16; 19–21; 24–25; 27 Three feet: 8; 11–15; 17–18; 23; 26	Six feet: 13; 38 Five feet: 2–4; 8; 19; 26 Four feet: 1; 5–6; 9–12; 14–18; 20–25; 27–33; 37; 39–40; 42; 44 Three feet: 7; 34–36; 41; 43	Seven feet: 2; 3 Six feet: 4; 9; 34 Five feet: 33 Four feet: 1; 5–6; 8; 10; 14–15; 16–17–21; 26–27; 30; 32; 35; 37 Three feet: 7; 11–13; 23–25; 28–29; 31; 36

			Two feet: 15a; 22
Strophic patterns	Triplet: 1–3; 4–6; 7–9; 11–13; 14–16; 17–19; 22–24; 25–27 Couplet: 20–21 Monostich: 10	Triplet: 29–31; 42–44 Couplet: 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; 32–33; 34–35; 36–37; 38–39; 40–41	Triplet: 7–9; 14–15a; 35–37 Couplet: 1–2; 3–4; 5–6; 10–11; 12–13; 16–17; 18–19; 20–21; 22–23; 24–25; 26–27; 28–29; 30–31; 32–33 Monostich: 34
Prosodic parallelism	10; 17–18; 25 and 27	11–12; 23–24; 42	10–15a; 19; 28–29
G-stress pattern	10	3	1; 2; 26
Anacrusis	10; 22	3; 13	3; 4; 17; 34

Table 16 - Prosodic figures identified in Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1

Phonologic Figures	**Lines in Marduk 2**	**Lines in Ištar 1**	**Lines in Šamaš 1**
Assonance	/a/: 6; 20–21 /e/: 1–3; 4–6; 10 /i/: 4–6; 7–9; 11–12; 14–16; 17–19; 25–27	/a/: 5; 10; 12; 13–14; 15–16; 19–20; 27; 33; 37	/a/: 3–4; 7–9; 10–11; 14–15a; 17; 19; 20–21; 30–31; 32–33; 34

	/u/: 1–3; 10; 11–13; 22	/e/: 2; 5–6; 14; 21; 23–24; 25–26; 28; 30–31; 34–35 /i/: 1–2; 3–4; 5–6; 7–8; 9–10; 11–12; 13–14; 15–16; 21–22; 23–24; 27–28; 30; 36; 38–39; 42–44 /u/: 7–8; 9–10; 17–18; 19–20; 21–22; 25–26; 29–31; 34–35; 38–39; 40–41; 42–44	/e/: 2; 3–4; 5; 10; 12; 34 /i/: 3; 7–9; 15; 16; 18–19; 24–25; 27; 28–29; 30–31; 32–33 /u/: 1–2; 3–4; 7–9; 20–21; 24–25; 26–27; 35–37
Consonance	/b/: 2–3; 4; 10; 11; 15–16; 20–21; 22–24; 26–27 /d/: 1–2; 5–6 /k/: 8–9; 25–27 /l/: 4–6; 7–8; 11–13; 17–18; 24; 25–27 /m/: 12–13; 20–21 /p/: 22–23 /q/: 15–16; 20–21	/ʔ/: 30 /b/: 9; 21–22; 23; 26; 27; 31; 36–37; 38; 43–44 /d/: 9–10; 25–26; 35 /k/: 8; 17–18; 21–22; 32–33; 34–35; 42–44 /l/: 5–6; 8; 14; 31; 33; 40–41; 42–44	/b/: 3; 5–6; 26–27; 36–37 /d/: 9; 18–19 /k/: 12–13; 32–33; 35–37 /l/: 5–6; 8–9; 21; 27; 30–31; 35–37 /m/: 3–4; 17; 18; 23 /n/: 1–2; 7; 11; 13 /p/: 1–2; 10–11; 14

	/y/: 14–15; 17–18 /z/: 17–18	/m/: 5–6; 13–14; 18; 30; 40–41 /n/: 3; 11–12; 13–14; 19; 23–24; 38 /p/: 7–8; 10; 13–14; 21–22 /q/: 36–37 /r/: 1–2; 29–31; 38–39 /t/: 1–2 /ṭ/: 38–39	/q/: 7–9; 24–25 /r/: 3–4 /š/: 3–4 /t/: 12; 17; 28 /y/: 19; 28–29; 30–31 /z/: 28–29
Alliteration	11; 11–12; 14–15	13–14; 40	–
Homeoteleuton	–	–	7; 19
Homeoptoton	14–15; 17–18; 24; 25–26	1–2; 11–12; 42; 42–43	19; 28–31; 35; 35–36
Rhyme	4–8; 23–24	4–8; 10–13	–

Table 17 - Phonologic figures identified in Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1

Syntactic Figures	**Lines in Marduk 2**	**Lines in Ištar 1**	**Lines in Šamaš 1**
Grammatical parallelism	1–3; 4–7; 10; 11–13; 14–15; 17–18; 22–23; 25–27	1–4; 11–12; 15–16; 17–18; 21; 22; 23–24; 25, 27–31; 39; 42–44	2; 3–4; 5–6; 7–8; 10, 12, and 14; 11, 13, 15, and 15a; 16; 18; 19; 25–26;

			24 and 27; 28–29; 30–31; 35–37
Hymnic parallelism	1–3	–	–
Gender-matched parallelism	17–18	15–16; 17; 32–33	7–8; 18–19; 28–29; 32–33
Chiasmus	–	5–6; 17–18; 19–20; 21–22; 23–24; 25–26; 27–28; 32–33; 34–35	10–15; 18–19; 24–25; 28–31
Rhetorical question	–	11–12	–
Repetition	*marūtuk bēlu rabû*: 10; 22 *marūtuk*: 3; 10; 22 *ʾ–l*: 10; 12; 17; 19; 26; 27 *ʾ–w–ʾ*: 15; 21 *ʾ–z–z*: 17; 18 *b–ʾ–l*: 4; 10; 22 *b–l–ṭ*: 6; 11; 23 *d–m–q*: 15; 16 *k–ʾ–n*: 11; 14; 19 *k–l–ʾ*: 8; 9 *l–b*: 15; 27 *m–g–r*: 20; 21 *n–p–š*: 5; 22; 23	*apsû*: 8; 42 *atti*: 5; 13 *ištar*: 1; 5 *lamassu*: 17; 33 *šēdu*: 17; 32 *šumma*: 11; 12 *ʾ–l*: 1; 15; 40; 43; 44 *ʾ–m*: 38; 39 *ʾ–m–n*: 18; 34 *ʾ–r–k*: 17; 33 *ʾ–š–r*: 18; 28 *b–ʾ–l*: 5; 23; 26; 31 *b–l–ṭ*: 31; 39; 40	*attā*: 17; 34 *igigī*: 8; 16 *šamaš*: 3; 4; 17; 34 *ʾ–d*: 19; 30 *ʾ–l*: 8; 16; 25; 30; 34; 36; 37 *ʾ–l–k*: 18; 21; 30 *ʾ–m*: 22; 27 *ʾ–r–ṣ*: 4; 35 *ʾ–š–r*: 3; 19; 21; 29 *ʾ–z–z*: 28; 29 *b–ʾ–l*: 5; 16; 17 *d–ʾ–n*: 15a; 16 *d–m–q*: 18; 19; 20; 22; 23; 32

	n–š: 7; 9 *p–ʾ*: 9; 14 *q–b–ʾ*: 11; 16; 20; 21 (x2); 23 *r–b–ʾ*: 2; 10; 22; 27 *š–l–m*: 5; 12; 19 *ṭ–ʾ–b*: 9; 27	*d–m–q*: 14; 18; 32; 35 *ḫ–d–ʾ*: 38; 42 *k–ʾ–n*: 13; 19; 24; 25 *k–š–d*: 35; 41 *l–b*: 26; 38; 44 *m–g–r*: 19; 29; 37 *n–w–r*: 22; 30 (x2) *p–l–s*: 22; 24 *p–n*: 17; 32 *q–b–ʾ*: 22; 23; 36; 37 (x2) *r–š*: 19; 28 *r–š–ʾ*: 32; 33 *s–ḫ–r*: 16; 31 *s–p–ʾ*: 15; 21 *š–ʾ–ʾ*: 15; 30 *š–d–ḫ*: 13; 25 *š–k–n*: 10; 27 *š*/*s–l–m*: 19; 20; 28; 31; 40 *š–m–ʾ*: 19; 21; 22; 29; 36 *š–m–l*: 18; 35	*l–b*: 15; 37 *m–t*: 4; 17 *n–š*: 2; 9 *n–ṭ–l*: 13; 20 *n–w–r*: 1; 2 (x2); 4; 7; 13 *p–l*: 1; 11 *p–t–ʾ*: 2; 12; 14 *q–b–ʾ*: 8; 24; 26; 33 *r–ʾ–š*: 27; 35 *r–b–ʾ*: 1; 26; 37 *r–š–ʾ*: 10; 34 *š–l–m*: 30; 31; 33 *š–m–y*: 4; 12; 35 *š–n*: 19; 20 *š–ʾ–m*: 17; 18 (x2)

		š–m–y: 2; 5; 42 *š–r–r*: 2; 29 *ṭ–ʾ–b*: 21; 26; 38; 44	
Anaphora	26–27	11–12; 43–44	7–8; 36–37
Anadiplosis	–	38–39	19–20
Epanadiplosis	11–12	32–33; 34–35	2
Hyperbaton	8	–	–
Anastrophe	12; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 20	6; 8; 9; 10; 14; 15; 16; 19; 20; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 36; 38; 40	7; 8; 9; 11; 13; 15; 15a; 19; 23; 24; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 34

Table 18 - Syntactic figures identified in Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1

Semantic Figures	**Lines in Marduk 2**	**Lines in Ištar 1**	**Lines in Šamaš 1**
Epithet	1–8; 10; 22	1–4; 7	1–6; 16–17
Vocative	3; 10; 22	1; 3; 5; 7; 23	3; 4; 17; 34
Merism	17–18	2; 11–12; 13; 15–16; 17; 18; 32–33; 34–35; 42	3; 4; 7–8; 28–29; 35
Enumeration	1–8 and 10	1–4; 19–20; 25–31	1–6; 25–31
Climax	7–9	11–12	34

Simile	–	5; 6; 10	–
Metaphor	–	2; 22	2; 4
Synonymous parallelism	5–6	2	–
Antithetical parallelism	–	–	10–14
Pun	–	–	3

Table 19 - Semantic figures identified in Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1

Morphologic Figures	**Lines in Marduk 2**	**Lines in Ištar 1**	**Lines in Šamaš 1**
Polyptoton	20–21	21–22; 30; 36–37; 38–39; 39–40	15a–16; 18–19; 30–31
Figura etymologica	–	–	18 Variants: SU 1951.45+ (o. 18); CBS 1519 (o. 16)

Table 20 - Morphologic figures identified in Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1

This wide variety of poetic devices and their interplay are an attestation to the prayers' sophistication, eloquence, and literariness, contributing to the units' recitation. These figures are also in accord with the prayers' rhetorical purposes. For example, the enumeration of epithets in the addresses (§§3.2.2.2.1; 3.3.2.2.1; 3.4.2.2.1) was a strategy to flatter the gods and address them politely in order to secure their attention before the

petitions. The use of merisms in Ištar 1:2, 11–12, 13, 15–16, 17, 18, and Šamaš 1:3, 4, 7–8 highlighted the absolute power of the deities in the address. These semantic figures acted as a reminder for the gods that they have the power to help and as a sign of reassurance for the supplicant. The anastrophic fronting of imperatives in Marduk 2:14–15, Ištar 1:23–24, and Šamaš 1:23 are an example of a poetic device that emphasizes the direct petitions, showing the supplicant's need for their fulfillment. These different examples thus attest to a link in these prayers between poetics and the rhetorical purposes of persuading the deities to act and bringing reassurance to the supplicant.

4 Comparative Poetic and Rhetorical Analysis of Akkadian Sources

In this chapter, I begin by comparatively analysing the speakers, audiences, and purposes (§4.1) of the two *Ludlul* hymns (I:1–40 and V:71–120) and the three selected Akkadian šuila-prayers (Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1). I will then analyse the use of poetic devices and their rhetorical impacts across all five units (§4.2), focusing on prosodic figures (§4.2.1), phonologic figures (§4.2.2), syntactic figures (§4.2.3), semantic figures (§4.2.4), morphologic figures (§4.2.5), and the units' poetic complexity (§4.2.6).

4.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

As first mentioned by van Rensburg and then further explored by Annus and Lenzi, *Ludlul* and šuila-prayers share a first-person voice.[691] This shared feature points to the similarities between the speakers in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and in the šuila-prayers. Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, the speaker of *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, is a supplicant who undergoes suffering and petitions the gods for change.[692] This parallels the speakers of the šuila-prayers as these are also individuals in suffering, as shown in the *attalû*, "eclipse," formula, who petition the deities for change.[693] Therefore, these texts share a similar perspective of speech. Nevertheless, in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan states that his situation has already changed (*Ludlul* I:37–38) by the action of Marduk, whereas in the šuila-prayers, the supplicants are still undergoing suffering as the use of the expression *palḫāku adrāku* (*u*) *šutādurāku*, "I am frightened, afraid, (and) terrified," demonstrates.[694] This distinction in terms of speakers between the units is furthered in *Ludlul* V:71–120 because the speaker of this closing hymn are the Babylonians, which contrasts with the singular voice in the šuila-prayers.

Regarding the audiences, both *Ludlul* hymns and the three šuila-prayers share a divine audience. The hymns in *Ludlul* are primarily addressed to Marduk and the šuila Marduk 2 is addressed to the same god; the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1 are addressed respectively to Ištar and Šamaš. Moreover, through the references to other deities, all the šuila-prayers expand their divine audience even if indirectly. Therefore, all

[691] Annus and Lenzi 2010: xxviii; van Rensburg 1995: 235.
[692] See, for example, *Ludlul* II:4–5.
[693] On the *attalû*-formula, see my comments in §3.1.
[694] This expression is found in the manuscripts CBS 1701 (o. 6′), SU 1951.45+ (o. 26), and CBS 1519 (o. 20), the first preserving Marduk 2 and the second and the third preserving Šamaš 1. For the use of this expression in other incantation-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 72–73. The difference between the past suffering in *Ludlul* and the present suffering in the šuila-prayers had already been noted by Annus and Lenzi (2010: xxix).

these five rhetorical units contain a form of speech addressed to the gods. In *Ludlul* I:39, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan states: *lušalmidma nišī qitruba gamālšin*, "May I teach the people their salvation is close." The opening hymn thus has another audience: the wider community. This is another distinctive point of the unit in comparison to the Akkadian šuila-prayers, and it influences the rhetorical structure and devices employed by the poet.

Concerning the rhetorical purposes, both the introductory and closing hymns of *Ludlul* state that their main goal is to praise Marduk: *ludlul*, "may I praise" (*Ludlul* I:1) and *ušāpâ narbî*[*šu*], "they proclaimed [his] greatness" (*Ludlul* V:70). Therefore, both poems are doxological in their rhetorical nature. This contrasts with the šuila-prayers, which, despite including praise to the deities in the address stanza, do not have a doxological rhetorical purpose. These prayers are meant to persuade the gods to act and change the current situation of the supplicant who is suffering. The prayers thus have a petitionary character. This contrast between the hymns and the prayers in terms of rhetorical purposes influences the usages of poetic devices within each rhetorical unit. The petitions found in *Ludlul* V:113–118 for the recovery of a sufferer give the closing hymn a petitionary character that is shared with the šuila-prayers, but again the petitionary rhetoric is not at the core of the closing hymn despite being a part of it, just as praise is not at the core of the šuila-prayers. *Ludlul* I:1–40 also has an instructional purpose as shown in the precative *lušalmidma*, "may I teach" (*Ludlul* I:39), which points to the goal of teaching the wider community about Marduk's mercy. This creates an indirect link with the šuila-prayers since these are used by sufferers to persuade the gods to act and *Ludlul* is meant to teach the sufferers that the gods, and particularly Marduk, can indeed change negative circumstances. Therefore, all the five units seem to work together in helping to alleviate suffering, despite their different rhetorical purposes.

The two *Ludlul* hymns and the three šuila-prayers have a divine audience that defines the type of religious language employed, but the speakers are different as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, unlike the supplicants of the šuila-prayers, has already overcome the suffering, and *Ludlul* V:71–120 has the people of Babylon as a plural speaker. The main rhetorical purposes are also different as both *Ludlul* hymns are mainly doxological while the šuila-prayers are mainly petitionary. Nevertheless, they are all ultimately meant to alleviate suffering.

4.2. Poetic Analysis

4.2.1. Prosodic Figures

4.2.1.1. Metre

It is difficult to identify patterns of use of metre across the five rhetorical units. The *Vierheber* Akkadian metre is the most common, but other metrical divisions are also found.[695] The three-foot lines are sometimes used in parallelism (Marduk 2:11–13, 14–15, 17–18; Ištar 1:34–35; Šamaš 1:11–13, 24–25, 28–29). Three-foot lines also sometimes have a structuring effect. Marduk 2:11–13 is the first triplet of the petition stanza and all the lines have three feet. Ištar 1:41 is a three-foot line and the final line of the petition stanza. In *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn, two three-foot lines are used in parallel to mark the midpoint of the rhetorical unit (*Ludlul* I:19, 23). Another pattern is the use of three-foot lines followed by four-foot or longer lines in strophes (Marduk 2:8–9, 14–16, 17–19, 23–24, 26–27; Ištar 1:36–37, 43–44; Šamaš 1:7–8, 36–37; *Ludlul* I:13–14, 19–20, 23–24). This metrical structure probably had an aural impact because of the change from shorter to longer lines, thus playing an important role in performance.[696]

4.2.1.2. Strophic Patterns

Ludlul V:71–120 is the only rhetorical unit whose strophic division is uncertain and this is due to its poor preservation. *Ludlul* I:1–40 has a very clear strophic pattern with quatrains which are composed by two couplets each. In the opening hymn we do not find any strophic "counterpatterning," thus showing the stability of this unit and its striking

[695] On the Akkadian metrical patterns, see my comments in §1.5.1.
[696] On three-foot lines as slowing the rhythm, see George 2003: 163.

balance.[697] The šuila-prayers also have a strophic pattern each, but also include "counterpatterning" strophes. In the šuila Marduk 2, triplets are the basic structure whereas monostichs and couplets create a disruption in this pattern. In the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1, the couplet is the most common strophic division following traditional Akkadian poetry, but again we find "counterpatterning" strophes. The balance created by the strophic patterns in each unit has an important rhetorical purpose as it gives a sense of harmony to the divine audience and the human speaker.

Regarding the strophic "counterpatternings" in the šuila-prayers, it should be noted that they tend to have similar rhetorical purposes. As part of prosody, they indicate structural changes, such as movements from one stanza to another.[698] In Marduk 2, the monostich of line 10 indicates the end of the address as the petition stanza starts in line 11. In the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1, the use of a triplet for the blessing also indicates a stanzaic change. In Ištar 1, the triplet of lines 29–31 also indicates a structural change but within the petition stanza. In Šamaš 1, line 34 is a monostich that marks the end of the petition stanza. In this same prayer, lines 7–9 are a triplet that indicates a structural change within the address stanza. Marduk 2:20–21 is a couplet whose purpose seems to be drawing attention to its theme, and Šamaš 1:24–27 is a quatrain whose purpose is uncertain, but because of the prayer's division into couplets, the quatrain still fits the overall strophic pattern. My poetic analysis of the šuila-prayers thus seems to indicate that the poets used "counterpatterning" in strophic divisions to indicate structural changes within the prayers, signposts for both the speaker and the addressee.

[697] On the concept of "counterpatterning," see my comments regarding *tayyārat* in *Ludlul* I:8 (§2.2.2.2.2).
[698] See, for example, how monostichs and triplets can mark the opening and closing of stanzas in Akkadian and Ugaritic poetry (Steinberger 2024: 94–98, 107).

4.2.1.3. Prosodic Parallelism and G-Stress Patterns

Prosodic parallelism is found in all five rhetorical units and it contributes to their performativity and rhythm.[699] The use of the G-stress pattern, a colon where the first and last syllables are stressed, with at least three unstressed syllables in between,[700] is more common in the selected šuila-prayers than in the *Ludlul* hymns. Because of its rarity, it plays an important emphatic role in the prayers. In fact, the poets employ it at the start of the address (Ištar 1:3; Šamaš 1:1, 2) or the closing line of the address (Marduk 2:10). Therefore, this prosodic figure seems to draw the attention of the divine audiences and the speakers to the prayer. The purpose of the use of the G-stress pattern in other lines of the rhetorical units (Šamaš 1:26; *Ludlul* V:78) is less clear, as it is not employed in particularly emphatic moments of the prayers or hymns.

4.2.1.4. Anacrusis

The possibility of the use of the divine name in anacrusis is found in all rhetorical units, with the exception of *Ludlul* V:71–120, and this highlights the importance of the divine audience.[701] In fact, this prosodic device can be seen as a way to secure divine attention in the hymns and prayers. Moreover, in the šuila-prayers it is used at particularly important moments, such as the address (Marduk 2: 10; Ištar 1:3, 13; Šamaš 1:3, 4, 17)

[699] On the rhetorical effects of prosody, see Steinberger 2024: 54–55. However, because of the current state of research on Akkadian prosody, it is still difficult to determine most effects of accentual patterns. On the debates regarding stress patterns, see my comments in §1.5.1.
[700] On this terminology for this type of stress pattern, see my comments in the introduction (§1.5.1), referring to Wisnom 2015: 491.
[701] On the possibility of anacrusis, see my comments on *Ludlul* I:11 (§2.2.2.2.2).

and the end of the petitions (Marduk 2:22; Šamaš 1:34). Besides the divine audience, the speaker's attention is also drawn to the divine name, a reminder of the deity he can trust.

4.2.2. Phonologic Figures

The use of phonologic figures possibly indicates the rhetorical units' poetic orality, that is, their performative context.[702] As discussed in the introduction (§1.4.1.2), the performance and recitation of the Akkadian šuila-prayers in ritual contexts is well attested in first-millennium BC sources. However, *Ludlul*'s only attested use is in school contexts.[703] Despite this, all rhetorical units employ phonologic figures which are not traditionally for the eye, but rather for the ear, suggesting an aural impact for these hymns and prayers.[704] In fact, these figures contribute to the hymns' and prayers' recitation and rhetorical effectiveness.[705]

4.2.2.1. Assonance and Consonance

I used the same metrics and criteria for the identification of assonance and consonance in *Ludlul*'s hymns and the selected šuila-prayers.[706] Assonance in the hymns employed the vowels /a/ and /u/ the most, while in the šuila-prayers, it employed the vowel /i/ the most.[707] In phono-symbolism, the sounds /a/ and /u/ tend to express strength and deepness

[702] On orality in Akkadian, see Ballesteros 2023: 13–15; Vanstiphout and Vogelzang 1992. On the impact of phonologic figures on oral performance, see Schwemer 2014: 281.
[703] See my discussion on *Ludlul*'s *Sitz im Leben* (§1.4.1.1).
[704] As a counterargument to phonologic figures being taken as a sign of oral composition, see Izre'el 1992: 172. However, Izre'el still understands Akkadian phonologic figures as having an aural impact.
[705] See, for example, the use of phonologic figures as part of persuasive language in Akkadian incantations (Veldhuis 1999: 38–41).
[706] On the metrics and criteria for identification of assonance and consonance in the Akkadian sources, see my discussion in §1.3.
[707] In Ištar 1 the sound /u/ and in Šamaš 1 the sound /a/ also played an important role.

in contrast to the softer /i/.[708] My comparative analysis thus points to the hymns' phonologic strength which is in accord with the units' doxological purpose, while the use of /i/ in the šuila-prayers can reflect the speaker's distress and weakness, a moment when he humbly presents his petitions before the gods. However, other reasons can be identified for the use of these sounds and more research on Akkadian sound patterns needs to be done before reaching definitive conclusions.

In terms of consonance, the results are less promising. In all units, the sounds /b/ and /l/ are used the most for consonance, with /k/ playing an important role in the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1, and /p/ also being used often in *Ludlul* V:71–120. These results can be influenced by the consonants' average in the metrics and are thus less clear. Nevertheless, consonance can have an emphatic effect.[709] In *Ludlul* I:31–32, the consonance of the sound /m/ emphasizes Marduk's name, while in Šamaš 2:3–4, the consonance of the sounds /m/ and /š/ emphasizes Šamaš's name. Therefore, this phonologic device highlights the audiences of the units.

4.2.2.2. Alliteration, Homeoteleuton, Homeoptoton, and Rhyme

Alliteration, homeoteleuton, homeoptoton, and rhyme also add emphasis to important ideas or parts of the rhetorical units.[710] For example, the alliteration in *Ludlul* I:2 and 4 between *mūši*, "night," and *muppašir*, "forgiving," highlights the antithesis between the god's wrath and mercy, the key idea of the rhetorical unit. The alliterations in Marduk 2:11–12 between *lubluṭ*, "may I live," *lušlimma*, "may I become well," and *luštammara*,

[708] See Plett 2010: 127–128; Maloney 2009: 48.
[709] For an emphatic use of consonance, see, for example, Michalowski 2024: 307–309.
[710] See Rozzi 2024b: 259–260; Hurowitz 2000: 67–70.

"may I praise," emphasize the first two petitions of the prayer, a key moment for both the god and the supplicant.

4.2.3. Syntactic Figures

4.2.3.1. Grammatical Parallelism

All five rhetorical units employ grammatical parallelism, which adds internal cohesion and allows the audience to understand the connections between the different poetic lines or cola.[711] This parallelism also contributed to the flow of recitation, creating balance, which was important for the human speakers and divine audiences of the rhetorical units. The breaks in grammatical parallelism were also important for the audiences, and this is attested in different rhetorical units.[712] For example, the parallelism in *Ludlul* I:33–36 contrasts with the lack of such clear grammatical parallelism in *Ludlul* I:37–40, the last stanza, thus drawing the attention of Marduk and the wider community to the hymn's conclusion. The grammatical parallelism of Marduk 2:1–6 is broken in Marduk 2:7–9, emphasizing the latter, which corresponds to a climax of the description of Marduk's power. Therefore, the contrast with grammatical parallelism was an important poetic device that drew the attention of the audiences to key elements of the rhetorical units.

4.2.3.2. Hymnic Parallelism

Ludlul's introductory hymn has three instances of hymnic parallelism (*Ludlul* I:1–4, 9–12, 29–32). This poetic device is a way of highlighting Marduk and praising him, as the

[711] See Steinberger 2024: 426.
[712] On this effect of breaks in grammatical parallelism, see Steinberger 2024: 426–427.

hymn is addressed to him. This form of parallelism is only found in one of the šuila-prayers analysed (Marduk 2:1–3). However, in this instance, there is no repetition between the lines unlike in traditional forms of hymnic parallelism, and thus is not a complete example of this type of parallelism. In fact, this syntactic device is more common in the Akkadian Great Hymns and Prayers, such as the *Great Prayer to Nabû* and the *Prayer Marduk 1*.[713] This difference between *Ludlul* I:1–40 and the šuila-prayers is a possible reflection of the doxological nature of the former in comparison with the latter.

4.2.3.3. Gender-Matched Parallelism

Gender-matched parallelism is attested in all five rhetorical units. The main function of this type of parallelism is to create a totalizing description or a merism.[714] This is the role played in all the instances found in the šuila-prayers and in *Ludlul* V:71–120. In Marduk 2:17–18, Ištar 1:32–33, and Šamaš 1:18–19, 28–29, and 32–33, the poets employ this parallelism in the petitions, pointing to the need of the supplicant to be fully protected. In Ištar 1:15–16 and 17, the poet uses gender-matched parallelism in the address to emphasize the totalizing power of the goddess and how she is fully accompanied by protective spirits, an important element for the supplicant because he then asks for this same male and female protective spirits (Ištar 1:32–33). In Šamaš 1:7–8, the gender-matched parallelism is also found in the address emphasizing a merism and the god's

[713] *Great Prayer to Nabû*:9–12, 13–16, 17–20, 21–24, 25–28, 29–32, 33–36, 37–40, 41–44, 45–48, 53–56, 81–84, 91–94, 99–102, 117–120, 187–190, 204–207, 212–215, 220–223. For an edition of the *Great Prayer to Nabû*, see Rozzi 2024b: 58–125. *Prayer Marduk 1*:1–4, 5–8, 9–12, 13–16, 17–20, 21–24, 25–28, 29–32, 33–36, 37–40, 41–44, 51–56, 62–65, 91–94, 137–140, 181–184, 191–194, 195–198, 201–204. For an edition of the *Prayer Marduk 1*, see Oshima 2011: 137–190.
[714] See Watson 1984: 125.

power. In *Ludlul* V:73–74 and 75–76, the gender-matched parallelism refers to Marduk and Zarpānītu, emphasizing how only these gods could have saved Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan.

Another function of gender-matched parallelism is emphasizing antitheses.[715] This is the role played by this syntactic figure in *Ludlul* I:19–20 and 21–22. In the former, the antithesis between Marduk's wrath and mercy is further highlighted by the comparisons of his wrath with *rīmu*, "a wild bull" (*Ludlul* I:19), and his mercy with *arḫu*, "a cow" (*Ludlul* I:20). In the latter, the use of a feminine verbal form, *usaḫḫalā*, "they pierce" (*Ludlul* I:21), contrasts with the use of a masculine verbal form, *uballaṭū*, "they restore" (*Ludlul* I:22).

4.2.3.4. Chiasmus

Watson has outlined two types of function of chiasmus: structural and expressive.[716] Among the first group, Watson identified four functions: "to open a stanza or poem," "to close a stanza or poem," "to link components of a poem," and "to indicate the midpoint of a poem."[717] Ištar 1:23–24 and Šamaš 1:18–19 include chiasmi which mark the opening of a new stanza, as in both cases these couplets are the first lines of the petition stanzas. Ištar 1:21–22 has chiasmus and closes the address stanza. Simultaneously, these lines mark the midpoint of the unit because the prayer has forty-four lines in total. Šamaš 1:18–19 besides opening a stanza also mark the midpoint since the prayer has thirty-seven lines.

By linking different parts of the unit, chiasmus contributes to the cohesion of the strophe.[718] In fact, this syntactic figure can be seen as a form of grammatical

[715] See Watson 1984: 125–126.
[716] Watson 1984: 205; 1981: 145–146.
[717] Watson 1984: 205; 1981: 146–147.
[718] Watson 1981: 146.

parallelism,[719] and in all instances contributes to the strophic cohesion. However, it is also important to identify links between other parts of the unit which are enhanced by chiasmus. In *Ludlul* I, the second quatrain has two parallel chiasmi between the couplets, contributing to the quatrain's unity:

5 *ša kīma ūmi* | *meḫê* || *namû* | *uggassu*
6 *u kīma mānit* | *šēreti* || *zâqšu* | *tâbu*
7 *uzzuššu* | *lā maḫār* || *abūbu* | *rūbšu*
8 *mussaḫḫir* | *karassu* || *kabattašu* | *tayyārat*

The one whose rage, like a storm of tempests, is a desert,
But whose blowing, like a breeze of morning hours, is sweet.
In his anger unopposed, his fury a deluge,
His feelings are merciful, his mood is relenting.

(*Ludlul* I:5–8)

This function of chiasmus is also visible in *Ludlul* I:30, 32, and 35–36:

30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*
32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad* | *tēnšu*

No one among [the gods] knows his way.
No god can understand his thought.

(*Ludlul* I:30, 32)

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

Without his consent (lit. heart), who may calm his blow?
Apart from his intention (lit. mood), who may stay his hand?

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

The ring-structure of *Ludlul* is also emphasized through this function of chiasmus, since *Ludlul* I:35–36 and V:73–74 are not only parallel rhetorical questions but also contain parallelism between their chiasmi:

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

Without his consent (lit. heart), who may calm his blow?
Apart from his intention (lit. mood), who may stay his hand?

[719] See, for example, Rozzi 2024b: 267.

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* | *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*

Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?
Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?

(*Ludlul* V:73–74)

In the šuila-prayers, the only attestation of chiasmus as a way to bring cohesion to different parts of the unit is found in Ištar 1:

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*
18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki* | *dumqu*

A male protective spirit is before you, a female protective spirit is behind you,
Justice is on your right side, goodness is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:17–18)

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pāṇīki*
33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*

May I acquire the good male protective spirit which is before you,
The female protective spirit which goes behind you, may I acquire.

(Ištar 1:32–33)

The chiasmi are not parallel, but the poet uses chiasmus in the lines of the address and stanza which are linked by their merisms and gender-matched parallelism. Therefore, the presence of chiasmus in both instances further contributes to the link between these parts of the prayer.

Watson identifies five expressive functions of chiasmus: "merismus," "reversal of existing state," "emphatic negation or prohibition," "strong contrasts or antithesis," and "other functions."[720] As far as merisms are concerned, this effect refers to the totalizing character of chiasmus, that is, the expression of totality through chiasmus, which does not

[720] Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 146–149.

need to employ an actual merism.[721] In *Ludlul* V:71–120, the poet uses chiasmus with this function in two instances:

84 […|| *k]al* (|) *nišī* | *libēlma*
85 […|| *li]rē* | *kal* (|) *dadmē*

[...] may he rule over all the people,
[... may he shepherd] all the inhabited world

(*Ludlul* V:84–85)

113 [*ša*ʔ *maruš*]*ta*ʔ | *īmuru* || *lippaṭir* | *aranšu*
114 [...] || *mānaḫtašu* | *lištapšiḫ*
115 [*ilšu*ʔ ...] || *ištartašu* | *likabbissu*
116 [... *n*]*išū* || *lišeʾāʔ* | *šulmāniš*
117 [...] ... || *šarrašu* | *likabbissu*
118 [*ṭūb* (|) *šīri*] | *u*ʔ *ḫūd* (|) *libbi* || *libaʔʔi* | *ūmīšam*

[The one whoʔ] experienced [distressʔ], may his transgression be absolved,
[...] may his weariness be assuaged,
[May his godʔ...], may his goddess honour him,
[...] may the people seekʔ in peace,
[...] may his king honour him,
May he daily look for [sweetness of flesh] andʔ joy of heart.

(*Ludlul* V:113–118)

The poet is making sure that everything is encompassed by the petitions, and the chiasmi emphasize this totalizing effect.

This function of chiasmus is also widely employed in Ištar 1:

5 *ištar* | *anātima* || *šamê* | *tabellī*
6 *kīma enlil* | *māliki* || *taṭemmī* | *dadmī*

Ištar, you are (like) Anu, you rule heaven,
Like Enlil, the adviser, you look after the inhabited world.

(Ištar 1:5–6)

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*
18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki* | *dumqu*

A male protective spirit is before you, a female protective spirit is behind you,
Justice is on your right side, goodness is on your left side.

[721] See Isa 40:26b, the example used by Watson (1981: 147) which refers to the merism function of chiasmus but without the use of an actual merism.

(Ištar 1:17–18)

19 *kunnū* | *ina rēšīki* || *tašmû* | (*u*) *magāru* | (*u*) *salīmu*
20 *itâtūki* | *šutasḫurā* || *balāṭa* | (*u*) *šulma*

Attention (and) acceptance (and) peace are established in your presence,
Your sides are surrounded with life (and) well-being.

(Ištar 1:19–20)

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pānīki*
33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*

May I acquire the good male protective spirit which is before you,
The female protective spirit which goes behind you, may I acquire.

(Ištar 1:32–33)

34 *ša imnukki* | *mešrâ* | *luṣṣib*
35 *dumqa* | *lukšuda* | *ša šumēlukki*

May I multiply the riches which are on your right side,
May I achieve the goodness which is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:34–35)

These five examples of chiasmus have a totalizing effect for both Ištar (Ištar 1:5–6, 17–18, 19–20), emphasizing her absolute power, and the supplicant (Ištar 1:32–33, 34–35), emphasizing his full protection. This is similar to the effect of the merisms employed in Ištar 1:17–18, 32–33, and 34–35.[722] Therefore, these chiasmi are in accord with the goals of securing divine attention and guaranteeing the speaker's petitions.

The šuila Šamaš 1 also has one example:

28 *kittu* | *lizziz* | *ina imittīya*
29 *mīšaru* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*
30 *littallak* | *ilu* || *mušallimu* | *ina idīya*
31 *ayy ipparku* | *rābiṣ* (||) *šulmi* | *ina arkīya*

May truth stand at my right side,
May justice stand at my left side.
May a protecting god constantly go at my side,
May a guardian for good not cease to be behind me.

(Šamaš 1:28–31)

[722] On this effect of the merisms, see my comments in §§3.3.2.2.1 and 3.3.2.2.2.

The chiasmus contributes to the merisms of these lines and emphasizes the supplicant's total protection.

The merism function of chiasmus and its totalizing effects are shared between the final hymn of *Ludlul* and the šuila-prayers. This is another feature that links these rhetorical units. Moreover, this function is widely employed in the petition stanza of the prayers and also in the petitions of *Ludlul* V:71–120, showing a structural parallel between the units.

Under the "reversal of existing state" function, I include the chiasmus in *Ludlul* V:73–74:[723]

73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* | *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*

Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?
Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?

(*Ludlul* V:73–74)

This couplet refers to the reversal of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's circumstances. This is an expression of the gods' powers and how they can change a sufferer's life. Therefore, the syntactic figure emphasizes this power of Marduk and Zarpānītu, contributing to their praise, the key rhetorical goal of the final hymn.

The "emphatic negation or prohibition" expressive function of chiasmus is employed in *Ludlul* I:30 and 32:[724]

30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*
32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad* | *tēnšu*

No one among [the gods] knows his way.
No god can understand his thought.

(*Ludlul* I:30, 32)

[723] On this expressive function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 147.
[724] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148.

These lines praise Marduk through his inscrutability as they state that no other god can know Marduk's way or thought. The chiasmus emphasizes this negation, contributing to Marduk's praise.

Ludlul I:1–40 is characterized by its use of antitheses setting a contrast between Marduk's wrath and mercy. This feature contributes to the god's praise as it shows his all-encompassing character but also how ultimately he is merciful. This thus also acts as reminder for the wider community that Marduk can be compassionate. This rhetorical unit contains five examples where the use of chiasmus has the function of emphasizing "strong contrasts or antithesis," thus contributing to the praise of Marduk:[725]

5 *ša kīma ūmi* | *meḫê* || *namû* | *uggassu*
6 *u kīma mānit* | *šēreti* || *zâqšu* | *tâbu*

The one whose rage, like a storm of tempests, is a desert,
But whose blowing, like a breeze of morning hours, is sweet.

(*Ludlul* I:5–6)

7 *uzzuššu* | *lā maḫār* || *abūbu* | *rūbšu*
8 *mussaḫḫir* | *karassu* || *kabattašu* | *tayyārat*

In his anger unopposed, his fury a deluge,
His feelings are merciful, his mood is relenting.

(*Ludlul* I:7–8)

9 *ša nakbat* | *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*
10 *rittuššu* | *rabbat* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

The weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.

(*Ludlul* I:9–10)

33 *ana kī kabtat* | *qāssu* || *libbašu* | *rēmēnī*
34 *ana kī gaṣṣu* | *kakkašu* || *kabattašu* | *mušniššat*

As his hand is heavy, his heart is merciful,
As his weapon is cruel, his mood is sustaining.

(*Ludlul* I:33–34)[726]

[725] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148.
[726] This couplet counts as two examples since each line expresses its own antithesis and contains chiasmus.

Besides *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn, this function of chiasmus is only found in Šamaš 1:

10 *etla | ēda || tappâ | tušarši*
11 *ana lā išari | tanamdin | apla*
12 *edlūti | sikkūr (||) šamê | tupatti*
13 *ana lā nāṭili | tašakkan | nūra*
14 *tuppa | arma || lā petâ | tašassi*
15 *ina libbi | immeri || tašaṭṭar | šīra*

You provide the lonely young man with a companion,
  You give a son to the impotent.
You open the locked bolts of heaven,
  You set light for the blind.
You read an unopened, enclosed tablet,
  You inscribe a flesh-omen on the insides of a sheep.

(Šamaš 1:10–15)

The chiasmi emphasize these lines of the address where Šamaš's ability to change impossible situations is praised. These lines act as a reminder to the god that he is powerful and that he can indeed change the circumstances of the supplicant. These lines are also important for calming the supplicant himself as he is also reminded of Šamaš's power and ability.

Watson categorizes some examples of chiasmus under "other" functions.[727] In *Ludlul* I:10 and 12, the use of chiasmus can be seen as emphatic because these lines contain hymnic parallelism and the syntactic device allows for the term *rabbat*, "gentle," to be in the first foot of line 12, paralleling the divine name which is in the first foot of line 11:[728]

9 *ša nakbat | qātīšu || lā inaššû | šamāʾū*
10 *rittuššu | rabbat || ukaššu | mīta*
11 *marūtuk | ša nakbat (|) qātīšu || lā inaššû | šamāʾū*

[727] Watson 1981: 148–149.
[728] On the emphatic function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149. In the analysed units, this is the only instance where the same words are repeated in chiasmus, but other examples of this feature, can be found outside the corpus. For example, in the Standard Babylonian *Ištar's Descent*:2–3: *ištar | mārat (|) sîn || uzunša | [iškun] / iškunma | mārat (||) sîn | uzu[nša]*, "Ištar, the daughter of Sîn, [set] her attention, / The daughter of Sîn indeed set her attention." The change in the word order leads the verbal form *iškunma* in line 3 to be placed in parallel to the divine name in line 2.

12 *rabbat* | *rittašu* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

The weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.
Marduk, the weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.

(*Ludlul* I:9–12)

This chiasmus highlights Marduk's mercy, and this is accompanied by the morphologic change between *rittuššu* and *rittašu*, adding more emphasis.

Ištar 1 has two instances of the use of chiasmus for emphatic purposes:

21 *kī ṭābū* | *supûki* || *kī qerub* | *šemûki*
22 *napluski* | *tašmû* || *qibītki* | *nūru*

How sweet are the supplications to you! How close is your hearing!
Your seeing is attention, your command is light.

(Ištar 1:21–22)

23 *rēmīnnīma* | *bēltī* || *qibî* | *naḫāšī*
24 *kīniš* | *naplisīnnīma* || *leqê* | *unnīnīya*

Have mercy on me, oh my lady, and command my prosperity,
Look at me genuinely and take my prayer.

(Ištar 1:23–24)

In Ištar 1:21–22, the poet emphasizes the goddess and her attributes, and in Ištar 1:23–24, the poet emphasizes the supplicant and the first petitions.

The emphatic function of chiasmus is also found in Šamaš 1:

18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*
19 *līširā* | *idātūya* || *lidmiqā* | *šunātūya*

Decree my destiny, make my way good,
May my signs become favourable, may my dreams be good.

(Šamaš 1:18–19)

Besides the structuring effect of chiasmus, the use of this syntactic figure emphasizes the first petitions of the prayer, an attempt to secure divine attention.

The chiasmus in *Ludlul* V:79 expresses simultaneity and harmony, another function of chiasmus:[729]

79 *mû* | *illakū* || *iziqqu* | *šāru*
The water flows, the wind blows.

(*Ludlul* V:79)

This natural harmony can be seen as an expression of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's own harmony and peace.

This function is also attested in Šamaš 1:24–25, because the poet uses chiasmus to express the simultaneity of the actions and the harmony they create in the life of the supplicant:

24 *ina sūqi* | *lū magir* | *qabûya*
25 *ilu* | *u šarru* | *lišāqirū'inni*
May my speech be accepted in the street,
May god and king respect me.

(Šamaš 1:24–25)

In Ištar 1:25–28, the poet uses chiasmus to show the correlation between the supplicant's good behaviour and his petitions:[730]

25 *erde* | *ūski* || *išdiḫu* | *likūna*
26 *serdâki* | *āḫuz* || *lubēl* | *ṭūb* (|) *libbi*
27 *ubil* | *abšānaki* || *pašāḫa* | *šuknī*
28 *uqe''i* | *rēški* || *līšira* | *salīmu*
I followed your custom; may profit be established for me,
I took your carrying-pole; may I lay claim to sweetness of heart.
I carried your yoke; set the cooling down (of anger),
I attended to you; may peace come straight to me.

(Ištar 1:25–28)

In both *Ludlul* hymns, the poet also uses chiasmus to emphasize an impossibility:[731]

[729] See Watson 1981: 149.
[730] On the use of chiasmus as a way to emphasize correlation, see Smith 1981: 19.
[731] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

Without his consent (lit. heart), who may calm his blow?
Apart from his intention (lit. mood), who may stay his hand?

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* | *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*

Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?
Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?

(*Ludlul* V:73–74)

Besides the parallelism between these couplets, the chiasmus in both also plays the same function: emphasizing that only Marduk can decide to be merciful (*Ludlul* I:35–36) and only Marduk and Zarpānītu could have saved Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan (*Ludlul* V:73–74). This shows the superiority of these deities, contributing to their praise.

4.2.3.5. Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are employed in both *Ludlul* hymns (*Ludlul* I:35–36 and V:71–74) and in Ištar 1:11–12, a part of the address. The rhetorical questions are thus notably used in hymnic contexts. Moreover, the syntactical construction of the rhetorical questions seems to follow a pattern:

35 *ša lā libbīšu* | *mannu* || *miḫiṣtašu* | *lišapšiḫ*
36 *ela kabtatīšu* | *ayyu* || *lišālil* | *qāssu*

Without his consent (lit. heart), who may calm his blow?
Apart from his intention (lit. mood), who may stay his hand?

(*Ludlul* I:35–36)

71 *mannumma* | *iqbi* || *amār* | *šamšīšu*
72 *ina libbi* (|) *manni* | *ibbaši* || *etēq* (|) *sūqīšu*
73 *ša lā marūtuk* | *mannu* || *mītūtašu* | *uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu* | *ištartu* | *ayyītu* || *iqīša* | *napšassu*

Who indeed (would have) said (he would) see his sun? (lit. Who indeed said the seeing of his sun?)
Who (would have) thought (he would) pass along his street? (lit. In the heart of whom did the passing along of his street exist?)
Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?
Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?

(*Ludlul* V:71–74)

11 *šumma* | *ina igigī* || *ayyu* | *māḫirki*
12 *šumma* | *ina anunnakī* || *ali* | *šāninki*

If among the Igigī, who is your opponent?
If among the Anunnakī, where is your rival?

(Ištar 1:11–12)

In all instances, except *Ludlul* V:71, the rhetorical questions start with particles or prepositions followed by a noun (*ša lā libbīšu*, *ela kabtatīšu*, *ina libbi*, *ša lā marūtuk*, *ela zarpānītu*, *šumma ina igigī*, and *šumma ina anunnakī*) and then the interrogative pronoun (*mannu*, *ayyu*, *manni*, *mannu*, *ayyītu*, *ayyu*, and *ali*). Despite the closer grammar and syntax between *Ludlul* I:35–36 and V:73–74,[732] all rhetorical questions still show similarities and point to a shared poetic way of building this syntactic figure, besides their common use in hymnic contexts. Rhetorical questions can have structuring effects of opening and closing stanzas.[733] In *Ludlul* I, the rhetorical questions close the second stanza and in *Ludlul* V, they open the hymn. In the šuila, the rhetorical questions mark the end of the part of the address alluding to Ištar's might in comparison to other deities (Ištar 1:5–12).

Regarding the expressive functions of rhetorical questions, their main role is to "command the audience's attention."[734] In the aforementioned instances, these devices

[732] I have already highlighted the similar syntactic constructions between *Ludlul* I:35–36 and *Ludlul* V:73–74 (§2.3.2.2.1). It should also be noted that in these examples, there is a sequence in the use of interrogative pronouns: *mannu* is followed by *ayyu*/*ayyītu*. However, this is not the case in every use of rhetorical questions. For example, in the *Great Hymn to Šamaš*:174–175, the poet uses *ayyūtu* twice rather than using *mannu* followed by a variation of *ayyu*.
[733] See Watson 1984: 341–342.
[734] Watson 1984: 341. See also Piccin 2021a: 93.

draw the attention of the gods to the hymns and prayer, but also the attention of the wider community in *Ludlul* and the supplicant in the šuila. Rhetorical questions can also emphasize a negation and assertion, and the implied answer to all the questions analysed is "no one" and "nowhere."[735] This implied answer and subsequently the rhetorical questions are a way of showing the absolute power of the deities to whom the hymns and prayer are directed. Therefore, the use of this poetic device draws the divine and human attention to the gods' might, important for securing divine action and reassuring the speaker that the gods have the power to help.

4.2.3.6. Repetition

Repetition is a key syntactic figure employed in all rhetorical units. It can have a structuring effect by linking different parts of a composition or unit.[736] In *Ludlul* and in the three šuila-prayers, repetition creates a ring structure. To achieve this, the poets use repetition of terms, forms, and roots, creating a link between the opening and ending. In *Ludlul* I:1–40, the poet employs first-person precative verbal forms in both the opening (*Ludlul* I:1–4) and concluding (*Ludlul* I:37–40) stanzas, and uses the term *uggassu*, "his rage," in lines 5 and 37. The two hymns of *Ludlul* also create a ring structure around the whole composition. Besides their doxological character, both hymns share vocabulary and forms. *Ludlul* I:37 preserves a first-person precative verbal form *lušāpi*, "may I proclaim," and *Ludlul* V:70 uses a third-person feminine plural durative verbal form *ušāpâ*, "they proclaimed." Both verbal forms derive from the Š-stem of the verb *wapû*, "to be(come) visible." The similar structuring of the rhetorical questions in *Ludlul* I:35–

[735] On this function of rhetorical questions, see Watson 1984: 341.
[736] On the structuring effects of repetition, see Wisnom 2023: 117; Black 1992: 72; Watson 1984: 279.

36 and V:73–74 also contributes to the ring structure. The parallel use of *qabru*, "grave," and *karašû*, "disaster" in *Ludlul* I:13–14 and V:75–76 is another poetic device that links *Ludlul*'s opening and closing hymns. The use of the verb *dalālu* in *Ludlul* I:1 and V:82, 119, as well as the cognate noun *dalī*[*līšu*], "[his] praises" (*Ludlul* V:119), are a further clear link between the hymns. The poet also employs the term *maqtu*, "fallen," in *Ludlul* I:14 and V:89. In *Ludlul* I:24, the poet uses the noun *aranšu*, "his transgression," with the verb *paṭāru*, "to release," which are then used again in *Ludlul* V:113.

These repetitions create a ring structure around *Ludlul*, which is thus defined by doxology as it opens and ends in praise. The ring structure itself also contributes to the praise of Marduk since it encircles the entire composition in this praise. Moreover, the goal of teaching the wider community about Marduk's mercy expressed in the opening hymn is completed in the final hymn as the Babylonians praise the god's compassion. Therefore, the ring structure evidences the completion of one of the rhetorical purposes. The ring structure also shows the movement from divine wrath to mercy, as in *Ludlul* I:1–40, Marduk's wrath and mercy are both praised, but in *Ludlul* V:71–120, only his compassion is extolled.

The šuila-prayers also have a ring structure through the address and the blessing. In Marduk 2, the poet uses a reference to the god Ea (Marduk 2:2, 25) and the root *ṭ–ʾ–b* (Marduk 2:9, 27) to emphasize this ring structure. In Ištar 1, the poet uses the terms *šamû* (Ištar 1:2, 5, 42) and *apsû* (Ištar 1:8, 42), and the root *ṭ–ʾ–b* (Ištar 1:21, 44) to establish a link between the address and the blessing. In Šamaš 1, the use of a merism with *šamû*, "heaven," and *erṣetu*, "earth," in both the address (Šamaš 1:4) and the blessing (Šamaš 1:35) contributes to the ring structure. More generally, both stanzas are a form of praise. The address is a doxology spoken by the supplicant, while the blessing, despite being also spoken by the supplicant, is a promise of praise by the other deities. Therefore, like in

Ludlul, there is a movement from an individual praise (*Ludlul* I:1–40 and address) to a more communal praise (*Ludlul* V:1–120 and blessing).[737] Therefore, all rhetorical units are framed by praise. Whereas in *Ludlul*, this emphasizes the doxological character of the composition, in the šuila-prayers, this is a rhetorical strategy to flatter the deities, secure their attention, and thus convince them to act in favour of the speaker.

Besides contributing to the creation of ring structures, repetition, as a structuring feature, also contributes to the composition's unity.[738] In the šuila-prayers, the repetition of epithets or their elements in the address and the petition stanzas contributes to the cohesion of the prayer by creating unity between the stanzas. For example, in the šuila Marduk 2, the expression *marūtuk bēlu rabû*, "Marduk, great lord," is used in lines 10 and 22. The ring structure of the prayers also has this structural effect. A key device in the šuila-prayers which contributes to internal cohesion are the so-called "pivot lines," lines that include elements from the previous and succeeding parts of the composition, creating a bridge between both.[739] Marduk 2:7, for example, has parallelism with the previous triplets and the following triplet, creating unity within the address. Šamaš 1:18 is also a "pivot line" because it introduces the petition stanza but still refers to the address through the use of the root *š–ʾ–m* also employed in line 17, the last line of the address.

In *Ludlul* I:1–40, these structuring effects of repetition are shown in the antithetical parallelism that characterizes the majority of the unit. In fact, the opening hymn is defined by the antithesis between Marduk's wrath and mercy. The use of first-person precative verbal forms in both the opening (*Ludlul* I:1–4) and concluding (*Ludlul* I:37–40) stanzas and the repetition of the term *uggassu*, "his rage" (*Ludlul* I:5, 37),

[737] The structural similarities between the opening and final hymns of *Ludlul* and the address and blessing of Akkadian šuila-prayers had already been noted by Lenzi (2023: 304–306; 2015: 71–73).
[738] On this function of repetition, see Watson 1984: 279.
[739] On this terminology, see my comments on Marduk 2:7 (§3.2.2.2.1), with reference to De Zorzi 2022: 385.

besides contributing to the hymn's ring structure, also strengthen its cohesion. In *Ludlul* V:71–120, the structuring effect of repetition is shown in the use of Marduk's name (*Ludlul* V:73, 75, 82, 104, 120), and the roots *b–ʾ–l* (*Ludlul* V:84, 102, 103, 110), *n–p–š* (*Ludlul* V:74, 81, 96, 99, 100), and *b–l–ṭ* (*Ludlul* V:73, 75, 96, 99, 107).

Besides the structuring effects and the creation of a ring structure, repetition of terms can also emphasize them, making them key words in the unit.[740] In the šuila-prayers, the semantic domain of speech plays an important role.[741] In Marduk 2, the root *q–b–ʾ* is used six times (Marduk 2:11, 16, 20, 21 (x2), 23). In the couplet of lines 20–21, this root is used three times and as a verbal polyptoton, further emphasizing it:

20 *šurkamma* | *qabâ* || *šemâ* | *u magāra*
21 *amāt* | *aqabbû* || *kīma aqabbû* | *lū magrat*

Give me speaking, listening, and acceptance,
So that the word which I speak, when I speak, may be accepted.

(Marduk 2:20–21)

The term *amātu*, "word," is used twice (Marduk 2:15, 21) and the term *pû*, "mouth," is also employed twice (Marduk 2:9, 14). It should also be noted that the root *š–m–ʾ* is used in line 20, which points to the need for listening to speech.

In Ištar 1, the semantic domain of speech is also widely present. The root *q–b–ʾ* is used five times (Ištar 1:22, 23, 36, 37 (x2)), and the poet employs a similar verbal polyptoton to the one of lines 20 and 21 of the šuila Marduk 2:

36 *qibîma* | *liššeme* | *zikrī*
37 *amāt* | *aqabbû* || *kīma aqabbû* | *lū magrat*

Command that my utterance may be heard,
So that the word which I speak, when I speak, may be accepted.

(Ištar 1:36–37)

[740] Watson (1984: 287) links key words to repetition but treats them as separate poetic devices. However, I will include key words as an effect of repetition through emphasis. On the emphatic effects of repetition, see Steinberger 2024: 243–244; Wisnom 2023: 116; Vogelzang 1996: 169–170; Watson 1984: 279.
[741] See Mayer 1976: 249–252.

The root *š–m–ʾ* is used five times (Ištar 1:19, 21, 22, 29, 36) and the term *pû*, "mouth," is employed in line 10.

In Šamaš 1, the semantic domain of speech is not as common as in the other two prayers, but still plays an important role. The root *q–b–ʾ* is used four times (Šamaš 1:8, 24, 26, 33) and the verb *awûm*, "to speak," is used once (Šamaš 1:32) in parallelism with *qabû*, "to say" (Šamaš 1:33).

The importance of speaking and listening in these prayers is shown through these different repetitions and use of other figures, such as the polyptoton. These domains are particularly important for the rhetorical purposes of the šuila-prayers as these are forms of speech that ought to be listened to and accepted by the gods. Therefore, these poetic devices emphasize the spoken element of the prayers, but also of the response of the deities since the supplicant mentions the *qibītu*, "command," of the deity (Marduk 2:11; Ištar 1:22; Šamaš 1:8). The deity has the power to order a change of the speaker's circumstances through a spoken word.[742] This power of the gods parallels antithetically the reference in *Ludlul* I:23, where the root *q–b–ʾ* is also used:

23 *iqabbīma* | *gillata* | *ušrašši*
He speaks and imposes punishment

(*Ludlul* I:23)

This line shows that Marduk is able, through his speech, to punish, while the lines in the šuila-prayers show that the gods are able to bring mercy through speech.

In Šamaš 1, speech plays a minor role in comparison to other prayers. However, in this unit, the semantic domains of seeing and light are particularly emphasized. The

[742] On the importance of the divine word, see Mayer 1976: 297–306. This idea is attested in other šuila-prayers, as in, for example, Ištar 2:85: *qibîma* | *ina qibītīki* || *ilu* | *zenû* | *lislim*, "Command that through your command, the angry god may become at peace." This idea is also found in the Old Babylonian literary tradition as shown, for example, in the Epilogue of *Codex Hammurapi*, col. xlvii:84–88: *ina qibīt šamaš* / *dayyānim rabîm* / *ša šamê u erṣeti* / *mīšarī ina mātim* / *lištēpi*, "At the command of Šamaš, the great judge of heaven and earth, may my justice be made manifest in the land." For an edition of *Codex Hammurapi*, see Oelsner 2022: 129–392.

root *n–w–r* is used six times (Šamaš 1:1, 2 (x2), 4, 7, 13), all in the address. This semantic domain is also referred to in lines 13 and 14 of the address:

13 *ana lā nāṭili* | *tašakkan* | *nūra*
14 *tuppa* | *arma* || *lā petâ* | *tašassi*

You set light for the blind.
You read an unopened, enclosed tablet.

(Šamaš 1:13–14)

Šamaš's light and ability to see are emphasized through repetition and parallelism in the address of the prayer. These important attributes, which are in accord with the god's role as the sun and judge of the gods, distinguish him from the other deities.[743] In fact, the root *n–w–r* is used three times in Ištar 1 (Ištar 1:22, 30 (x2)) and is not present in Marduk 2. Therefore, the poets' emphasis on semantic domains also varied according to the deity to whom the prayer was addressed. The importance of sight and light in Šamaš 1 is shared with *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn:

13 (*ša*) *ina libbātīšu* | *uptattâ* | *qabrātu*
14 *īnuššu* | *ina karašê* || *ušatbi* | *maqtu*
15 *ikkelemmūma* | *inessû* || *lamassu* | *u šēdu*
16 *ippallasma* | *ana ša iskipūšu* || *ilšu* | *isaḫḫuršu*

Because of whose rage tombs are opened,
  At his glance, he raises the fallen from disaster.
He glares and the protective spirits depart,
  He gazes and his god returns to the one he had rejected.

(*Ludlul* I:13–16)

Marduk's sight leads to divine abandonment but also to mercy and divine return.[744] In Šamaš 1, the semantic domain only takes on positive connotations, showing again a contrast with *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn. This parallels the references to speech in the šuila-prayers and *Ludlul*.

[743] On these roles of Šamaš, see my comments on Šamaš 1:2 and 15–15a (§3.4.2.2.1).
[744] On the importance of divine sight in the Mesopotamian literary tradition, see my comments on *Ludlul* I:13–16 (§2.2.2.2.2.).

An important parallel use of repetition between the šuila-prayers and *Ludlul*'s closing hymn are the references to life through the roots *b–l–ṭ* and *n–p–š*. In *Ludlul* V:71–120, the poet uses each root five times (*b–l–ṭ*: *Ludlul* V:73, 75, 96, 99, 107; *n–p–š*: *Ludlul* V:74, 81, 96, 99, 100). In Marduk 2, the poet uses both roots three times (*b–l–ṭ*: Marduk 2:6, 11, 23; *n–p–š*: Marduk 2:5, 22, 23). In Ištar 1, the poet uses the root *b–l–ṭ* four times (Ištar 1:20, 31, 39, 40) but does not use *n–p–š*. In Šamaš 1, the root *b–l–ṭ* is only used once (Šamaš 1:3) and the root *n–p–š* is not employed. Therefore, the parallelism between *Ludlul* V:71–120 and the šuila Marduk 2 is stronger in the use of these roots. This semantic domain points to the importance of life for the supplicant in the prayers and in the history of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan as well as in the petitions of the final hymn.

The positivity shown in these two roots is also expressed through the repeated use of two other roots in the šuila-prayers: *d–m–q* (Marduk 2:15, 16; Ištar 1:14, 18, 32, 35; Šamaš 1:18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 32) and *š–l–m* (Marduk 2:5, 12, 19; Ištar 1:19, 20, 28, 31, 40; Šamaš 1:30, 31, 33). The use of morphologic figures such as polyptotons adds another emphasis to these roots. This is the case, for example, in Šamaš 1:18–20 with the root *d–m–q*:

18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*
19 *līširā* | *idātūya* || *lidmiqā* | *šunātūya*
20 *šunat* | *aṭṭulu* || *ana damqāti* | *šukna*

Decree my destiny, make my way good,
May my signs become favourable, may my dreams become good.
Turn the dream I saw into something good.

(Šamaš 1:18–20)

The repetition and other poetic devices that emphasize these roots highlight their importance for the rhetorical purposes of the prayers. The supplicant needs goodness and peace in his life, and thus these poetic devices clearly emphasize these and remind the deity to institute them for the supplicant.

Some roots that allude to the divine audience, such as *ʾ–l* and *b–ʾ–l*, are also repeated across the different rhetorical units. These repetitions situate the hymns and prayers within their religious discourse. The noun *libbu*, "heart," is also repeated in all rhetorical units, and its understanding as the seat of emotions is important in the two hymns and the three prayers.[745] In *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, Marduk's heart is described as merciful (*Ludlul* I:33) and Marduk can understand the hearts, i.e., the thoughts and emotions, of the gods (*Ludlul* I:29, 31), but no one can calm Marduk if his heart does not want it (*Ludlul* I:35). In *Ludlul*'s closing hymn, the heart is linked to the petitioner's emotions (*Ludlul* V:118) and the source of thought (*Ludlul* V:72), just as in the introductory hymn. In the šuila-prayers, *libbu* is used with the verb *ṭâbu*, "to be(come) sweet," (Marduk 2:27; Ištar 1:26, 44; Šamaš 1:37) or other positive elements, such as *amāt damiqti*, "a good word" (Marduk 2:15), and *ḫūdu*, "happiness" (Ištar 1:38). In *Ludlul* V:118, *libbu* is also employed with *ṭâbu*, another similarity between the šuila-prayers and *Ludlul*'s closing hymn.

An important pattern of repetition in the šuila-prayers is the repetition of certain elements in the address and the petitions.[746] This syntactic figure is employed as a reminder for the deity that he/she can help the supplicant in the address and then this help is requested in the petition stanza. In Ištar 1, this link between the epithets of the address and the petitions is clear in lines 17 and 18:

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*
18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki* | *dumqu*

A male protective spirit is before you, a female protective spirit is behind you,
Justice is on your right side, goodness is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:17–18)

[745] For *libbu*, "heart," as the seat of emotions, see Steinert 2021: 424; Jaques 2017: 200–201.
[746] Mayer 1976: 43.

Ištar is accompanied by *šēdu*, "a male protective spirit," *lamassu*, "a female protective spirit," *mīšaru*, "justice," and *dumqu*, "goodness." These elements are further emphasized through the spatial merisms and the chiasmi. In the address, the supplicant then petitions for these and pairs them with the sides also mentioned in the address, creating repetition:

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pānīki*
33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*
34 *ša imnukki* | *mešrâ* | *luṣṣib*
35 *dumqa* | *lukšuda* | *ša šumēlukki*

May I acquire the good male protective spirit which is before you,
The female protective spirit which goes behind you, may I acquire.
May I multiply the riches which are on your right side,
May I achieve the goodness which is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:32–35)

With the exception of *mīšaru*, "justice," which in the petition is replaced by *mešrû*, "riches," all the other elements are asked for by the supplicant using the same merisms used in the address.[747] Therefore, lines 17 and 18 act as a reminder of what the goddess has to offer, which is then petitioned in lines 32–35.

In Šamaš 1, this pattern of repetition is found in the final lines of the address (Šamaš 1:16–17) and the first petition (Šamaš 1:18):

16 *dayyān* | *ilī* || *bēl* | *igigī*
17 *šamaš* | *bēl* (|) *šīmat* (||) *māti* | *attāma*
18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*

Judge of the gods, lord of the Igigī,
Šamaš, you are the lord of the land's destiny.
Decree my destiny, make my way good.

(Šamaš 1:16–18)

The epithets of Šamaš as *dayyānu*, "judge" (Šamaš 1:16), and *bēl šīmat māti*, "lord of the land's destiny" (Šamaš 1:17), are important because he is reminded that he can rightly judge the supplicant's suffering and change the supplicant's destiny. In Šamaš 1:18, the

[747] On this difference between the address and the petition, see my comments in §3.3.2.2.2.

first line of the petition stanza, the supplicant asks for the god to decree his destiny as he is *bēl šīmat māti*, "the lord of the land's destiny" (Šamaš 1:17). This is further emphasized through the repetition of the root *š–ʾ–m* in Šamaš 1:18, a *figura etymologica*. These examples from Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1 thus show how repetition in the address and petitions acts as a reminder for the deity of his/her attributes which are then important for the petitions posed by the supplicant.

4.2.3.7. Anaphora, Anadiplosis, and Epanadiplosis

The anaphora, anadiplosis, and epanadiplosis, three forms of repetition, are found only in the šuila-prayers. These poetic devices are closely linked to grammatical parallelism because they are used in parallel lines and do not seem to indicate a usage specific to the šuila-prayers.[748] The epanadiplosis with the second-person possessive suffixes in Marduk 2:11–12 and Ištar 1:32–33 emphasizes the divine addressee and is a similarity between both prayers.

4.2.3.8. Hyperbaton and Anastrophe

Changes to the traditional Akkadian syntax are a common feature of poetry.[749] The corpus only includes one hyperbaton, the insertion of a word between two words that are closely linked. This instance is found in Marduk 2:8 and emphasizes the climax of the address where Marduk's totalizing power is praised. The anastrophe, a variation in word order, is

[748] See, for example, the anaphora with the preposition *ana* in the Standard Babylonian *Ištar's Descent*:4–7.
[749] See Rozzi 2024b: 266; Lenzi 2019a: 51; George 2003: 433–435; Groneberg 1987: 175–179; Hecker 1974: 120–138.

more common and is found in all rhetorical units. An important and patterned use of anastrophes is found in the šuila-prayers, where the fronting of imperative verbal forms occurs.[750] The imperatives "direct the speech (oral/written) to the 'second person', introducing him/her directly into the communication,"[751] and in the šuila-prayers, they play a crucial role in the petition stanza since they are direct addresses to the deity, thus emphasizing the requests. Their fronting further emphasizes the petition. This syntactic figure applied to imperatives is found in all three prayers. In Marduk 2, the fronting of the imperatives is employed in two lines that refer to speech, a key petition in the prayer:

14 *šuškin* | *kitti* | *ina pīya*
15 *šubši* | *amāt* (||) *damiqti* | *ina libbīya*

Establish truth in my mouth,
Create a good word in my heart

(Marduk 2:14–15)

In Ištar 1, the anastrophe with the imperatives is employed in the first two lines of the petition stanza:

23 *rēmīnnīma* | *bēltī* || *qibî* | *naḫāšī*
24 *kīniš* | *naplisīnnīma* || *leqê* | *unnīnīya*

Have mercy on me, oh my lady, and command my prosperity,
Look at me genuinely and take my prayer.

(Ištar 1:23–24)

The use of this syntactic figure at the start of the petition stanza further emphasizes it and acts as a way to secure divine attention as the requests begin.

Šamaš 1 has one example of a fronting of an imperative:

23 *šutlimamma* | *egirrê* | *dumqi*

Grant me a good ominous utterance.

(Šamaš 1:23)

[750] I am limiting this analysis to the fronting in the first colon, but fronting in the second colon is also found (Ištar 1:38; Šamaš 1:34).
[751] Piccin 2021a: 92.

This petition is not as emphatic as the ones found in the šuila-prayers Marduk 2 and Ištar 1, but still alludes to the important role of the sun-god in divination. Moreover, it might allude to the *attalû*, "eclipse," formula which refers to negative omens.[752] Therefore, this petition plays an important role in the prayer and the fronting of the imperative alongside the use of a three-foot line emphasize it.

The anastrophic use of imperatives underlines the requests to the deities, a key aspect of the rhetorical purpose of the prayers since they are meant to persuade the gods to act according to the speaker's petitions. For the supplicant, this poetic device emphasizes the urgency of his request. In *Ludlul* I:1–40, there are no imperative verbal forms, but in *Ludlul* V:71–120, there is one imperative verbal form: *dullā*, "praise" (*Ludlul* V:82). The use of this verbal form again draws this hymn closer to the šuila-prayers. However, this line follows traditional Akkadian syntax and thus there is no anastrophe.

4.2.4. Semantic Figures

4.2.4.1. Epithets

The epithets are a particularly defining feature of the addresses in the šuila-prayers, and their enumeration at the start of the prayers has an important rhetorical effect in attempting to secure divine attention. The speaker wishes that the god will listen to his petitions and change his circumstances. Therefore, the enumeration of epithets is a form of flattering the deity to secure his attention before moving to the petition. It is also part of the politeness which characterizes an audience between an individual and his

[752] On the *attalû*-formula, see my comments in §3.1.

superior.[753] The epithets are also important for the supplicant because they remind him of the deity's power and ability to help.[754] Therefore, the epithets highlight the god's absolute power and prestige, showing how important the deity is. In the šuila Marduk 2 this is visible, for example, in line 8:

8 *ušumgal* | *kališ* | *parakkī*
Monarch of the sanctuaries everywhere

(Marduk 2:8)

The poet uses an epithet for Marduk that emphasizes his cultic power and it is a way of flattering the god and showing politeness. This is further emphasized through the use of a three-foot line, the only one in the address, and a hyperbaton, an extremely rare syntactic figure.

In the šuila Ištar 1, the opening epithets also point to the goddess's absolute power:

1 *qarittu* | *ištar* || *kanūt* | *ilāti*
2 *dipār* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti* || *šarūr* (|) *kibrāti*
Valiant one, Ištar, the cherished of the goddesses,
The torch of heaven and earth, the brilliance of the world.

(Ištar 1:1–2)

In line 1, the poet emphasizes Ištar's role among the goddesses and in line 2, he uses a merism to highlight her power over all the world. This is combined with the use of the divine name as a vocative in line 1. Therefore, these epithets are an expression of flattery and politeness towards the goddess and reassurance for the supplicant.

In the šuila Šamaš 1, the poet also flatters the god through the epithets:

3 *šamaš* | *muštēšir* (|) *mīti* | *u balṭi* || *bār* (|) *kal* (|) *mimma šumšu*
4 *šamaš* | *nūr* (|) *šamê* | *u erṣeti* || *šarūr* (|) *mātāti*
Šamaš, who leads aright the dead and the living, who sees absolutely everything,

[753] On the question of the šuila-prayers' address and the politeness towards the high gods of the pantheon in an audience context, see Zernecke 2011a: 331–335; 2011b: 178–182; Lenzi 2010: 311–315.
[754] On the importance of the address and its epithets for the supplicant, see Mayer 1976: 44.

Šamaš, the light of heaven and earth, brilliance of the lands.

(Šamaš 1:3–4)

The sun-god is praised through his power over the living and the dead, over heaven and earth, two merisms that form the epithets. This demonstration of the god's power is reassuring for the supplicant and a polite way to address the god. The use of the divine name in vocative twice further emphasizes the importance of securing Šamaš's attention.

These three examples demonstrate how in all the šuila-prayers, the epithets were important means for flattering the gods and addressing them politely as they express the deities' importance and power. To further deepen these rhetorical effects, the poets also employed other poetic devices such as a hyperbaton in Marduk 2:8 or divine names in the vocative in Ištar 1:1 and Šamaš 1:3–4. The enumeration of epithets in the addresses of all three prayers also contributes to their effectiveness as it creates a sense of totality. These poetic devices are thus in accord with the rhetorical purposes of the prayers as they required the attention of the gods so that they can use their power to change the circumstances of the speaker. This was also important for calming the supplicant because he learned that the deity is able to change his situation and contributed to his confidence that the deity will do so.

Marduk 2 and Šamaš 1 share a pattern in the use of epithets in the last set of petitions alongside the use of the divine name in the vocative which might be in anacrusis:

22 *marūtuk* | *bēlu* | *rabû* || *napištī* | *qīša*
23 *balāṭ* | *napištīya* | *qibi*
24 *maḫarka* | *namriš* || *atalluka* | *lušbi*

Marduk, great lord, grant me my life,
Command the good health of my life,
So that before you, I may enjoy walking about splendidly.

(Marduk 2:22–24)

34 *šamaš* | *ašarēd* (|) *ilī* | *attā* || *rišâ* | *rēma*

Šamaš, you are the foremost of the gods, have mercy.

(Šamaš 1:34)

These lines are particularly emphatic because of their different poetic devices, and show again how the supplicant tries to flatter the gods appropriately and address them politely in order to secure their attention before moving to the petition.

Ludlul V:71–120 has no epithets attested and in *Ludlul* I:1–40, the epithets play a more limited role than in the šuila-prayers, as they are only employed in the first quatrain to summarize the core ideas of the hymn and in lines 29 and 31 to describe Marduk as wise. In *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, the poet places emphasis in Marduk's wrath, mercy, and inscrutability, themes that define the entirety of the composition. The epithets in the šuila-prayers tend to focus on attributes of the gods, the divine families, or the gods' absolute power, important elements to secure divine attention and remind the deities of their power over the supplicant.[755] While in *Ludlul*, the rhetorical purpose is to praise Marduk and teach the wider community, in the šuila-prayers, the purpose is to persuade the gods to change the speaker's current suffering. Therefore, the epithets in *Ludlul* I:1–40 are a goal in themselves, they are a form of praise to Marduk, whereas in the šuila-prayers, they are not a goal in themselves but are rather part of a wider rhetorical strategy. The use of this semantic figure thus does not contribute to the same rhetorical purposes in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn and in the Akkadian šuila-prayers.

4.2.4.2. Vocatives

The use of the divine name in the vocative is a key poetic technique in the rhetorical units under analysis. In the opening *Ludlul* hymn, the poet employs Marduk's name three times,

[755] On the different types of epithets used in Akkadian incantation-prayers, see Mayer 1976: 39–45.

a particularly striking repetition,[756] and all in so-called hymnic parallelism. Nevertheless, because of the use of third-person forms throughout the hymn, these mentions are not vocatives.

In the šuila-prayers, the use of the divine names in the vocative as a poetic and rhetorical device is common. In Marduk 2, the divine name is employed as a vocative three times (Marduk 2:3, 10, 22), a particularly striking repetition. Moreover, in lines 10 and 22, the last line of the address and the last petition respectively, the name might be in anacrusis, a further element of emphasis. In Ištar 1, the divine name is used three times (Ištar 1:1, 3, 5), an emphatic repetition as in Marduk 2. In line 3, the name might be in anacrusis. In line 7, the poet employs the epithet *mummu* as a vocative, and in line 23 the form *bēltī*, "my lady," also as a vocative.[757] The latter is particularly important because it is the first petition of the prayer. In Šamaš 1, the divine name is used four times (Šamaš 1:3, 4, 17, 34) and in all instances it might be in anacrusis. Line 17 is the last line of the address and line 34 is the last petition. The use of the divine names in the vocative in the šuila-prayers shows two patterns. First, the use of the divine name in the first few lines of the prayers (Marduk 2:3; Ištar 1:1, 3, 5; Šamaš 1:3, 4). Second, the use of vocatives at particularly emphatic moments of the prayer, such as the end of the address (Marduk 2:10; Šamaš 1:17), the beginning of the petitions (Ištar 1:23), and the end of the petitions (Marduk 2:22; Šamaš 1:34). These patterns reflect the prayers' rhetorical purposes. Because the supplicant aims to secure divine attention, using the divine name as a vocative at the start of the prayers is aligned with this goal. The second pattern shows the importance of certain parts of the prayer for the supplicant, and the use of vocatives is an attempt to draw the deity's attention to these parts, particularly the petitions. The

[756] On the emphatic use of three-time repetitions in Akkadian, see Piccin 2021a: 211.
[757] On *mummu* as an epithet for different deities, see Krebernik 1997: 415–416. On this epithet, see also Frahm 2013: 104–112.

emphasis placed through three-time repetitions is found in the šuila-prayers Marduk 2 and Ištar 1, as well as in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn. The vocatives also draw the attention of the supplicant to the deity he is addressing, the one who can change his situation.

In *Ludlul* V:71–120, the names of Marduk and Zarpānītu are employed twice each but not as vocatives (*Ludlul* V:73–76). Marduk's name is also employed as the accusative object in line 82. The only possible vocative is in line 120, as Marduk's name is reconstructed. If the god's name is indeed used as a vocative, this would bring *Ludlul*'s final hymn closer to the šuila-prayers. Another similarity between these units is the use of second-person forms. *Ludlul* I:1–40 has no second-person suffixes or verbal forms, whereas in the šuila-prayers these second-person forms are extremely common throughout all the three stanzas. In *Ludlul* V:71–120, the poet also avoids using second-person forms except in line 82 (*dullā*, "praise") and the final line where he uses *tanittaka*, "your praise." In fact, the final words are *tanittaka ṭābat*, "your praise is sweet." This is similar to the final words of all three šuila-prayers: *libbaka*[758] *liṭibbū*, "may they sweeten your heart," as the verbal forms stem from the same root.[759] Therefore, the šuila-prayers as a whole seem to share more poetic similarities with *Ludlul* V:71–120 than with *Ludlul* I:1–40.

4.2.4.3. Merisms

Merisms are used in all rhetorical units, as shown in the following table.

[758] In the šuila Ištar 1, the possessive suffix employed is *-ki* and not *-ka* because it is the second-person singular feminine suffix.
[759] The phrase in *Ludlul* V:120 corresponds to the Sumerian za_3-mi_2-zu du_{10}-ga-am_3, linking the hymn back to an older Mesopotamian tradition, as discussed in §2.3.2.2.6.

Categories	Merisms	Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40	Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120	Lines in Marduk 2	Lines in Ištar 1	Lines in Šamaš 1
Time	*mūšu*/*urru* “night/dawn”	2, 4				
Human or divine groups	*ilu*/*ištaru* “god/goddess”	28	115	17–18	15–16	
	igigī/*anunnakī* “Igigī/Anunnakī”				11–12	
	tenēšētu/*ilū igigī* “humankind/Igigī gods”					7–8
	mītu/*balṭu* “dead/living”					3
Space	*šamû*/*erṣetu* “heaven/earth”		88		2	4, 35
	erṣetu/*šamāmū* “earth/heaven”		77			
	šamû/*apsû* “heaven/Apsû”				42	
	imnu/*šumēlu* “right side, left side”			17–18	18, 34–35	

	imittu/*šumēlu* “right side, left side”					28–29
	pānu/*arkatu* “front, behind”				17	
	pānu/*arku* “front, behind”				32–33	
Human Conditions	*lupnu*/*išdiḫu* “poverty/profit”				13	
Nature	*ūmi meḫê*/*mānit šēreti* “storm of tempests/breeze of morning hours”	5–6				
	rīmu/*arḫu* “wild bull/cow”	19–20				

Table 21 - Merisms identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40, *Ludlul* V:71–120, Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1

In *Ludlul*’s introductory hymn, the merism between *mūšu* and *urru* in lines 2 and 4 emphasizes the range of Marduk’s power and emotions.[760] It contributes to the antithetic parallelism between the cola, as each respectively refers to wrath and mercy, and highlights the totalizing character of the god.[761] The nature merisms in lines 5–6 and 19–

[760] On merism as a poetic device to create a totalizing description, see Rozzi 2024b: 276; Watson 1984: 321.
[761] On the link between merism and antithesis, see Watson 1984: 323.

20 also have the same effect as each line refers respectively to Marduk's anger and compassion. Therefore, the merisms in these lines further contribute to the praise of the god and his power, aligning themselves with the rhetorical purposes of *Ludlul* I:1–40. In line 28, the merism with *ilu* and *ištaru* also contributes to Marduk's praise because it expresses his power over both the male and female personal deities; he can reconcile all the gods with a sufferer.

The merism in *Ludlul* V:77 along with the enumeration of the natural elements in lines 77–79 create a totalizing description of the natural world. This triplet parallels the triplet in lines 80–82 which focuses on the human world. Therefore, the two triplets emphasize how everyone everywhere ought to praise Marduk. The *erṣetu* and *šamāmū* merism contributes to this sense of totality, similarly to the merism in *Ludlul* I:28. The other merisms in *Ludlul*'s closing hymn are reconstructed (*Ludlul* V:88, 115) and thus their effects are more difficult to outline. Nevertheless, they probably also create a sense of totality but for a sufferer because they are both set in the petition stanzas of the hymn.

In the three šuila-prayers, it is possible to identify two patterns in the use and effects of merisms. The first pattern is the emphasis on the god's power when the poets use this semantic figure in the address. In Ištar 1, the merisms highlight the goddess's power over all realms (Ištar 1:2), over other gods (Ištar 1:11–12, 15–16), and over the people (Ištar 1:13). In the address of Šamaš 1, the poet also employs merisms which highlight the god's power over all realms (Šamaš 1:4), over other gods (Šamaš 1:8), and over the people (Šamaš 1:3, 7). The emphasis placed on the deity's power is a rhetorical strategy to secure divine attention but also to remind the deities that they have the power to change the supplicant's negative circumstances.[762] This is also important for the

[762] The merisms expressing divine superiority, particularly in reference to the other gods and heaven and earth, are part of the traditional Mesopotamian hymnic literature, as attested in both Sumerian and Old Babylonian Akkadian hymns (Metcalf 2015: 40–41, 76).

supplicant himself because it reminds him that his situation can be changed. The second pattern is the emphasis on the full protection of the supplicant through the totalizing nature of merisms. This is mostly done through the use of merisms referring to space. In Marduk 2, the speaker petitions for both his personal god and goddess to be at his right and left sides respectively (Marduk 2:17–18). The grammatical parallelism between the line further emphasizes the two merisms, which express the supplicant's wish to be fully protected by his personal gods. In Ištar 1, the speaker petitions for *šēdu*, "a male protective spirit" (Ištar 1:32), *lamassu*, "a female protective spirit" (Ištar 1:33), *mešrû*, "riches" (Ištar 1:34), and *dumqu*, "goodness" (Ištar 1:35), which go respectively before, behind, at the right side, and at the left side of the goddess. These also express the supplicant's wish to be fully surrounded by positive elements. The poet uses these same merisms in the address (Ištar 1:17–18), showing that Ištar is also fully accompanied by these elements and that she can thus provide the supplicant with them as he requests in the petition stanza.[763] In Šamaš 1:28–29, the supplicant asks for *kittu*, "truth," and *mīšaru*, "justice," to be at his right and left sides respectively, emphasizing again how the speaker wishes to be fully surrounded by positive elements.

This analysis shows that all the merisms have a totalizing effect but with different goals. In *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn, they highlight the antitheses and Marduk's all-encompassing emotions. In *Ludlul*'s closing hymn, they emphasize Marduk's praise by all realms and possibly the full protection of the petitioner. In the šuila-prayers, this semantic figure is employed to flatter the gods by praising their power and to guarantee that the supplicant is fully protected and surrounded by positive elements. Therefore, there are possibly some similarities between *Ludlul* V:71–120 and the šuila-prayers regarding the protection of the supplicant. It should be noted that merisms play a more

[763] The only difference is between *mešrû* (Ištar 1:34) and *mīšaru*, "justice" (Ištar 1:18), as already discussed in §3.3.2.2.2.

prevalent role in the šuila Ištar 1 than in the other rhetorical units. This could just be a choice by the poet to use this poetic device to emphasize the goddess's power and the supplicant's protection rather than other poetic devices. A common aspect of the use of merisms in all rhetorical units is the interplay between this semantic figure and gender-matched parallelism, as previously mentioned (§4.2.3.3).

4.2.4.4. Enumeration

Enumeration, like merism, creates a totalizing description.[764] No rhetorical unit has a traditional enumeration, that is, a sequence of terms grouped as a list. Nevertheless, they all have enumerations of different elements. In *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, the references to diseases, deities, and spirits in lines 25–28 show the absolute power of Marduk over other entities. In *Ludlul*'s closing hymn, the enumeration of natural elements in lines 77–79 also creates a totalizing description that shows the extension of the praise to the god. In the šuila-prayers, the enumeration of epithets is important as it creates an idea of totality regarding the deities' power. In these rhetorical units, enumeration also refers to the positive elements that ought to accompany the supplicant (Šamaš 1:25–31) or that accompany the gods (Ištar 1:19–20). These totalizing descriptions thus reflect the power of the gods or the supplicant's need for full protection. The enumeration of actions and requests in Ištar 1:25–31 is a totalizing way of showing that the speaker has always conducted himself appropriately and that he thus deserves to have his petitions fulfilled.

[764] On this function of enumeration, see Rozzi 2024b: 276; Piccin 2021a: 101; Wasserman 2021: 66.

4.2.4.5. Climax

The use of climax in *Ludlul* V:71–120 and the šuila-prayers brings emphasis to the deities addressed and their power, as it highlights the deities' power over everything (Marduk 2:7–9; Ištar 1:11–12) or how everyone ought to praise them (*Ludlul* V:82). It is also a similarity between *Ludlul*'s closing hymn and the šuila-prayers.

4.2.4.6. Similes and Metaphors

The semantic figures of simile and metaphor play a bigger role in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn than in any other rhetorical unit. In this hymn, these poetic devices add vividness to the antithesis between Marduk's wrath and compassion (*Ludlul* I:2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 19, 20, 37), emphasizing this motif.[765] In the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1, the only metaphors employed relate to the semantic field of light (Ištar 1:2, 22; Šamaš 1:2, 4). These metaphors point to divine benevolence and how, through their light, the gods can illuminate the truth and lead the supplicant.[766] This was an important reminder for both the human and divine audiences. In Ištar 1, the poet employs similes to compare the goddess's power with the power of other deities (Ištar 1:5, 6, 10), contributing to her praise. By emphasizing Ištar's own power, this also shows her and the supplicant that she can change the negative circumstances.

[765] On these functions of imagery, see Watson 1984: 262.
[766] On these metaphors and their meaning, see my comments regarding Ištar 1:2 in §3.3.2.2.1.

4.2.4.7. Synonymous and Antithetical Parallelism

Regarding semantic parallelism, i.e., synonymous and antithetical parallelism, *Ludlul*'s opening hymn should clearly be highlighted. This hymn is composed by a series of antitheses praising Marduk's wrath and mercy. This antithetical parallelism that traverses the entirety of *Ludlul* I:1–40 is not present in the šuila-prayers analysed. In fact, only in the address of Šamaš 1, does the poet employ a series of antitheses (Šamaš 1:10–14). However, these are not an opposition between the god's wrath and mercy, but rather an opposition between difficult or impossible situations and Šamaš's actions, such as giving a son to the impotent (Šamaš 1:11) or sight to the blind (Šamaš 1:13).[767]

4.2.4.8. Puns

Puns are found in *Ludlul* V:71 and Šamaš 1:3. In both cases, this semantic figures plays with the name of the deity addressed, showing another rhetorical strategy to emphasize the audience.

4.2.5. Morphologic Figures

Because of the scarce use of morphologic figures in the five rhetorical units, I could not identify a patterned or specific use, but they may add emphasis to lines that are important within the rhetorical unit or that already employ other poetic devices.[768] For example, the

[767] Antithetic parallelism as found in *Ludlul* I:1–40 is only attested in the šuila Marduk 4:1–2, the šuila Ištar 2:51–52, and the šuila Nabû 1:9–10. Nevertheless, these examples are shorter and do not define the entire prayer.
[768] On the emphatic function of morphologic figures, see Rozzi 2024b: 286.

figura etymologica in *Ludlul* V:119 emphasizes the praise to Marduk, and in Marduk 2:20–21 and Ištar 1:36–37, the polyptotons emphasize speech, a key motif of these prayers. Therefore, these poetic devices are important for emphasis. They may be more common in the šuila-prayers than in *Ludlul*'s hymns.

4.2.6. Poetic Tradition and Complexity

The preceding comparative analysis of the prosodic, phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures employed in the two *Ludlul* hymns and the three šuila-prayers highlighted the similarities and differences between uses. Moreover, it showed that the five rhetorical units are set within the poetic traditions of late second-millennium BC Mesopotamia. In fact, the two hymns and the three šuila-prayers are defined by parallelism, the key feature of Akkadian poetry and Semitic poetry more generally.[769] Grammatical and prosodic parallelism are found in all the rhetorical units, synonymous parallelism is found in both hymns and in the šuila-prayers Marduk 2 and Ištar 1, and antithetical parallelism is found in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and in the šuila Šamaš 1. My metrical analysis also indicates that all the rhetorical units tend to follow the traditional *Vierheber* Akkadian metre despite the existence of other metrical divisions. The poetic structuring into couplets, triplets, or quatrains is also part of the Akkadian poetic tradition and these divisions are found in the two hymns and the three prayers.

This analysis has also shown that each line is composed of different poetic devices employed in intricate and complex ways. This creates highly sophisticated rhetorical units which are a web of intertwined poetic features. This complexity is shown, for example,

[769] See Steinberger 2024: 11; Jiménez 2017: 74; Annus and Lenzi 2010: xxx; Streck 2007: 167; Watson 1984: 114.

in *Ludlul* I:33 and 34, which includes prosodic parallelism, grammatical parallelism, chiasmus, and antithetical parallelism:

33 *ana kī* ***kab****tat* | ***qāss****u* || ***lib****bašu* | *rē****mē****nī*
34 *ana kī* ***gaṣ****ṣu* | ***kak****kašu* || *ka****bat****tašu* | *muš****niš****šat*

As his hand is heavy, his heart is merciful,
As his weapon is cruel, his mood is sustaining.

(*Ludlul* I:33–34)

This couplet also includes phonologic figures: assonance, consonance, and homeoptoton. These different prosodic, phonologic, syntactic figures, and semantic figures contribute to the literariness of these lines.

This complexity is also found in *Ludlul* V:

71 *mannumma* | *iqbi* || *a****mār*** | *šam****šī****šu*
72 *ina libbi* (|) *manni* | *ibbaši* || *e****tēq*** (|) *sū****qī****šu*

Who indeed (would have) said he (would) see his sun? (lit. Who indeed said the seeing of his sun?)
Who (would have) thought he (would) pass along his street? (lit. In the heart of whom did the passing along of his street exist?)

(*Ludlul* V:71–72)

This couplet includes prosodic and grammatical parallelism, as well as consonance. Moreover, the genitive construction *amār šamšīšu*, literally "the seeing of his sun," in line 71 can be understood as a pun with ^{d}amar.utu. These different figures play with the two rhetorical questions.

In the šuila Marduk 2, this intricacy is found, for example, in the opening triplet:

1 *gašru* | *šūpû* || *etel* | *eridu*
2 *rubû* | *tizqāru* || *bukur* | *nudimmud*
3 *marūtuk* | *šalbābu* || *murīš* | *e-engurra*

Powerful, resplendent, pre-eminent of Eridu,
Exalted prince, son of Nudimmud,
Sagacious Marduk, who gives the E-engur cause to rejoice.

(Marduk 2:1–3)

The grammatical parallelism is accompanied by the enumeration of epithets, the divine name as a vocative in line 3, and the assonance of the vowel /u/ in all three lines.

Ištar 1 also includes examples of this poetic complexity:

17 *pānukki* | *šēdu* || *arkatuk* | *lamassu*
18 *imnuk* | *mīšaru* || *šumēlukki* | *dumqu*

A male protective spirit is before you, a female protective spirit is behind you,
Justice is on your right side, goodness is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:17–18)

In this couplet, the poet uses two merisms, alongside grammatical parallelism, gender-matched parallelism, and chiasmus. The interplay between these different devices, besides their rhetorical effects, lends poetic formality to the lines.

In Šamaš 1, the poet uses his inventiveness, for example, at the start of the petition stanza:

18 *šīmtī* | *šīm* || *alaktī* | *dummiq*
19 *līširā* | *idātūya* || *lidmiqā* | *šunātūya*

Decree my destiny, make my way pleasant,
May my signs become favourable, may my dreams become good.

(Šamaš 1:18–19)

In this couplet, the poet plays with the grammatical parallelism within each line and the chiasmus between the two lines. Moreover, he uses two morphologic figures: one *figura etymologica* (*šīmtī šīm*) and one verbal polyptoton (*dummiq*, *lidmiqā*). The verbal forms also create gender-matched parallelism.

These different examples of poetic complexity, found in all rhetorical units, show how the poets used a combination of different devices creating an intricate literary web that can be defined as poetry, a type of high register, a literary language of eloquence appropriate for the divine audiences.

4.3. Summary

In the preceding sections, I comparatively analysed the speakers, audiences, and purposes (§4.1) and use of poetic devices (§4.2) of *Ludlul*'s hymns and the šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1. My analysis showed that the two rhetorical units of *Ludlul* have a distinct rhetorical purpose from the šuila-prayers, as the former are doxological and the latter petitionary. Nevertheless, both *Ludlul* I:1–40 and the prayers share a suffering speaker, and all rhetorical units have a divine audience. This audience is addressed in all units with an appropriate and complex poetic language that is distinct from the day-to-day language employed in letters or administrative texts by its intricate use of different poetic devices (§4.2.6). Therefore, *Ludlul*'s hymns and the šuila-prayers are part of the late second-millennium BC Akkadian poetic tradition appropriate for a divine audience.

Despite their shared poetic language, this analysis also showed that the rhetorical units employ the poetic devices according to their own rhetorical purposes. For example, the epithets in the prayers are meant to secure divine attention and remind the deity of his or her ability to help the speaker, while in *Ludlul* I:1–40, the epithets are a goal in themselves, the unit is meant to praise Marduk (§4.2.4.1). Moreover, the epithets in the prayers focus on the deities' families and power, following the traditions of Mesopotamian hymnic literature, while in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, the epithets focus mostly on Marduk's superior wisdom, an aspect of his inscrutability praised in the hymn.

The šuila-prayers showed several striking similarities, such as the anastrophic use of imperatives to emphasize the petitions (§4.2.3.8), or the use of the divine name as a vocative at the start of the address and at key points of the prayer (§4.2.4.2). The similar uses of poetic devices in the prayers are not only an expression of their shared rhetorical context, but also of the genre's unity and cohesion. Despite the similarities, each prayer

still demonstrates its unique character created by the poet, as in the repetition associated with the semantic domain of light in Šamaš 1 (§4.2.3.6) or the prolific use of merisms in Ištar 1 (§4.2.4.3).

The šuila-prayers also show similarities with *Ludlul*'s opening hymn, such as the placement in anacrusis of the divine name or its three-time repetition. These similarities are, however, linked to the units' use of poetic language more generally and do not point to a specificity of these usages. The similarities between *Ludlul*'s closing hymn and the šuila-prayers are more striking. Both *Ludlul* V:71–120 and the šuila-prayers include petitions and these employ merisms and chiasmus to emphasize the full protection of the sufferer (§4.2.3.4). In *Ludlul*'s closing hymn and the šuila-prayers, there is also a striking repetition of the roots *n–p–š* and *b–l–ṭ*, emphasizing life as a motif in all rhetorical units (§4.2.3.6). The use of second-person forms in *Ludlul* V:71–120 and the šuila-prayers and their absence in *Ludlul* I:1–40 also point to the proximity between *Ludlul*'s closing hymn and the prayers (§4.2.4.2). It is, thus, plausible to suggest that *Ludlul* V:71–120 follows the pattern of Akkadian prayer literature including a hymn or address and petitions, just like the šuila-prayers.

5 Poetic and Rhetorical Analysis of Biblical Hebrew Comparators

In this chapter, I will focus on the Biblical Hebrew comparators, starting with Job 3 (§5.1) by first identifying its rhetorical context (§5.1.1), then offering a transcription and translation of the unit (§5.1.2), followed by a detailed poetic analysis (§5.1.3). I will then analyse Psalm 25 (§5.2), following a similar structure: identification of the rhetorical context (§5.2.1), transcription and translation of the unit (§5.2.2), and poetic analysis (§5.2.3). The summary (§5.3) will outline the poetic devices identified in both rhetorical units in five tables, each corresponding to one of the five categories of poetic figures.

5.1. Job 3

5.1.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

In terms of the speakers, audiences, and rhetorical goals of Job 3, Pohl has already outlined some of the elements in his study of the rhetorical strategies of Job 3.[770] The speaker in Job 3 is clear, as v. 2 states:

2 *wayyaʿan ʾiyyôḇ wayyōʾmar*
And Job answered and said

(Job 3:2)

Pohl, following Yu,[771] identified the friends and Yahweh, or more precisely Eloah, as the audience, who, despite not being directly addressed, is alluded to through the name Eloah used in vv. 4 and 23.[772] The immediate answer by Eliphaz, one of Job's friends, in chapter 4 and Yahweh's answers (Job 38–41) at the end of the dialogue between Job and his friends also indicate that Job's friends and the god are part of the audience who hear Job's speech.

Regarding the rhetorical purposes of the chapter, the first verse provides an important answer:

1 *ʾaḥărê-ḵēn pāṯaḥ ʾiyyôḇ ʾeṯ-pîhû wayqallēl ʾeṯ-yômô*
After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

(Job 3:1)

In this verse, the poet indicates that Job wishes to curse *yômô*, "his day," which is described as his day of birth in v. 3.[773] Therefore, the poet sets this curse as the main

[770] See Pohl 2018: 4–6.
[771] See Yu 2011: 200.
[772] See Pohl 2018: 5–6.
[773] Seow (2013: 338) and Pohl (2018: 4–5), following Seow's reasoning, argue that Job is cursing his fate rather than his day of birth. Nevertheless, v. 3 clearly indicates the subjects of the curse as the day of his birth and night of his conception.

rhetorical goal of the chapter. Pohl has also identified another key rhetorical goal of the curse and lament in Job 3: the deliverance from Job's suffering.[774] In fact, Job wishes to obtain an answer from the god and overcome the adversities he has been subjected to, as he later in the book states:

20 *ʾăšawwaʿ ʾēlêḵā wĕlōʾ ṯaʿănēnî*
ʿāmaḏtî watiṯbōnen bî

I cry out to you, but you do not answer me,
I stand, but you (just) observe me.

(Job 30:20)

Ultimately, these rhetorical goals are accomplished, as Yahweh answers Job (Job 38–41) and his suffering ends (Job 42).

5.1.2. Transcription and Translation

1 *ʾaḥărê-ḵēn pāṯaḥ ʾiyyôḇ ʾeṯ-pîhû wayĕqallēl ʾeṯ-yômô*

2 *wayyaʿan ʾiyyôḇ wayōʾmar*

3 *yōʾḇaḏ | yôm | ʾiwwāleḏ bô*

wĕhallaylā(h) | ʾāmar | horā(h) | ḡāḇer

4 *hayyôm | hahûʾ | yĕhî | ḥōšeḵ*

ʾal-yiḏrĕšēhû | ʾĕlōah | mimmāʿal

wĕʾal-tôpāʿ | ʿālâw | nĕhārā(h)

5 *yiḡʾāluhû | ḥōšeḵ | wĕṣalmāweṯ*

tiškān-|ʿālâw | ʿănānā(h)

yĕḇaʿăṯuhû | kamrîrê[775] *yôm*

[774] Pohl 2018: 5.
[775] The Masoretes point this term as *kimrîrê*, "like the bitternesses," but I transcribe it as *kamrîrê*, "eclipses." I will discuss this decision in §5.1.3.2.1

6 *hallaylā(h) | hāhûʾ | yiqqāḥēhû | ʾōp̄el*

ʾal-yēḥaḏ[776] *| bîmê šānā(h)*

bĕmispar yĕrāḥîm | ʾal-yāḇōʾ

7 *hinnēh | hallaylā(h) | hahûʾ | yĕhî | ḡalmûḏ*

ʾal-tāḇōʾ | rĕnānā(h) ḇô

8 *yiqqĕḇuhû | ʾorrê-yām*[777]

hāʿăṯîdîm | ʿōrēr liwyāṯān

9 *yeḥšĕḵû | kôḵĕḇê nišpô*

yĕqaw-|lĕʾôr | wāʾayin

wĕʾal-yirʾeh | bĕʿapʿappê-šāḥar

10 *kî loʾ sāḡar | ḏalṯê ḇiṭnî*

wayyastēr | ʿāmāl | mēʿênāy

11 *lāmmā(h) | loʾ mēreḥem | ʾāmûṯ*

mibeṭen | yāṣaʾṯî | wĕʾeḡwāʿ

12 *maḏḏûaʿ | qidděmûnî | ḇirkāyim*

ûmā(h)-|šādayim | kî ʾînāq

13 *kî-ʿattā(h) | šāḵaḇtî | wĕʾešqôṭ*

yāšantî | ʾāz | yānûḥa lî

14 *ʿim-mĕlāḵîm | wĕyōʿăṣê ʾāreṣ*

habōnîm | ḥărāḇôṯ | lāmô

15 *ʾô ʿim-śārîm | zāhāḇ | lāhem*

haměmalʾîm | bottêhem | kāsep̄

16 *ʾô ḵĕnēp̄el | ṭāmûn | loʾ ʾehye(h)*

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[776] In the BHS, this verb is pointed as *ʾal-yiḥaḏḏĕ*, "may it not rejoice," but I will use the pointing *ʾal-yēḥaḏ*, "may it not be counted." I will discuss this decision in §5.1.3.2.1.

[777] The Masoretes point this noun as *yôm*, "day," but I use the transcription *yām*, "Yamm." I will discuss this decision in §5.1.3.2.1.

kĕᶜollîm | loʾ-rāʾû | ʾôr

17 *šām | rĕšāᶜîm | ḥaḏlû | rōḡez*

wĕšām | yānûḥû | yĕḡîᶜê | ḵoaḥ

18 *yaḥaḏ | ʾăsîrîm | šaʾănānû*

loʾ šomᶜû | qôl nōḡēś

19 *qāṭōn | wĕḡādôl | šām | hûʾ*

wĕᶜeḇeḏ | ḥopšî | mēʾădōnâw

20 *lāmmā(h) | yittēn | lĕᶜāmēl | ʾôr*

wĕḥayyîm | lĕmārê nāpeš

21 *haměḥakkîm | lammāweṯ | wĕʾênennû*

wayyaḥpĕruhû | mimmaṭmônîm

22 *haśśĕmēḥîm | ʾĕlê-|ḡîl*

yāśîśû | kî yimṣĕʾû-|qāḇer

23 *lĕḡeḇer | ʾăšer-|darkô | nistārā(h)*

wayyāseḵ | ʾĕlôah | baᶜăḏô

24 *kî-lipnê | laḥmî | ʾanḥāṯî | ṯāḇōʾ*

wayyittĕḵû | ḵammayim | šaʾăḡōṯay

25 *kî paḥaḏ | pāḥaḏtî | wayyeʾĕṯāyēnî*

waʾăšer | yāḡōrtî | yāḇōʾ lî

26 *loʾ šālawtî | wĕloʾ šāqaṭṭî*

wĕloʾ-naḥtî | wayāḇōʾ | rōḡez

1 After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

2 And Job answered and said:

3 “May the day on which I was born perish,

And the night that said “A man was conceived.”

4 May that day be darkness,

May Eloah from above not be concerned about it,

And may light not shine on it.

5 May darkness and the deepest gloom claim it,

May a cloud lie down on it,

May eclipses of the day terrify it.

6 That night, may darkness seize it,

May it not be counted among the days of the year,

May it not enter among the number of months.

7 Yes, may that night be sterile,

May a shout of joy not enter in it.

8 May the cursers of Yamm condemn it,

The ones ready to rouse Leviathan.

9 May the stars of its twilight become dark,

May it wait for light and have none,

And may it not see the eyelids of dawn.

10 For he did not shut the doors of my womb,

Nor hide trouble from my eyes.

11 Why did I not die from the womb?

Come out from the belly and expire?

12 Why did knees receive me?

And why breasts that I might suckle?

13 For now I could lay down and be quiet,

I could be asleep and then there would be rest for me.

14 With kings and counselors of the earth,
Who built ruins for themselves.
15 Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver.
16 Or like a hidden stillborn would I not be,
Like infants who did not see light.
17 There the wicked cease trouble,
And there the weary of power rest.
18 Captives are together at ease,
They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.
19 Small and great, one is there,
And the slave is free from his master.
20 Why did He give light to the sufferer?
And life to those bitter of spirit?
21 To those who wait for death but it does not come,
And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,
22 Those who rejoice upon a heap,
Exult when they find a grave,
23 To a man whose way is hidden,
And whom Eloah shuts in?
24 For before my food comes my groaning,
And my roarings pour out like water.
25 For I dreaded exceedingly and it has befallen on me,
And what I feared has come to me.
26 I am not at ease nor tranquil,

I have no rest and turmoil has come.

5.1.3. Poetic Analysis

5.1.3.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Chapter 3 of Job marks the beginning of the poetic dialogue of the book of Job. The protagonist starts speaking in v. 3 and here poetry begins, which demonstrates a link between orality, performance, and poetry.[778] This chapter is traditionally divided into two general parts, the curse in vv. 3–10 and the lament in vv. 11–26; and three stanzas, vv. 3–10, vv. 11–19, and vv. 20–26.[779] Seow divides it into three parts: vv. 3–10, vv. 11–24, and vv. 25–26 which are a "poetic coda."[780] Fokkelman divides the unit into the following parts: vv. 3–9, vv. 10–19, and vv. 20–26.[781] Hartley,[782] based on Fishbane's study of Job's curse,[783] divides the chapter into two parts: vv. 3–13, the curse, and vv. 14–26, the lament. I follow the division into the following three stanzas: vv. 3–10, vv. 11–19, and vv. 20–26. The first stanza corresponds to the curse and the second and third stanzas correspond to the lament, but while vv. 11–19 focus on Sheol and death, vv. 20–26 focus on Job and suffering. Moreover, rhetorical questions play a structuring role in Biblical Hebrew poetry by opening and closing stanzas,[784] and both vv. 11–12 and 20 have rhetorical questions that can have this structuring effect.

[778] Biblical poetry is always, either explicitly or implicitly, speech, i.e., performance (Vayntrub 2019: 6–7).
[779] See, for example, Barbiero 2015: 43; Clines 1989: 75; Freedman 1968: 503. Crenshaw (2015: 85) and Habel (1985: 47) divide the poem into two parts, vv. 3–10 and vv. 11–26.
[780] Seow 2013: 315.
[781] Fokkelman 1998: 153.
[782] Hartley 1988: 88.
[783] Fishbane 1971: 151–167.
[784] See Watson 1984: 341–342.

Stanza	Verses in Job 3	Chapter section
Curse	3–10	§5.1.3.2.1
Lament with focus on Sheol and death	11–19	§5.1.3.2.2
Lament with focus on Job and suffering	20–26	§5.1.3.2.3

Table 22 - Stanzaic division of Job 3:3–26

Regarding the strophic division of the rhetorical unit, couplets are the most common type of strophe. The only exceptions are vv. 4–6 and 9, as each contains a triplet. The curse is divided into day (vv. 4–5) and night (vv. 6–9), and the use of the triplets is parallel in both parts as each has two triplets.[785] This follows what Clines names "the rule of three," that is, the use of "threeness" in the structuring of Job.[786] However, like in other parts of the book,[787] the poet here also breaks this rule by adding two couplets to the curse upon the night, creating an aural impact for the audience of the unit. These couplets are framed by the triplets and extend the curse upon the night (vv. 6–9) in comparison to the curse upon the day (vv. 4–5). The triplets in vv. 6 and 9 refer to darkness, and envelope the two couplets (vv. 7–8) that refer to the living world, thus creating a chiastic structure: darkness/light (v. 6); living world (vv. 7–8); darkness/light (v. 9). This structure brings emphasis to darkness, the key motif of chapter 3,[788] and reflects the idea that all the living world should be enveloped by darkness, so that light does not generate life.[789] This structure contributes to the effectiveness of the words recited by Job as he wishes that

[785] See Freedman 1968: 503–504.
[786] Clines 2023: 7–8. This parallels the emphasis placed by three-time repetition in Akkadian poetry (see Piccin 2021a: 211).
[787] See, for example, the extension of the number of friends from three to four through the unexpected inclusion of Elihu in chapter 32 (Clines 2023: 7–8).
[788] Perdue 1994: 145–146.
[789] In Genesis, darkness and light are the basis for all the creation (Beyer 2011: 98).

darkness takes both his day of birth and his night of conception, so he wishes that darkness takes over all the creation. The placement of the two couplets between vv. 6 and 9 can thus be explained by this wish for darkness to overshadow everything.

5.1.3.2. Micro-Level Analysis

5.1.3.2.1. Job 3:3–10

In v. 3, Job begins the curse, wishing that the day of his birth and the night of his conception perished:

3 *yōʾḇaḏ | yôm | ʾiwwāleḏ bô*
wĕhallaylā(h) | ʾāmar | horā(h) | gāḇer
"May the day on which I was born perish,
And the night that said "A man was conceived."

(Job 3:3)

The merism of *yôm*, "day," and *laylāh*, "night," defines the first stanza of the rhetorical unit, and also marks a general pattern of movement in the poem. In this verse, the movement is a regression, as Job first mentions his birth in the first line and then his conception in the second line.[790] This regression reflects the regression to the chaos before creation that Job wishes in the following verses. Verse 3 thus acts as an introduction to the movement of regression that structures the curse. The semantic figure of merism also has a totalizing effect, leading Job's curse to encompass his entire creation. The two lines also have grammatical parallelism as the word order in both lines is main verb (*yōʾḇaḏ*), omitted in the second line, followed by the subject (*yôm* and *wĕhallaylā(h)*), and a relative clause (*ʾiwāleḏ bô* and *ʾāmar horā(h) gāḇer*). This parallelism contributes to the emphasis

[790] Barbiero 2015: 46; Clines 1989: 82. Habel (1985: 105) states that reversal is a key theme in this chapter.

on the opening merism. The alliteration in the first two terms of the curse, through the repetition of the sound /yo/, contributes to the eloquence and aural effect of the curse.

The first term in the curse, following the traditional word order, is the jussive verbal form *yōʾbaḏ*, "may perish." The last term in v. 3 is *geḇer*, "man," a term used for adult strong men.[791] The emphasis placed on these two terms, which occupy key positions in this couplet, creates a link between them. The *geḇer* is Job, as this term repeated in v. 23 suggests, and Job's ultimate wish is that he himself had perished (vv. 11–12). Therefore, v. 3 acts not only as an introduction to the curse of vv. 3–10, but also as an introduction to chapter 3, outlining its main motifs.

In v. 4, Job curses his day:

4 *hayyôm | hahûʾ | yĕhî | ḥōšeḵ*
ʾal-yiḏrĕšēhû | ʾĕlōah | mimmāʿal
wĕʾal-tôpaʿ | ʿālâw | nĕhārā(h)

May that day be darkness,
May Eloah from above not be concerned about it,
And may light not shine on it.

(Job 3:4)

The anastrophic fronting of *hayyôm hahûʾ*, "that day," emphasizes the first element of the merism in v. 3: Job's day of birth. The first line of this verse has been compared to Genesis 1:3, because in the creation story Yahweh says *yĕhî ʾôr*, "may there be light," and in Job 3:4, Job says *yĕhî ḥōšeḵ*, "may there be darkness," thus wishing for the undoing of Yahweh's creation.[792] This wish for "decreation," a term employed by Grant,[793] parallels the movement of regression first expressed in v. 3, the introduction to the curse. Job first mentions his birth and then his conception, moving backwards in time. In v. 4 and in the

[791] See BDB s.v. *geḇer*.
[792] The intertextual links between Job 3 and Gen 1:1–2:4a have been explored, for example, by Häner 2020: 266–284; Beyer 2011: 95–98; Pettys 2002: 94–100; Tönsing 1996: 439–440; Perdue 1986: 307–308; Habel 1985: 104; Fishbane 1971: 153–155. Clines (1989: 81) on the contrary does not see this intertextual reference as a curse on all of creation but just on Job's own day of birth.
[793] Grant 2019: 59–76.

following verses, Job moves backwards in time by wishing for "decreation," for the chaotic moment before Yahweh said *yĕhî ʾôr* (Gen 1:3). Job wishes that the *ḥōšeḵ*, "darkness," that covered the *pĕnê ṯĕhôm*, "the face of the deep" (Gen 1:2), before Yahweh's creative words, returns. This term for darkness is used in the first lines of the two triplets (vv. 4 and 5) that correspond to the curse on the day, marking a link between the verses and a movement to the uncreated and chaotic world.

In the third line of v. 4, the poet uses an unusual verb: *yāpaʿ*, "to shine forth." Outside of Job, this verb is used to refer to Yahweh,[794] and in this verse the poet places it in parallel with a line that directly refers to Yahweh through his name Eloah (v. 4b) and with a line that alludes to Yahweh's creative actions (v. 4a). These direct and indirect references to Yahweh play with the "decreation" Job wishes. The god that through his actions created the world must now not be concerned about his creation and his light must not shine forth; he must not be present. The grammatical parallelism between the second and third lines of v. 4 reinforces this idea that *yāpaʿ* refers to Yahweh. The word order in each line is negative precative (*ʾal-yiḏrĕšēhû* and *wĕʾal-tôpāʿ*), followed by a direct object as a pronominal suffix in v. 4b (*hû*) and an indirect object in v. 4c (*ʿālâw*), and the subject in both lines (*ʾĕlōah mimmāʿal* and *nĕhārā(h)*). Job rejects Yahweh in the face of his suffering,[795] and the light that shines forth and that outside of Job is a symbol of Yahweh's presence must now be absent.[796] This rejection of Yahweh's light is also in antithesis with the blessings where Yahweh causes his face to shine on the people, as in the Priestly Blessing of Num 6:23–27. This way, Job rejects Yahweh's blessing, which he does not possess at the moment as his intense suffering suggests, and his curse stands as an

[794] See Deut 33:2; Pss 50:2; 80:1; 94:1. Seow (2013: 341) confirms that this verb is linked to Yahweh's presence.
[795] Beyer (2011: 101–102), for example, analyses the references to Yahweh in the third person not as a form of politeness but as a form of distance, and Driver and Gray (1921: 38) understand the indirect reference to Yahweh in v. 20 in the same way.
[796] For the use of the verb *yāpaʿ* as an expression of divine presence, see Deut 33:2; Pss 50:2; 80:1; 94:1.

opposite to a blessing. This contrast with divine blessings is a clear break with traditional religious views,[797] and thus would come as a disruption for both a human and divine audience.

In v. 5, the references to darkness expand as the poet uses more synonyms for it:

5 *yiḡʾāluhû | ḥōšeḵ | wĕṣalmāweṯ*
tiškān-|ʿālâw | ʿănānā(h)
yĕḇaʿăṯuhû | kamrîrê yôm

May darkness and the deepest gloom claim it,
May a cloud lie down on it,
May eclipses of the day terrify it.

(Job 3:5)

Besides *ḥōšeḵ*, the poet uses the term *ṣalmāweṯ*, whose meaning is debated. Seow understands the noun as having an allusion both to darkness and death,[798] and Michel understands it as a compound noun, "Shadow of Death," an epithet of the underworld and the translation adopted by the Septuagint.[799] I understand it as cognate with the Akkadian *ṣalāmu*, "to be(come) dark" and *ṣalmu*, "dark,"[800] taking it as an intensified darkness.[801] Another debated synonym for darkness in v. 5 is *kamrîrê yôm*, pointed as *kimrîrê yôm* by the Masoretes. The Masoretic understanding of this expression and Seow's view is that *kimrîrê* is a noun from the root *m–r–r* with a *kĕ-* preposition, "like the bitternesses of the day."[802] Gordis understands the expression in view of Exod 32:24, taking the *kĕ-* preposition as asseverative and translating *kimrîrê* as "demons."[803] I, like Driver and

[797] See, for example, how the Priestly Blessing of Num 6:23–27 is preserved in the Ketef Hinnom Amulets, which were found in a burial chamber (Barkay and others 2004: 43), emphasizing the importance of Yahweh's blessing for both living and dead.
[798] Seow 2013: 342–343.
[799] Michel 1984: 5–20. Habel (1985: 100) also understands this darkness with a link to death and Sheol, the biblical underworld.
[800] Dhorme 1967: 26–27.
[801] Driver and Gray (1921: 32) state that it is the most intense term in Biblical Hebrew for darkness. In other passages, like Job 24:17 and Amos 5:8, *ṣalmāweṯ* is linked to *bōqer*, "morning," highlighting the term's relation to darkness.
[802] Seow 2013: 346.
[803] Gordis 1978: 33. Habel (1985: 100) follows a similar understanding. Noegel (2007: 556–562), analysing Mesopotamian texts that refer to demons as parts of the day, sees the form *kimrîrê yôm* as "day-demons."

Gray,[804] Pope,[805] Dhorme,[806] Rowley,[807] and Greenstein,[808] repoint the text to *kamrîrê* relating the term to the Syriac root *k–m–r*, "to be black," and possibly translating it as "eclipses" or "darknesses." Verses 5b and 5c have gender-matched parallelism because the parallel subjects *ʿănānā(h)*, "cloud," and *kamrîrê yôm*, "eclipses of the day," are feminine and masculine respectively. The use of this syntactic figure can have a totalizing effect since gender-matched parallelism is used to express merisms.[809] Therefore, Job wishes for darkness to fully envelop his day of birth. The use of synonymous parallelism in this verse also emphasizes the curse and Job's wish.[810]

My understanding of both *ṣalmāweṯ* and *kamrîrê yôm* is not only indebted to the comparison with cognate languages, but also to my view on the curse in Job 3:3–10 and its rhetorical use of poetics. Curses in biblical texts were effective through their words, the curse acted like a spell or an incantation.[811] In fact, the language of incantations is meant to be effective as the similes in the Akkadian *Maqlû* series and biblical texts analysed by Hillers suggest.[812] Therefore, language and form played a key role in the performance of these curses, as these were the means through which the curse was enacted. In v. 4, the poet refers to darkness as the chaotic element to which Job's day of birth and creation as a whole should return. The parallelism of the second and third lines of v. 4 continues in v. 5, as the structure verb (*yiḡʾāluhû*, *tiškān*, and *yĕḇaʿăṯuhû*), followed by object (*hû*, *ʿālâw*, and *hû*) and subject (*ḥōšeḵ wĕṣalmāweṯ*, *ʿănānā(h)*, and *kamrîrê yôm*) is present in all three lines. This grammatical parallelism binds the different lines,

[804] Driver and Gray 1921: 19.
[805] Pope 1965: 29.
[806] Dhorme 1967: 27.
[807] Rowley 1980: 40.
[808] Greenstein 2019: 13.
[809] See Watson 1984: 125.
[810] On this effect of semantic parallelism, see Steinberger 2024: 265.
[811] Blank 1951: 78, 95. Hartley (1988: 101–102) also makes a connection between the creation imagery of Job's curse and incantations or spells.
[812] Hillers 1983: 181–185.

creating parallel references to darkness. Moreover, this parallelism extends to the use of the pronominal suffix *hû* (vv. 4b, 5a, 5c) as a direct object and *ʿālâw* (vv. 4c, 5b) as an indirect object, creating chiasmus:

4 *hayyôm | hahû᾽ | yĕhî | ḥōšeḵ*
᾽al-yiḏrĕšēhû | ᾽ĕlōah | mimmāʿal
wĕ᾽al-tôpāʿ | ʿālâw | nĕhārā(h)
5 *yiḡ᾽āluhû | ḥōšeḵ | wĕṣalmāweṯ*
tiškān-|ʿālâw | ʿănānā(h)
yĕbaʿăṯuhû | kamrîrê yôm

(Job 3:4–5)

The rhyming ending in /ah/ of vv. 4c and 5b contributes to this parallelism.

The use of rarer terms for darkness, parallel to each other in vv. 4–5, can be seen as a way of adding a foreign and ancient feel to Job's speeches.[813] However, it can also be seen as a poetic and rhetorical strategy within the curse. For example, in first-millennium Mesopotamian incantations, composers sometimes used Mumbo-Jumbo Sumerian to add magicality and effectiveness.[814] In vv. 4 and 5, the poet first uses the more common term *ḥōšeḵ* in the first lines, defining what he intends to enact, and then uses rarer terms, thus adding this magical element to the curse and also possibly showing technical language. Thus the common term acts as a gloss on the rarer terms, so the hearer understands what is meant even if unfamiliar with the vocabulary. Therefore, based on the different forms of parallelism, I interpret the other terms in relation to *ḥōšeḵ* and in this view of the curse as a spell-like composition with specific terminology.

In the second line of v. 5, the poet uses alliteration with the sound /ʿa/. This and other phonologic figures employed in the curse contribute to its performativity and magicality, as sounds and language are interconnected. Curses were recited orally as the

[813] Regarding the language of Job and its use as a poetic feature to give Job and his friends a foreign feel, see Seow 2013: 24–26; Greenstein 2013: 331–346; 2003: 651–666.
[814] Veldhuis 1999: 47–48. On mumbo-jumbo or abracadabra incantations in ancient Mesopotamia, see also Baragli 2019: 293–321.

use of the oral pronouncement *ʾāmēn* in the curse of Deut 27:15-26 suggests.[815] Thus prosodic and phonologic figures played a role in this oral performance and its rhetorical impact.[816] Curses were also effective through writing,[817] and these different poetic devices could have also played a role in this efficacy of the written word.

Moreover, as argued by Greenstein,[818] the use of the verbal form *yōʾḇaḏ*, "may perish," is common in imprecations and incantations in the Hebrew Bible, like in Jdg 5:31 and Jer 10:11; as well as outside of the Hebrew Bible, like in the Aramaic Neirab inscriptions and the Aramaic magical bowls. This emphasizes the link between Job's curse and other incantations, which were part of a specialist lore, suggesting that both the vocabulary and the spell-like rhythm of parallelism were part of the technical language of curses and incantations.

In v. 6, Job continues his curse by shifting to the night:

6 *hallaylā(h) | hāhûʾ | yiqqāḥēhû | ʾōp̄el*
ʾal-yēḥaḏ | bîmê šānā(h)
bĕmispar yĕrāḥîm | ʾal-yāḇōʾ

That night, may darkness seize it,
May it not be counted among the days of the year,
May it not enter among the number of months.

(Job 3:6)

The anastrophic fronting of *hallaylā(h) hāhûʾ*, "that night," parallels the fronting of *hayyôm hahûʾ*, "that day," in v. 4, emphasizing the second element of Job's curse: the night of his conception. The grammatical parallelism between vv. 4a and 6a extends to the rest of the line since after the fronted element, the poet uses a verbal form (*yĕhî* and

[815] Quick 2017: 169.
[816] See, for example, how prosodic and phonologic figures were important in first-millennium BC Akkadian incantations (Schwemer 2014: 279, 281).
[817] Quick 2017: 170–172.
[818] Greenstein 2007: 86–87.

yiqqāḥēhû) and a noun (*ḥōšeḵ* and *ʾōp̄el*). There is also metrical parallelism, since both lines have four poetic feet, emphasizing the balance between both parts of the curse.

In the second line of v. 6, the verbal form is pointed as *ʾal-yiḥaḏḏĕ*, "may it not rejoice," from the verb *ḥāḏāh*, "to rejoice." However, the critical apparatus in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia suggests repointing to *ʾal-yēḥaḏ*, "may it not be counted," from the verb *yāḥaḏ*, "to be counted." This suggestion is followed by Driver and Gray,[819] and Dhorme,[820] who point out the parallel use of the verbs *yāḥaḏ* and *bôʾ*, "to enter," in Gen 49:6, just like in the second and third lines of v. 6. Gordis suggests that both meanings were intended,[821] and Rendsburg goes further by suggesting that both in Job 3 and Genesis 49 there is double polysemy, as the verbal form *yāḇōʾ*, can be repointed as *yōḇēʾ*, "may it desire," from the verb *ʾāḇāh*, "to desire."[822] I take the first verbal form as deriving from *yāḥaḏ* and, thus, understand these two lines as having chiasmus:[823]

6 *hallaylā(h) | hāhûʾ | yiqqāḥēhû | ʾōp̄el*
ʾal-yēhad | bîmê šānā(h)
bĕmispar yĕrāḥîm | ʾal-yāḇōʾ

(Job 3:6)

Chiasmus can emphasize a negation,[824] and in this case it highlights Job's wish for "decreation," the core of his curse. This chiasmus also plays with the synonymous parallelism in these lines that, like in v. 5, emphasizes Job's wish.

In v. 7, the poet emphasizes the second reference to the night with the four-beat rhythm and the particle *hinnēh*:

7 *hinnēh | hallaylā(h) | hahûʾ | yĕhî | ḡalmûḏ*
ʾal-tāḇōʾ | rĕnānā(h) ḇô
Yes, may that night be sterile,

[819] Driver and Gray 1921: 19.
[820] Dhorme 1967: 28.
[821] Gordis 1978: 34.
[822] Rendsburg 1982: 51.
[823] This syntactic figure had already been highlighted by Freedman (1968: 504).
[824] For this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148.

May a shout of joy not enter in it.

(Job 3:7)

The poet fronts again *hallaylā(h) hahû*ʾ, "that night," in v. 7a and follows the syntax of vv. 4a and 6a, by placing a verb (*yĕhî*) and a noun (*gālmûḏ*). Verse 7 alludes to sexual imagery through the term *galmûḏ*, "sterile," in the first line. In the second line, the verb *bôʾ*, "to enter," might refer to sexual intercourse,[825] and thus *rĕnānāh*, "a shout of joy," can also allude to moaning.[826] The sterility implied by the sexual imagery of this verse contrasts with life and creation in Genesis,[827] particularly with god's first commandment in Gen 1:28 "to be fruitful and multiply." Therefore, this verse continues the "decreation" wish initiated in v. 3. This verse also contains synonymous parallelism emphasizing Job's wish for "decreation."

In v. 8, Job mentions Yamm and Leviathan, two chaotic sea creatures:[828]

8 *yiqqĕḇuhû* | *ʾorrê-yām*
hāʿăṯîdîm | *ʿōrēr liwyāṯān*

May the cursers of Yamm condemn it,
The ones ready to rouse Leviathan.

(Job 3:8)

Job wishes that the sinister and dangerous forces of enchanters enable these creatures to arise so that they might destroy creation. This verse is thus in opposition to Yahweh's creation of and therefore control over sea monsters in Gen 1:21,[829] but also to Yahweh's control over the waters in Gen 1:6–10, as these creatures represent the chaotic primordial waters. Therefore, the couplets in vv. 7 and 8 continue the "decreation" process and allude

[825] See, for example, its use in Gen 6:4; 16:2; Ruth 4:13; Ezek 23:44.
[826] Perdue (1994: 146; 1986: 309) had already made this link between *rĕnānāh* and sexual activity.
[827] Häner 2020: 272; Beyer 2011: 97.
[828] The reference to Yamm in the first line of v. 8 is debated because the Masoretic text presents the term *yôm*, "day." However, the parallelism between Yamm and Leviathan, and Wikander's (2010: 265–271) study about enchanters of sea creatures in the ancient Near East, reinforce my preference for repointing as *yām*, "Yamm." Pope (1965: 30) and Gordis (1978: 34–35) also indicate a preference for Yamm. Habel (1985: 101) sees it as a wordplay or pun between *yôm*, "day," and Yamm.
[829] Häner 2020: 272; Hartley 1988: 102.

to other elements of the creation story in Genesis besides the opposition between light and darkness. This verse can also be an allusion to another creation tradition where Yahweh had to defeat sea monsters before creating the world, as suggested by Ps 174; Isa 27; 51; and Job 26.[830] The allusion to two different creation traditions in the curse can be seen as way of guaranteeing that creation was truly undone. The consonance and assonance between *ʾōrrê*, "cursers," and *ʿōrēr* "to stir up," in v. 8 contributes to the rhythmical and magical language of the curse.

Verse 9 continues the curse upon the night with more references to darkness:

9 *yeḥšĕḵû | kôḵĕḇê nišpô*
yĕqaw-|lĕʾôr | wāʾayin
wĕʾal-yirʾeh | bĕʿapʿappê-šāḥar

May the stars of its twilight become dark,
May it wait for light and have none,
And may it not see the eyelids of dawn.

(Job 3:9)

All three lines start with a jussive verbal form (*yeḥšĕḵû*, *yĕqaw*, and *wĕʾal-yirʾeh*) and the noun *ʾôr*, "light," has sound-matching with *ʾōrrê* and *ʿōrēr* of the previous verse. The references to darkness link this verse to vv. 4 and 5, furthering the relation between the two parts of the curse and the two elements of the merism: day and night. The synonymous parallelism in vv. 9b and 9c again emphasizes Job's curse.

In vv. 3a, 3b, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, 5c, 6b, 7b, 8a, 9a, 9b, and 9c, the first term is the jussive verbal form. As previously mentioned, words in curses enact their effectiveness. Therefore, by placing the verbal actions at the start of the clauses, besides following the traditional word order, the poet is emphasizing these actions which are the key elements of Job's curse. Repetition and the word order thus reflect the wish for effectiveness of these actions. The repetitive use of jussives creates a form of enumeration of Job's wishes,

[830] Perdue 1986: 301–302, 311–312.

which leads to a sense of completion and totality.[831] Job wishes for complete "decreation."

It is also significant to note that the first letters of the first lines of vv. 3–5 spell the consonantal text for the verbal form *yĕhî*, "may there be."[832] This quasi-acrostic structure thus reflects the wish of Job on Yahweh's creative words in Genesis, acting in a spell-like manner, as already seen for the use of other poetic devices. In fact, as mentioned above, the curse was effective through the oral performance and also the written word. Therefore, the use of an acrostic that alludes to the jussive verbal forms of the curse contributes to the efficacy of the oral recitation and also of the written word of the curse. It can also be a sign left by the author that, in the end, Job will survive, he will live and prosper, as stated in the epilogue of Job,[833] because of the meaning of the verb *hāyāh* as "to be." However, the use of poetics to create a spell-like curse suggests that my first interpretation is more likely.

Verse 10 acts as a conclusion to the curse, paralleling v. 3 which is the introduction, as both are couplets and have a first-person reference:[834]

10 *kî loʾ sāḡar | ḏalṯê ḇiṭnî*
wayyastēr | ʿāmāl | mēʿênāy
For he did not shut the doors of my womb,
Nor hide trouble from my eyes.

(Job 3:10)

The use of the particle *kî* indicates the start of another part within the curse, i.e., the conclusion. Usually, the night is seen as the subject of this verse.[835] However, Fokkelman

[831] On this effect of enumeration, see Rozzi 2024b: 276; Piccin 2021a: 101; Wasserman 2021: 66.
[832] Barbiero (2015: 45–46) mentioned the use of these root letters at the start of verses in the curse as a way of structuring the strophes. Skehan (1961: 125–126) has also pointed out that acrostic structures are key to Job as each chapter between Job 4 and 14 has twenty-two or twenty-three poetic lines. This supports my suggestion that Job 3 starts with an acrostic for the verbal form *yĕhî*.
[833] Job 42:10–17.
[834] Barbiero 2015: 44; Seow 2013: 326; Freedman 1968: 503.
[835] See, for example, Clines 1989: 88; Habel 1985: 109; Dhorme 1967: 31; Driver and Gray 1921: 35.

takes Yahweh as the subject because he links this verse to the following stanza and understands Yahweh as the one who can open or close a woman's womb.[836] I agree that this is an indirect reference to the deity as Job avoids mentioning Yahweh directly at the start of this chapter, even if the accusation is indeed against Yahweh as he let Job be born and did not protect him from suffering. The two lines of this verse have grammatical parallelism since after the particles *kî* and *loʾ,* which are omitted in the second line, they both have a verb (*sāḡar* and *wayyastēr*), followed by the direct objects (*ḏalṯê ḇiṭnî* and *ʿāmāl mēʿênāy*), both ending with a first-person possessive suffix. This parallelism emphasizes the inaction of Yahweh.

As argued by Pohl, Job employs different rhetorical strategies to secure Yahweh's attention and thus achieve a theophany.[837] The poetic devices of the curse in vv. 3–10 are in accord with this conclusion, as they give the curse a spell-like contour that would generate oral and written efficacy. The "decreation" imagery and structures that envelope all creation in darkness and the contradiction with divine blessings add intensity to this curse. The performance of this curse, indirectly alluding to Yahweh, can thus be seen not only as an expression of Job's deep suffering but also a rhetorical strategy to secure divine attention through shock, as the use of spell-like language against the deity would be shocking for Yahweh and Job's friends, the human audience.

[836] Fokkelman 1998: 165.
[837] Pohl 2018: 1–19.

5.1.3.2.2. Job 3:11–19

The second stanza of Job 3 opens with a series of rhetorical questions, a common function of this poetic feature, particularly in Job:[838]

11 *lāmmā(h)* | *loʾ mēreḥem* | *ʾāmûṯ*
mibeṭen | *yāṣaʾṯî* | *wĕʾeḡwāʿ*
12 *maḏḏûaʿ* | *qiddĕmûnî* | *ḇirkāyim*
ûmā(h)-|*šādayim* | *kî ʾînāq*

Why did I not die from the womb?
Come out from the belly and expire?
Why did knees receive me?
And why breasts that I might suckle?

(Job 3:11–12)

These types of questions also play an emphatic role by producing "immediate engagement between speaker and the one spoken to, and between speaker and reader."[839] This way, as Yahweh is the addressee of this unit, Job continues to try to secure his attention by starting his lament with four rhetorical questions defined by the interrogative "why?" The questions create a progression as v. 11a focuses on life in the womb, vv. 11b and 12a on birth, and v. 12b on nurturing.[840] The answer to these questions is clear, it is Yahweh, since he is the one who did not shut the doors of the womb of Job's mother (v. 10). Therefore, these questions and their progression are another poetic attempt to secure divine attention and probably intervention. Verse 11 has grammatical parallelism, since after the interrogative pronoun *lāmmā(h)* and the negative particle *loʾ*, which are omitted in the second line, both lines have a noun with the *m*-preposition (*mēreḥem* and *mibeṭen*), followed by first-person verbal forms (*ʾāmûṯ* and *yāṣaʾṯî wĕʾeḡwāʿ*). In v. 12, both lines

[838] On the structuring role of rhetorical questions, see Watson 1984: 341. On the rhetorical questions' role in Job, see Magary 2005: 292; Watson 1984: 340.
[839] Magary 2005: 292. See also Watson 1984: 341.
[840] Regarding the first line of v. 12, I understand the knees as the mother's knees when she gives birth, because Eckstein (2019: 381–404) convincingly showed that the kneeling position was common in childbirth.

open with interrogative pronouns (*maḏûaʿ* and *ûmā(h)*), but the other syntactic elements do not create grammatical parallelism. Verses 11 and 12 also have consonance with the sound /m/. These syntactic and phonologic figures further emphasize these rhetorical questions for both the human and divine audiences.

This progression culminates in v. 13 which starts with the emphatic *kî-ʿattā(h)*, "for then," and expresses how Job would be restful had he not been born:

13 *kî-ʿattā(h)* | *šāḵaḇtî* | *wĕʾešqôṭ*
yāšantî | *ʾāz* | *yānûḥa lî*

For now I could lay down and be quiet,
I could be asleep and then there would be rest for me.

(Job 3:13)

Verse 13 marks the numerical ending of the first half of the unit as it has the last two lines of the first twenty-six lines of Job 3:3–26.[841] The importance of this verse is linked to the central theme it addresses: Job's wish for *nûaḥ*, "rest."[842] This contrasts with Job's description of his current lack of *nûaḥ* in v. 26, the last verse of the second half of the poem.[843] Metrically, these verses also present the contrast between the rest Job hopes for and the rest he does not have, as v. 13 has the pattern 3+3 whereas v. 26 has the pattern 2+3. The rhythmical balance expresses the calmness Job hopes for in v. 13, and the rhythmical imbalance expresses the state of distress of Job in v. 26. The metrical calmness of v. 13 reflects the calmness and rest of Yahweh after creation in Genesis,[844] as some authors have pointed out that this verse continues the creation theme of the curse through the reference to rest.[845] Verse 13 has some grammatical parallelism with the use of Qatal

[841] Fokkelman 1998: 154; Freedman 1968: 506.
[842] The importance of v. 13 is highlighted by other authors, such as van der Lugt (1995: 60), who states that v. 13 is key because of its middle point, and Hartley (1988: 88–89), who divides the units into two parts and takes v. 13 as the last verse of the first half.
[843] The linguistic and thematic links between vv. 13 and 26 have already been noted by different authors such as Barbiero 2015: 56, 59–60; Seow 2013: 315; 2010: 435; Fokkelman 1998: 154; Freedman 1968: 506.
[844] Gen 2:2.
[845] Häner 2020: 272; Beyer 2011: 97; Perdue 1986: 306; Fishbane 1971: 154.

first-person verbal forms (*šāḵaḇtî* and *yāšantî*) and temporal expressions (*ʿattā(h)* and *ʾāz*). This verse also contains synonymous parallelism as both lines refer to Job's death, emphasizing the positive elements of Sheol.

This balance and calmness reflective of the rest in Sheol continues in vv. 14 and 15:

14 *ʿim-mĕlāḵîm | wĕyōʿăṣê ʾāreṣ*
habōnîm | ḥărāḇôṯ | lāmô
15 *ʾô ʿim-śārîm | zāhāḇ | lāhem*
haměmalʾîm | bottêhem | kāsep̄

With kings and counselors of the earth,
Who built ruins for themselves.
Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver.

(Job 3:14–15)

The grammatical parallelism contributes to the idea of balance, as the first lines of both verses have the particle *ʿim*, "with," followed by plural subjects (*mĕlāḵîm* and *śārîm*), and the second lines start with active participles (*habōnîm* and *haměmalʾîm*) describing the plural subjects. The themes in these verses are also parallel as both refer to human rulers and their properties in life, and reflect the earthly hierarchies as the *mĕlāḵîm*, "kings," are mentioned before the *śārîm*, "princes." The repetitive use of the /m/ sound in these verses, which is used five times in v. 14 and seven times in v. 15, can be understood as calming, because of the sound's softness. Psychological research has shown that nasal sounds like /m/ tend to be associated with sadness and calmness.[846] Thus the repetitive use of this sound in vv. 14–15 can express Job's feelings of sadness because of his circumstances but also of calmness because of his positive view of Sheol.

This balance created through different poetic devices expresses Job's feelings and also has a rhetorical impact on both the divine and human audiences. Regarding Job's

[846] Auracher and others 2011: 1–25.

goal of securing Yahweh's attention and intervention, the calmness of these verses could be disconcerting for the deity since Sheol, as described in the Psalms, is a liminal and dangerous place.[847] This reversal of the psalmic view of Sheol could be a rhetorical attempt to secure Yahweh's action through shock. This extends to the human audience, Job's friends, who can also be shocked by this play with a psalmic theme.[848] This is in accordance with the initial curse as both can be understood as shocking. Moreover, this positive view of Sheol creates a contrast with Job's current situation; his circumstances are so dreadful that Job would find it more calming to be in Sheol. This also contributes to the rhetorical strategy of shock.

Verse 16 continues the theme of death:

16 *ʾô ḵĕnēp̄el | ṭāmûn | loʾ ʾehye(h)*
kĕʿollîm | loʾ-rāʾû | ʾôr

Or like a hidden stillborn would I not be,
Like infants who did not see light.

(Job 3:16)

It is seen as a difficult verse and some scholars transpose it within the unit.[849] Other scholars do not move v. 16 and understand it as forming chiasmus.[850] I do not move this verse, but rather follow Clines'[851] and Freedman's[852] interpretation that v. 16 parallels vv. 11 and 12 lamenting Job's birth, and vv. 17–19 parallel vv. 13–15 in depicting the peace of Sheol. This structural repetition within the stanza emphasizes Job's wish for death, adding to the rhetorical strategy of shock employed by the poet to secure Yahweh's

[847] Suriano 2018: 223–248. See, for example, Pss 88 and 116.
[848] Dell (2013: 33; 1991: 109–110, 216) states that Job is a parody by misusing traditional biblical genres, including Psalms as is the case of Job 7:17–18 which parodies Psalm 8 (Dell 2013: 34–35). Regarding the use of Psalms in Job, see Frevel 2013: 157–168; Kynes 2012.
[849] Pope (1965: 31) and Skehan (1961: 129) place v. 16 after v. 11, while van der Lugt (1995: 50), Rowley (1980: 42), and Dhorme (1967: 33) place it after v. 12.
[850] According to Gordis (1978: 36), the first line of vv. 11 and 16 refer to death in the womb and the lines in-between refer to death after birth. Barbiero (2015: 50–53) follows this interpretation, and adds that v. 16 is in chiasmus with v. 13 because both focus on "I" and vv. 14 and 15 focus on "others."
[851] Clines 1989: 89.
[852] Freedman 1968: 504–505.

attention. This verse maintains the metrical pattern, and the grammatical parallelism within this verse is shown in the use of two similes (*ḵĕnēp̄el* and *kĕʿollîm*) as well as negative verbal forms (*loʾ ʾehye(h)* and *loʾ-rāʾû*). There is also assonance with the vowels /e/ and /o/. The synonymous parallelism between both lines emphasizes the death of children in the womb and again highlights Job's wish for Sheol.

The idea of calmness and balance of Sheol continues in vv. 17–18:

17 *šām | rĕšāʿîm | ḥaḏlû | rōḡez*
wĕšām | yānûḥû | yĕḡîʿê | ḵoaḥ
18 *yaḥaḏ | ʾăsîrîm | šaʾănānû*
loʾ šomʿû | qôl nōḡēś

There the wicked cease trouble,
And there the weary of power rest.
Captives are together at ease,
They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.

(Job 3:17–18)

Both lines in v. 17 start with the adverb *šām*, "there," but then have chiasmus:

17 *šām | rĕšāʿîm | ḥaḏlû | rōḡez*
wĕšām | yānûḥû | yĕḡîʿê | ḵoaḥ

(Job 3:17)

The chiasmus can express the simultaneity and balance of these statements.[853] There is also chiasmus between vv. 17 and 18, as the oppressors are mentioned in vv. 17a and 18b (*rĕšāʿîm* and *nōḡēś*), and the oppressed in vv. 17b and 18a (*yĕḡîʿê ḵoaḥ* and *ʾăsîrîm*).[854] This chiasmus extends to the sound play between the last word of v. 17a, *rōgez*, "trouble," and the last word of v. 18b, *nōgēś*, "oppressor," as they share the sounds /g/, /o/, and /e/, and the consonants *z* and *ś* are sibilants.

The structure and prosody of v. 19 highlight these lines at the end of the second stanza:

[853] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.
[854] This chiasmus had already been highlighted by Gordis (1978: 38).

19 *qāṭōn* | *wĕgādôl* | *šām* | *hûʾ*
wĕʿeḇeḏ | *ḥopšî* | *mēʾădōnâw*

Small and great, one is there,
And the slave is free from his master.

(Job 3:19)

Verses 17 and 18 have chiasmus between them as they mention the oppressor and oppressed in different lines, whereas v. 19 mentions both in each line. Metrically v. 19 also stands out since it has a 4+3 metre, unlike the previous verses.[855] Verse 19 is the conclusion of Job's positive depiction of Sheol. In both lines, the poet uses merisms: *qāṭōn*, "small," and *gādôl*, "great," in the first line, and *ʿeḇeḏ*, "slave," and *ʾădōnāy*, "master," in the second line. These merisms contribute to the idea that everyone is in Sheol, independently of their circumstances in life. The use of the independent personal pronoun in the first line plays into this idea because it makes the subject abstract. This abstraction of the subject is then reversed by the reference in the second line to *ʿeḇed*, "the slave," and *ʾădōnāy*, "the master," which can seem odd. The references to Yahweh being responsible for Job's suffering have been so far indirect, and in this line, I think, we can identify another indirect reference. The term *ʿeḇed* can be translated as "servant" and is used in different biblical compositions to refer to righteous worshipers of Yahweh.[856] The term *ʾădōnāy* is also the title "lord" for Yahweh.[857] In these verses, Job identifies himself with the oppressed because of his current suffering,[858] and thus with *ʿeḇed*. Job's master is Yahweh and therefore in v. 19, Job wishes for his own separation from Yahweh whom he sees as the cause of his suffering. This subtle reference, emphasized by the metrical and structural differences between v. 19 and the previous

[855] It is still important to note that the first line uses the four-feet metre of v. 17, and the second line uses the three-feet metre of v. 18a, showing a connection to the previous verses despite the differences.
[856] For example, this is the term used by Yahweh in the Prologue to refer to Job while mentioning his righteousness to Satan (1:8).
[857] See, for example, Pss 8:2, 10; 114:7; 135:5.
[858] Barbiero 2015: 54.

verses, also plays into the rhetorical strategy of shock the poet has employed so far, which included the recitation of a curse and a peaceful depiction of Sheol. This rhetoric of shock is further developed by the inference that Yahweh will also find himself in Sheol, since everyone is there. This indeed would be shocking for both the divine and human audiences.

In the second line of v. 19, the word order also emphasizes the separation Job wishes for, as the terms *ʿeḇed* and *ʾădōnāy* are not side by side but set apart by *ḥapšî*, "separated." Yahweh as *ʾădōnāy* in this verse is a depiction of Yahweh as a slaver, which contrasts with the Exodus motif of god freeing the Israelites from servitude in Egypt.[859] In Exodus, the Egyptians are the oppressors, but in Job, Yahweh is the oppressor. This passage thus continues the undoing of traditional Israelite theology started with the "decreation" in the curse, contributing to the rhetorical strategy of shock.

5.1.3.2.3. Job 3:20–26

The rhetorical question in v. 20 opens a new stanza, paralleling the rhetorical questions in vv. 11–12:

20 *lāmmā(h)* | *yittēn* | *lĕʿāmēl* | *ʾôr*
wĕḥayyîm | *lĕmārê nāpeš*

Why did he give light to the sufferer?
And life to those bitter of spirit?

(Job 3:20)

The rhetorical questions also contribute to the structuring of the unit by introducing the new stanza, as the rhetorical questions in vv. 11–12 did (§5.1.3.2.2). Verse 20 uses the interrogative pronoun *lāmmā(h)*, "why?," like v. 11. As rhetorical questions direct the

[859] Exod 3:7–10.

audience to the speaker, this device, as in vv. 11–12, is a way of securing Yahweh's attention. In v. 20a the subject of the verb *nāṯan*, "to give," is not explicit, but, like in v. 10, it is Yahweh who is responsible for giving life. Therefore, after describing the peace of Sheol, Job addresses Yahweh again indirectly using a series of rhetorical questions from v. 20 to v. 23, as the preposition *lĕ* at the start of v. 23 is still governed by the clause of v. 20.[860] This way, the third stanza of the rhetorical unit parallels the second stanza because it starts with a series of rhetorical questions, but, whereas in the second stanza these questions are followed by a positive description of Sheol, in the third stanza these questions are followed by a negative description of Job's circumstances. This structural antithesis plays an important role in expressing Job's feelings of despair because of the contrast between the peace of Sheol and the turmoil of Job's life. This imbalance reflects the chaos of Job's suffering and the buildup of despair in Job's speech.[861]

Verse 20 has chiasmus between the two poetic lines:

20 *lāmmā(h)* | *yittēn* | *lĕʿāmēl* | *ʾôr*
wĕḥayyîm | *lĕmārê nāpēš*

(Job 3:20)

Chiasmus can have an emphatic effect,[862] and in these lines it emphasizes the direct objects *ʾôr*, "light," and *ḥayîm*, "life," by placing them in the middle. This link between light and life develops the theme of the curse where light was linked to life, and darkness to death. Job thus brings unity to the curse and lament, and the repetition of the motif acts as reminder for both the human and divine audiences of Job's wish to die. The assonance

[860] Greenstein (2019: 15), Hartley (1988: 99), Habel (1985: 111), Rowley (1980: 44), Gordis (1978: 39), and Pope (1965: 27) understand v. 20 as governing v. 23. Gordis (1978: 30) even repeats the question of v. 20b in his translation of v. 23.
[861] As a comparison, see, for example, how Seow (2013: 29) interprets the shortness of the third cycle of speeches in Job as a formal expression of the degradation of the conversation between the speakers.
[862] See Watson 1981: 149.

and consonance between *lĕʿāmēl*, "to the sufferer," and *lĕmārê*, "to those bitter," contributes to the parallelism between the lines and emphasis on the rhetorical questions.

Verses 21–23 continue the rhetorical questions and Job's indirect accusations against Yahweh:

21 *haměḥakkîm | lammāweṯ | wĕʾênennû*
wayyaḥpĕruhû | mimmaṭmônîm
22 *haśśĕmēḥîm | ʾĕlê-|ḡîl*
yāśîśû | kî yimṣĕʾû-|qāḇer
23 *lĕḡeḇer | ʾăšer-|darkô | nistārā(h)*
wayyāseḵ | ʾĕlôah | baʿăḏô

To those who wait for death but it does not come,
And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,
Those who rejoice upon a heap,
Exult when they find a grave,
To a man whose way is hidden,
And whom Eloah shuts in?

(Job 3:21–23)

Verses 21a and 22a have grammatical parallelism as they open with an active participle (*haměḥakkîm* and *haśśĕmēḥîm*) followed by a noun with a preposition (*lammāweṯ* and *ʾĕlê-ḡîl*). Verses 21b and 22b also have grammatical parallelism since both open with a third-person masculine plural Yiqtol verbal form (*wayyaḥpĕruhû* and *yāśîśû*). This balance of vv. 21 and 22 is broken by v. 23 which is an important verse. Structurally, it stands in the middle of the last stanza, a key position, and it is the first direct accusation against Yahweh, using the name Eloah. The curse and the indirect accusations had been building up tension, culminating in the first direct accusation against the addressee of the unit in v. 23. The centrality of this verse is also visible in the use of the verb *śuḵ* in the by-form *sûḵ*, "to shut in," as this verb is used with a positive connotation in Job 1:10, alluding to Yahweh's protection around Job.[863] This pun with the verb shows that unlike what Satan said, Job did not feel protected by god but crushed by him. This pun and the

[863] Crenshaw 2015: 87; Seow 2013: 370; Hartley 1988: 99; Habel 1985: 51–52, 112; Rowley 1980: 44; Gordis 1978: 39; Driver and Gray 1921: 39.

buildup of tension culminating in this direct accusation were part of Job's rhetorical strategies to secure Yahweh's attention.[864] Verse 23 has chiasmus:

23 *lĕḡeḇer* | *ʾăšer-darkô* | *nistārā(h)*
wayyāseḵ | *ʾĕlôah* | *baʿăḏô*

(Job 3:23)

This syntactic figure expresses a merism, that is, how this person is in complete distress and does not know the way.[865]

These verses also preserve different phonologic figures. Verses 21 and 22 have consonance with the sound /m/ and homeoptoton between *mimmaṭmônîm* and *haśśĕmēḥîm*. These devices contribute to the parallelism between the lines and the aural effects. The poet creates a sound-play between the terms *qāḇer*, "grave," in v. 22 and *geḇer*, "man," in v. 23,[866] because of the sound-matching, contributing to the parallelism between the verses. The term *geḇer* is the same used in v. 3 to refer to the man who was conceived, Job.[867] Therefore, Job identifies himself with the man "whose way is hidden" and "whom Eloah shuts in."[868] The fronting of *geḇer* also emphasizes this term, thus emphasizing Job himself.

The last term of v. 22a has been debated because the consonantal text could stand for *gîl*, "rejoicing," or *gal*, "heap." Seow argues that the verb *gîl* can refer to a shout of lament, as in Hos 10:5,[869] but he also supports the suggestion of *gal*.[870] Therefore, there could be a double meaning for this term and the poet is probably using a pun, alluding to death through sound and through the description of funerary structures.

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[864] The ironic use of the verb *sûḵ* can also suggest that only one author wrote both the prose and poetry of Job.
[865] Chiasmus can have this effect without using an actual merism, as in Isa 40:26b, the example used by Watson (1981: 147).
[866] Seow 2013: 369; Fokkelman 1998: 171.
[867] Seow 2013: 333.
[868] Freedman 1968: 505.
[869] Seow 2013: 367.
[870] Seow 2013: 368.

Verse 23 and its indirect reference to Yahweh act as a hinge between the rhetorical questions and Job's personal lament in vv. 24–26, where he refers directly to his current situation:[871]

24 *kî-lipnê | laḥmî | ʾanḥāṯî | ṯāḇōʾ*
wayyittĕḵû | ḵammayim | šaʾăḡōṯay
25 *kî p̄aḥaḏ | pāḥaḏtî | wayyeʾĕṯāyēnî*
waʾăšer | yāḡōrtî | yāḇōʾ lî
26 *lōʾ šālawtî | wĕlōʾ šāqaṭtî*
wĕlōʾ-noḥtî | wayāḇōʾ | rōḡez

For before my food comes my groaning,
And my roarings pour out like water.
For I dreaded exceedingly and it has befallen on me,
And what I feared has come to me.
I am not at ease nor tranquil,
I have no rest and turmoil has come.

(Job 3:24–26)

The particle *kî* introduces this new part within the stanza, presenting the reasons for Job's curse and lament. In v. 24, Job uses the word pair *leḥem*, "bread," and *mayim*, "water," both occupying the second foot in each line.[872] These terms are a merism corresponding to the basics of human sustenance creating a sense of totality.[873] However, instead of bread and water, Job has *ʾănāḥāh*, "groaning," and *šĕʾāḡāh*, "roaring." The first term is used in several laments (e.g., Pss 6:7; 31:11; 102:6; Lam 1:22). The second term is also used in laments (e.g., Pss 22:2; 32:3), but it also refers to the roaring of a lion, as in Isa 5:29 and Job 4:10. This allusion to a roaring of a lion expresses the intensity of Job's groans and suffering,[874] acting as another rhetorical strategy to secure Yahweh's attention. The simile between Job's *šĕʾāḡāh* and water also points to the intensity and

[871] Freedman (1968: 505) had already noted that v. 23 acts as a transition within the stanza, and van der Lugt (1995: 60), Clines (1989: 76), and Skehan (1961: 128) understand vv. 24–26 as a separate part within the stanza. Seow (2013: 315) interprets vv. 25–26 as a "poetic coda" and v. 24 as a conclusion to vv. 11–23.
[872] For other examples of this word pair, see Exod 23:25; 34:28; Num 21:5; 1 Sam 25:11; 30:11; 1 Kgs 22:27; 2 Chr 18:26; Neh 9:15; Ezek 4:16–17; 12:18–19; Hos 2:5.
[873] On bread and water as a merism, see how Wasserman (2003: 94) treats the Akkadian *akalu*, "bread," and *mû*, "water," as a merism in Old Babylonian sources.
[874] Rowley 1980: 44.

abundance of the protagonist's suffering. By first referring to the basics of human sustenance as a merism and the intensity of his sighing, Job adds emphasis to these lines, a last attempt to call Yahweh to action. Verse 24 has chiasmus between its lines:

24 *kî-lipnê* | *laḥmî* | *ʾanḥātî* | *ṯāḇōʾ*
wayyittĕḵû | *ḵammayim* | *šaʾăḡōtay*

(Job 3:24)

This chiasmus further contributes to the merism and the totalizing character of Job's suffering.

Verse 25 has a *figura etymologica* through the repetition of the root *p–ḥ–d*, which also creates an alliteration between *pāḥaḏ* and *pāḥaḏtî*. This emphasizes again the intensity of Job's suffering, which can be seen as an attempt for Yahweh to intervene to stop the suffering or for the friends to pity and console him. The verbs *yāḡōrtî* and *yāḇōʾ* also create alliteration. The two lines of this verse also have grammatical parallelism between the second and third feet, as the second foot of each line preserves a first-person Qatal verbal form (*pāḥaḏtî* and *yāḡōrtî*) and the third foot a first-person Yiqtol verbal form (*wayyeʾĕṯāyēnî* and *yāḇōʾ lî*). The Yiqtol verbal forms derive from two synonymous verbs, *ʾāṯāh*, "to come," and *bôʾ*, "to come." The former is an Aramaic word, possibly reflecting Job's foreignness and Job's foreign setting. Verse 25 is the only metrically balanced verse in this last part of the stanza. The balance shown in the metre and parallelism contrasts with vv. 24 and 26. Verse 25 looks back at the past through the use of two Qatal verbal forms, whereas vv. 24 and 26 only focus on Job's current situation. The past for Job was successful as described in the prologue, and thus the balanced lines could be a memory of that balanced past. The reference to this past fear can also allude to Job 1:5, where Job, even if successful, still made burnt offerings to god because his children might have cursed against him. Therefore, v. 25 seems to be looking at the past

before Job's current situation. The synonymous parallelism in this verse also emphasizes the change in Job's life.

Verse 26 is the last verse of the second half of the poem, paralleling v. 13, as already noted. In v. 26, the metrical imbalance reflects the chaos of Job's current situation and, in v. 13, the metrical balance reflects the peace of Sheol. The intensity of v. 26 is also expressed in the three-time repetition of the negative particle *lōʾ*, as the number three expresses "intensiveness and permanence."[875] This rhythmical emphasis is also expressed through phonologic figures as both poetic feet in the first line have the same vowels and the verbal forms start with *š*. The first foot in the second line continues this sound-play with the repetition of *lōʾ* and the final *-tî*, which creates a homeoptoton with the previous two feet of v. 26a. This verse also has grammatical parallelism because v. 26a and the first foot of v. 26b are composed of the particle *lōʾ* and a first-person Qatal verbal form (*šālawtî*, *šāqaṭtî*, and *noḥtî*). The synonymous parallelism in this verse emphasizes Job's current negative situation, continuing the effect from the previous verse.

The last term of the unit is *rōḡez*, "turmoil," which has the same vowels as *ḥōšeḵ*, "darkness," a key noun in the curse. This way, Job links the beginning and ending of his first speech. He wanted darkness to seize the day of his birth, but turmoil has seized his life. This contrast reflects the development of the unit: initially Job tried to secure Yahweh's attention through shock, but in the end, as Yahweh did not reply, Job grew more and more hopeless, stating what his current life situation is. This statement is probably one last rhetorical strategy, as Yahweh might have pity on Job and intervene. This also affects the human audience, Job's friends, who might hear this and also pity him.

[875] Bar-Ilan 2014: 415. Moreover, as noted in §5.1.3.1, the number three is widely used in Job to structure the composition.

Verses 24–25 also have assonance with the /i/ sound because of the employment of first-person singular forms and other terms, like *kî*. Moreover, the endings of vv. 25a, 25b, and 26a rhyme because of the ending in /i/, and the beginnings of vv. 24a and 25a also have sound-matching because of the use of *kî*. In phono-symbolism, the /i/ sound expresses vulnerability, and it is interesting to note that its use is more consistent in these last verses.[876] Throughout this chapter, Job has tried to secure Yahweh's attention, and the different poetic devices have shown it. The tension that has been built up and that culminated in the direct accusation against Yahweh in v. 23 has not led to a divine intervention. In face of this, Job feels hopeless and refers to his own current experience in an unbalanced or chaotic way as the lack of balanced metre in these last verses shows. The repetition of the /i/ sound as an expression of Job's vulnerability is also an expression of this hopelessness. Job's rhetorical strategies have not worked so far and he feels vulnerable as there seems to be no reply from god. Therefore, the poetic devices in these verses are an expression of this unanswered vulnerability, hopelessness, and suffering.

[876] On the /i/ sound and its vulnerability, see Plett 2010: 127–128; Maloney 2009: 48.

5.2. Psalm 25

5.2.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

The speaker of Psalm 25 is an undefined first-person singular supplicant, whose identity is not specified. Therefore, the speaker can be anyone undergoing a moment of distress (vv. 16–19) and who has committed a sin (vv. 7, 18). The audience is specified in v. 1 as the speaker calls out to Yahweh using a vocative. The speaker also uses the vocatives with the divine name in vv. 4, 6, 7, and 11. In vv. 8, 10, 12, 14, and 15, the speaker refers to Yahweh in the third person. These different direct and indirect references clearly place Yahweh as the divine audience of the psalm.

Regarding the rhetorical goals of Psalm 25, as it is a psalm of individual lament, its main purpose is to petition Yahweh for change. In fact, throughout Psalm 25, the supplicant asks to learn the paths of Yahweh (vv. 4–5), for forgiveness of his sins (vv. 7, 11, 18), and for the god to alter his current negative situation of distress (vv. 16–20). Therefore, the main rhetorical goals of this psalm are to convince Yahweh to act on behalf of the supplicant and change his situation. In fact, like the šuila-prayers (see §3.1), this psalm has a petitionary character and also aims to calm the speaker himself.

Psalm 25 sometimes is not understood as a psalm with a ritual use and thus without a petitionary rhetorical purpose.[877] This is due to the acrostic which is interpreted as an exclusively visual element, thus limiting the psalm to its written form. Nevertheless, the psalm's similarities with other psalms of individual lament and my analysis of its poetic devices in §5.2.3 show that this psalm also had an aural component that probably corresponded to the rhetorical purposes described above.[878]

[877] See Gunkel 2020: 128; Human 1996: 77; Ruppert 1972: 578.
[878] Gerstenberger (1988: 20, 121) also argues that acrostic psalms had a liturgical setting and Maloney (2009: 49) also argues that the repetitions within acrostic psalms are for the ear.

5.2.2. Transcription and Translation

1 (א) *ʾēlêḵā* | *YHWH*

napšî | *ʾeśśāʾ* | *ʾĕlōhay*[879]

2 (ב) *bĕḵā* | *ḇāṭaḥtî* | *ʾal-ʾēḇôšā(h)*

ʾal-yaʿalṣû | *ʾōyḇay lî*

3 (ג) *gam* | *kol-qōwêḵā* | *loʾ yēḇōšû*

yēḇōšû | *hābôḡĕdîm* | *rêqām*

4 (ד) *dĕrāḵêḵā* | *YHWH* | *hôḏîʿēnî*

ʾōrḥôṯêḵā | *lammĕḏēnî*

5 (ה) *haḏrîḵēnî* | *ḇaʾămitteḵā* | *wĕlammĕḏēnî*

kî-ʾattā(h) | *ʾĕlōhê yišʿî*

ʾôṯĕḵā | *qiwwîṯî* | *kol-hayyôm*

6 (ו) *zĕḵōr-|raḥămêḵā* | *YHWH* | *waḥăsāḏêḵā*

kî mēʿôlām | *hēmmā(h)*

7 (ז) *ḥaṭṭōʾwṯ* | *nĕʿûray* | *ʾal-tizkōr*

kĕḥasdĕḵā | *zĕḵār-lî-|ʾattā(h)*

lĕmaʿan | *ṭûḇḵā* | *YHWH*

8 (ט) *ṭôḇ-|wĕyāšār* | *YHWH*

ʿal-kēn | *yôre(h)* | *ḥattāʾîm* | *badāreḵ*

9 (י) *yaḏrēḵ* | *ʿănāwîm* | *bammîšpāṭ*

wîlammēḏ | *ʿănāwîm* | *darkô*

[879] The BHS places *ʾĕlōhay*, "my god," at the start of v. 2, but this would break the alphabetic acrostic. See my comments in §5.2.3.2.1.

10 (כ) *kol-ʾorḥôṯ YHWH | ḥeseḏ | weʾĕmeṯ*

lĕnōṣrê ḇĕrîṯô | wĕʿēḏōṯâw

11 (ל) *lĕmaʿan-|šimḵā | YHWH*

wĕsālaḥtā | laʿăwōnî | kî raḇ-|hûʾ

12 (מ) *mî-ze(h) | hāʾîš | yĕrēʾ | YHWH*

yôrennû | bĕḏereḵā | yiḇḥār

13 (נ) *napšô | bĕtôḇ | tālîn*

wĕzarʿô | yîraš | ʾāreṣ

14 (ס) *sôḏ YHWH | lîrēʾâw*

ûḇĕrîṯô | lĕhôḏîʿām

15 (ע) *ʿênay | tāmîḏ | ʾel-YHWH*

kî hûʾ-|yôṣiʾ | mērešeṯ | raḡlāy

16 (פ) *pĕnē(h)-|ʾēlay | wĕḥonnēnî*

kî-yāḥîḏ | wĕʿānî | ʾānî

17 (צ) *ṣārôṯ lĕḇāḇî | harḥêḇ*[880]

mimmĕṣûqôtay | hôṣîʾēnî

18 (ר) *rĕʾē(h) | ʿonyî | waʿămālî*

wĕśāʾ | lĕḵol-ḥattōʾwṯāy

19 (ר) *rĕʾē(h)-|ʾôyḇay | kî-rābbû*

wĕśinʾaṯ ḥāmās | śĕnēʾûnî

20 (ש) *šomrā(h) | napšî | wĕhaṣṣîlēnî*

ʾal-ʾēḇôš | kî-ḥāsîṯî ḇāḵ

21 (ת) *tōm-|wāyōšer | yiṣṣĕrûnî*

kî qiwwîṯîḵā

[880] The BHS has the verbal form *hirḥîḇû*, "they enlarged," which I correct to *harḥêḇ*, "make room." This decision will be discussed in §5.2.3.2.3.

22 (פ) *pědē(h)* | *ʾělōhîm* | *ʾeṯ-yiśrāʾēl*

mikōl ṣārôṯâw

1 To you, oh Yahweh,

I come in prayer, my god.

2 In you I trust, may I not feel ashamed,

May my enemies not exult over me.

3 Indeed, all who wait for you will not feel ashamed,

The treacherous who act in vain will feel ashamed.

4 Make your ways known to me, oh Yahweh,

Teach me your paths.

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,

For you are the god of my salvation,

For you I wait every day.

6 Remember your compassion, oh Yahweh, and your kindness,

For they are from old.

7 Do not remember the sins of my youth,

Because of your kindness, remember me, oh you,

For the sake of your goodness, oh Yahweh.

8 Yahweh is good and upright,

Therefore, he directs the sinners in the way.

9 May he lead the humble in justice,

And may he teach the humble his way.

10 All the paths of Yahweh are kindness and truth,

For the ones who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For the sake of your name, oh Yahweh,

Please forgive my iniquity for it is great.

12 Who is this man who fears Yahweh?

He will direct him in the way he chooses.

13 His life will remain in prosperity,

And his descendants will inherit the earth.

14 The counsel of Yahweh belongs to those who fear him,

And he reveals his covenant to them.

15 My eyes are continuously to Yahweh,

For he brings out my feet from the net.

16 Turn to me and grant me a favour,

For I am alone and afflicted.

17 The distresses of my heart, make room,

And from my straits bring me out.

18 See my affliction and my trouble,

And forgive all my sins.

19 See my enemies for they are many,

And with violent hatred they hate me.

20 Guard my life and save me,

May I not feel ashamed for I seek refuge in you.

21 May integrity and uprightness keep me,

For I wait for you.

22 Redeem, oh god, Israel,

From all its distresses.

5.2.3. Poetic Analysis

5.2.3.1. Macro-Level Analysis

Psalm 25, as an alphabetic acrostic poem, is structured by the twenty-two consonant acrostic and is traditionally divided into three stanzas.[881] The psalm is also understood in a concentric or chiastic construction with v. 11 (ל) in the middle.[882] The first stanza corresponds to vv. 1–7, while the second and third stanzas are more debatable because some authors take v. 15 as part of the second stanza while others take it as part of the third stanza.[883] I structure my tripartite division of Psalm 25 around the movement from second-person address to Yahweh between vv. 1–7, to third-person address between vv. 8–15 (with the exception of v. 11), and back to second-person address between vv. 16–22.[884] Van der Lugt, through four examples (Psalms 21, 24, 58, 74), convincingly argues that these changes can structure the psalms and emphasize the rhetorical centre,[885] which in Psalm 25 would be v. 11.

Stanza	Verses in Psalm 25	Chapter section
Second-person address	1–7	§5.2.3.2.1
Third-person address	8–15	§5.2.3.2.2
Second-person address	16–22	§5.2.3.2.3

[881] See, for example, Meynet 2012: 234–236; Human 1996: 79; Craigie 1983: 218; Anderson 1972: 207.
[882] See, for example, Doyle 2001: 202; Craigie 1983: 217–218; Alden 1974: 18–19; Ruppert 1972: 579. Bazak (1985: 486) divides Psalm 25 into three concentric circles around verse 11.
[883] For v. 15 as part of the second stanza, see, for example, Meynet 2012: 236; Lohfink 1991b: 124–125; Ridderbos 1963: 62–63. For v. 15 as part of the third stanza, see, for example, Human 1996: 78–79; Anderson 1972: 207.
[884] Bazak (1985: 486) highlights this movement between second- and third-person addresses to the god.
[885] van der Lugt 2010: 550–551.

Table 23 - Stanzaic division of Psalm 25

Regarding the strophic division, with the exception of vv. 5 and 7, all other verses preserve couplets, which can be understood as a calming effect for both the human speaker and the divine audience. Verse 5 is the first triplet in the prayer, and in the third line we would expect a ו at the start in accordance with the acrostic structure. Freedman argues that the use of triplets in vv. 5 and 7 is meant to compensate for the absence of a ו verse.[886] I agree that this absence was intentional, as the same phenomenon is found in Psalm 34 and it allows for the ל verse to be in the centre of the poem, with twenty-two lines on each side, paralleling the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The ל verse in the centre, the א at the start, and the additional פ verse at the end spell *aleph*, the first letter of the alphabet, a feature that I will explore in more detail below. The start of the second line of v. 5 is preserved in the manuscript 5/6ḤevPs, and Flint's reconstruction of this manuscript places the second and third lines of v. 5 in the same line.[887] This suggests that at least some scribal communities of the first century AD in Israel-Palestine understood these two lines as parallel. Besides contributing to the acrostic and the spelling of *aleph*, the use of a triplet in v. 7 can have a structuring effect by marking the end of the first stanza.

Regarding the acrostic, which is the core macro-structure of this psalm, it is important first to analyse its role. Watson identifies three main purposes of biblical acrostics: as a mnemonic aid; as a display of completeness;[888] and as a demonstration of the poet's artistry.[889] Dobbs-Allsopp adds to these purposes by including the literary

[886] Freedman 1992: 128–129.
[887] Flint 2000: 32, 40.
[888] Totalizing descriptions, descriptions that attempt at encompassing everything, are an important part of biblical literature, and the acrostic in Proverbs 31:10–31 is such an example as it uses the totalizing character of the acrostic to praise wisdom (Vayntrub 2020a: 52–55). Ezekiel 27 is another example of this through its thick description of Tyre as a ship and as a body (Vayntrub 2020b: 214–236).
[889] Watson 1984: 198.

impact acrostics can have through repetition, coherence, and closure.[890] The acrostic of Psalm 25 demonstrates the poet's artistry as shown in the deliberate use of certain terms at the start of verses, and it also has a literary impact visible in the repetitions and chiastic structures.[891] James identifies the didactic purpose of the acrostic in Psalm 25, relating it to the continuous use of vocabulary linked to learning and teaching in this psalm.[892] This refers back to the mnemonic purpose of the acrostics, which are understood to stem from a school context and abecedaries, a type of school text.[893] This links the acrostics to a scribal setting of production and use, and therefore to the format of the acrostics as compositions for the eye of the scribe, i.e., for reading, and not for an oral reproduction in a cultic context. Giffone clearly states that the acrostics are for the eye,[894] and Dobbs-Allsopp uses Psalms 25 and 34 as examples of this because of their use of א, ל, and פ at the start, middle, and end of the prayer, thus forming the term *aleph*, the first letter of the alphabet.[895] This spelling of *aleph* can be understood as a sign of the scribal profession because of the key role of the alphabet in this craft.[896] The use of the acrostic and the spelling of *aleph* can also reflect the completeness of the psalm, the wholeness of the lament and petition to Yahweh.[897]

These different perspectives and reflections lead to my own understanding of the acrostic and v. 22 in Psalm 25. The impact of the acrostic for the eye does not limit its use of the psalm to a scribal context. These prayers are also meant for Yahweh, who can see everything,[898] and therefore also sees and hears the acrostic. Hurowitz claims that "the

[890] Dobbs-Allsopp 2009: 285. For a more complete outline of the purposes of acrostics, see Ho 2019: 595.
[891] These elements will be analysed in §5.2.3.2.
[892] James 2021: 323. Regarding this type of vocabulary, see, for example, the use of the verbal roots *yāda*ʿ, "to know," in vv. 4 and 14, and *lāmaḏ*, "to learn," in vv. 4, 5, and 9. See also Abernethy 2015: 339–351.
[893] Dobbs-Allsopp 2009: 282–284; Seybold 2001: 172.
[894] Giffone 2010: 50.
[895] Dobbs-Allsopp 2009: 285.
[896] Hurowitz 2002a: 333.
[897] Dobbs-Allsopp 2009: 286; Soll 1988: 317.
[898] See Prov 5:21.

alphabet in its entirety can be symbolic of YHWH, expressing his infinity, all inclusiveness, omnipresence, and omniscience."[899] I think that the acrostic is not only symbolic of Yahweh, but it is also meant for him. By using the acrostic form, the poet is making Yahweh know that the prayer should cover all petitions, making it more easily used in different circumstances.[900] Acrostics are an example of what Vayntrub has termed a "totalizing description," a thick description which aimed at expressing the totality of the described object. Totalizing descriptions usually have a "concluding statement of totality," where "the object being described, is claimed to be perfect and complete."[901] These statements typically include the term *kōl*, "all," and this is the case in Psalm 25 as the expression *mīkōl ṣārôṯâw*, "from all its distresses," in v. 22 shows. This again demonstrates the totalizing character of the psalm which can be used in different contexts. The acrostic and the spelling of *aleph* can also be seen as pleasing for the ear of Yahweh, and as a rhetorical strategy to secure divine attention and help. This means that the acrostic form in Psalm 25 also takes the divine audience into account, suggesting that v. 22 is part of the original composition of the prayer.[902]

The understanding of the acrostic as a feature for the eye of the scribe is also limited by the manuscript evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The manuscripts 11QPs^{c} and 4QPs^{a} preserving Psalm 25 do not have a stichometric arrangement of the lines but arrange the lines in prose format.[903] This would make it more difficult to recognize the acrostic when reading and suggests that the acrostic was possibly emphasized aurally through intonation and speech, rather than visually through its layout.

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[899] Hurowitz 2002a: 332.
[900] On the question of the applicability of psalms to different circumstances, see Gunkel 2020: 130; Mowinckel 1992: 8.
[901] Vayntrub 2020b: 215.
[902] The divine audience is also taken into account in Mesopotamian acrostics, as the acrostic of the *Babylonian Theodicy* shows, because, as Soll (1988: 316) suggests, this acrostic was also a way of showing respect for the gods.
[903] On the stichometric arrangement of poetic lines in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Tov 2004: 166–178.

By taking v. 11 as the medial verse, there are twenty-two lines before it and twenty-two lines after it, possible through the deletion of the ו verse and the addition of another פ verse. These twenty-two lines thus mirror the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and place the focus on v. 11, suggesting that the changes to the normal acrostic order were on purpose as argued by Freedman.[904]

5.2.3.2. Micro-Level Analysis

5.2.3.2.1. Psalm 25:1–7

Gunkel identifies the invocation of Yahweh as the first part of the psalms of individual lament,[905] which include Psalm 25. This invocation differs from the hymnic introduction of the Akkadian šuila-prayers because of its brevity. As Zernecke and Lenzi have convincingly argued,[906] the invocation in the psalms of individual lament is more similar to the short invocation in the Akkadian diĝiršadaba-prayers because of the proximity between the supplicant and Yahweh in the psalms of individual lament and the personal god in the diĝiršadaba-prayers. Nevertheless, the hymnic introductions or these short invocations play the same rhetorical role within the prayers: securing the deity's attention.

Verse 1 corresponds to this invocation:

1 *ʾēlêḵā | YHWH*
napšî | ʾeśśāʾ | ʾĕlōhay
To you, oh Yahweh,
I come in prayer, my god.

(Psalm 25:1)

[904] Freedman 1992: 127–128.
[905] Gunkel 2020: 152.
[906] Zernecke 2011a: 334–335; 2011b: 181–182; Lenzi 2010: 313–314.

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia's critical apparatus suggests reconstructing the verbal form *qûṯî*, "I wait," in the first line; and including *ʾĕlōhay*, "my God," at the end of the second line. The inclusion of *ʾĕlōhay* in v. 1 agrees with the acrostic format of the prayer as it allows for v. 2 to start with the letter ב, and, for this reason, I agree with the emendation of BHS. However, I do not agree with the addition of *qûṯî* because there is no manuscript evidence for this; the decision for which verb to add is unclear and entirely hypothetical; and this addition breaks the metrical chiastic construction with v. 22, the final verse, that I will explore in detail in §5.2.3.2.3. My translation of v. 1 follows the New English Translation since I translate the second line as "I come in prayer, my god," understanding the expression *napšî ʾeśśāʾ*, "I lift up my life," as an expression of prayer which is also found in Pss 86:4 and 143:8. In fact, in the Mesopotamian context, the lifting of the hands was a prayer gesture associated with šuila-prayers as their name indicates,[907] but also present in art as a greeting gesture to deities.[908] The Biblical Hebrew term *nepēš* is typically translated as "life," but can also refer idiomatically to mean the physical self.[909] As such, to "lift up one's life" can refer to an embodied action of supplication before the deity. Therefore, the lifting of the life can also be understood, particularly when used at the start of the psalm, as an image of prayer. The idea that worshippers would see and lift their eyes to Yahweh, in a ritual and/or prayer context, also contributes for this understanding of v. 1.[910]

Psalm 25 starts with a preposition directed to Yahweh, *ʾēlêḵā*, "to you," followed by a vocative with the tetragrammaton, the invocation. The anastrophic use of a preposition with a second-person possessive suffix and the vocative emphasize Yahweh as the main recipient of the prayer, attempting to secure his attention by directly referring

[907] Frechette 2012: 153–154.
[908] Frechette 2012: 55–88; Keel 1997: 311–314.
[909] BDB s.v. *nepēš*.
[910] On seeing Yahweh in a cultic context, see Chavel 2012: 15–19.

to him.[911] In v. 1b, the verbal form *ʾeśśāʾ*, "I lift," starts with an א. Therefore, the poet could have maintained the normal word order and still respected the acrostic form of the poem. However, he chose to front the preposition to highlight the direct address to Yahweh, the key audience of the prayer, as he is the one who is capable of changing the negative state of the supplicant. Moreover, the shortness of the first line with just two feet also emphasizes and adds urgency to the first address to god. The vocative *ʾĕlōhay*, "my god," in the second line continues this rhetorical strategy. The poetic emphasis on Yahweh is also visible in the placing of the tetragrammaton and *ʾĕlōhay* at the end of each line in v. 1. The pause between the two lines and between the verses aurally emphasizes these last words.[912] Verse 1b has alliteration through the repetition of the sound /ʾe/. There is also homeoptoton between both lines if the tetragrammaton is not pronounced and instead the supplicant says *ʾădōnāy*, "lord," as both lines end in *-ay*. These phonologic figures contribute to the performativity of the prayer and inner parallelism.

Verse 2 starts the petitions:

2 *bĕḵā | ḇāṭaḥtî | ʾal-ʾēḇôšā(h)*
ʾal-yaʿalṣû | ʾōyḇay lî

In you I trust, may I not feel ashamed,
May my enemies not exult over me.

(Psalm 25:2)

The first line of v. 2, like v. 1a, starts with a preposition directed to Yahweh, *bĕḵā*, "in you." This again emphasizes the address to Yahweh since the verbal form *ḇāṭaḥtî*, "I trust," in v. 2a starts with a ב and could thus be fronted while respecting the acrostic. The final foot of the first line and the first foot of the second line have alliteration through the repetition of the negative particle *ʾal*, bringing emphasis to the petitions and contributing

[911] Briggs and Briggs (1952: 221) had already noted the emphatic use of the prepositions in vv. 1 and 2 to show that Yahweh was the only recipient of the prayer.
[912] Kugel (1998: 1) assumes the existence of a shorter pause between two parallel lines and a longer pause after the second line.

to performativity. This verse uses the traditional *qînāh* metre, since the first line has three main stresses and the second line has two main stresses.[913]

Verse 3 provides a reason for the deity to help the supplicant in the face of his distress:

3 *gam* | *kol-qōwêḵā* | *loʾ yēḇōšû*
yēḇōšû | *hābôḡĕdîm* | *rêqām*
Indeed, all who wait for you will not feel ashamed,
The treacherous who act in vain will feel ashamed.

(Psalm 25:3)

The poet links v. 3 to the previous one through the verbal polyptoton of the root *b–w–š* (*ʾēḇôšā(h)* and *yēḇōšû*). This verbal polyptoton and the parallelism between *bĕḵā ḇāṭaḥtî*, "in you I trust," in v.2a, and *kol-qōwêḵā*, "all who wait for you," in v. 3a, leads to an equation between the supplicant of v. 2 and all who wait for Yahweh of v. 3 and, thus, do not feel ashamed. The parallel structure of these lines creates cohesion between them and the association of ideas. This association is then extended to the enemies mentioned in v. 2b as these parallel the treacherous of v. 3b who will feel ashamed.

Verse 3 contains antithetical parallelism as it sets an opposition between the ones who wait for Yahweh and the treacherous. This antithesis is further emphasized by the chiasmus between the lines:

3 *gam* | *kol-qōwêkā* | *loʾ yēḇōšû*
yēḇōšû | *hābôḡĕdîm* | *rêqām*

(Psalm 25:3)

This syntactic figure is also deepened by the anadiplosis since the verb *yēḇōšû* is used at the end of the first line and at the start of the second line.[914] The poet thus not only expresses the antithesis at the semantic level but also at the syntactic and morphologic

[913] On *qînāh* metre, see Fleischer 2004: 17–23; Shea 1979: 103–107; Budde 1882: 1–52.
[914] I agree with Alter (2007: 84), who unlike the BHS, does not correct the verb in the second line to *yāšūḇû*, "they return," because the chiasmus and the anadiplosis agree with the underlying message of the verse.

levels. This emphasizes the opposition between the supplicant and his enemies and highlights the parallels between the supplicant and the ones who wait for Yahweh.

In v. 4, the poet employs imperatives for the first time:

4 *dĕrāḵêḵā* | *YHWH* | *hôḏîʿēnî*
ʾōrḥôṯêḵā | *lammĕḏēnî*

Make your ways known to me, oh Yahweh,
Teach me your paths.

(Psalm 25:4)

This verse uses so-called "wisdom vocabulary," a central theme of Psalm 25.[915] The poet employs a vocative by using the tetragrammaton which is a rhetorical strategy to secure divine attention. Excluding the vocative which is in the middle of the first line, both lines have grammatical parallelism as they have a direct object with a second-person possessive suffix (*dĕrāḵêḵā* and *ʾōrḥôṯêḵā*), followed by a second-person singular imperative verbal form with a first-person suffix (*hôḏîʿēnî* and *lammĕḏēnî*). The breaking of this parallelism with the vocative in the first line emphasizes this semantic figure, the invocation addressed to Yahweh.[916] This verse also has gender-matched parallelism because *dereḵ*, "way," is masculine while *ʾōraḥ*, "path," is feminine. This syntactic figure can create a merism and, in this verse, it expresses how the supplicant wishes to know all the ways and paths of Yahweh, showing respect for the god.[917]

Maloney suggests that there is an opposition in this verse between the sound /a/, reflecting strength, and /i/, reflecting vulnerability.[918] The direct objects at the start of

[915] Abernethy 2015: 339–351; Doyle 2001: 209; Human 1996: 76–88; Ruppert 1972: 581–582. The terms *dereḵ*, "way," used in vv. 4, 8, 9, 12, and *ʾōraḥ*, "path," used in vv. 4 and 10, are examples of this so-called "wisdom vocabulary." For an introduction to wisdom in the Hebrew Bible, see Dell 2009: 869–875; Murphy 1992: 920–931. On wisdom terminology, see Vayntrub 2021: 20–22; Murphy 1992: 920. On terms for wisdom in Proverbs, for example, see Fox 2000: 29–38. On the path metaphor as a wisdom motif, see Millar 2019: 95–108.
[916] Breaks in grammatical parallelism can be a way of securing the audience's attention or emphasizing an idea (Steinberger 2024: 426–427).
[917] On this function of gender-matched parallelism, see Watson 1984: 125.
[918] Maloney 2009: 48.

each line end with an /a/ sound, referring to Yahweh's ways and paths, and the imperative verbal forms end with an /i/ sound, referring to the supplicant. Maloney argues that this creates an opposition between Yahweh's strength and the supplicant's vulnerability and need for Yahweh to direct him. The use of first-person suffixes in the verbal forms also leads to homeoptoton between the two lines, contributing to the parallelism and performativity.

Verse 5 is the first triplet of the psalm:

5 *haḏrîḵēnî* | *ḇaʾămitteḵā* | *wĕlammĕḏēnî*
kî-ʾattā(h) | *ʾĕlōhê yišʿî*
ʾôṯĕḵā | *qiwwîṯî* | *kol-hayyôm*

Lead me in your truth and teach me,
For you are the god of my salvation,
For you I wait every day.

(Psalm 25:5)

The poet uses homeoptoton between the first term of v. 5, *haḏrîḵēnî*, "lead me," and the last term of v. 4, *lammĕḏēnî*, "teach me." In v. 5a, the poet employs the root *d–r–k*, also used in v. 4a, and the root *l–m–d*, used in v. 4b. This repetition contributes to the parallelism between the lines and emphasizes the direct petitions to Yahweh. The poet also creates chiasmus between vv. 4 and 5a through the use of verbs and objects:

4 *dĕrāḵêkā* | *YHWH* | *hôḏîʿēnî*
ʾōrḥôṯêkā | *lammĕḏēnî*
5 *haḏrîḵēnî* | *baʾămittekā* | *wĕlammĕḏēnî*

(Psalm 25:4–5a)

This chiasmus emphasizes the petitions and sets a link between these verses.

The use of the second-person independent pronoun *ʾattā*(*h*), "you," in v. 5b and the anastrophic fronting of *ʾôṯĕḵā*, "for you," in v. 5c continue the centering of Yahweh as the main audience of the prayer. This is again a rhetorical strategy to secure divine attention and intervention. The grammatical parallelism between the use of these two

second-person forms links vv. 5b and 5c, making it clearer that the third line is part of the triplet and not a monostich with the letter ו.[919]

Verse 6 continues the petitions:

6 *zĕḵōr-|raḥămêḵā | YHWH | waḥăsāḏêḵā*
kî mēʿôlām | hēmmā(h)

Remember your compassion, oh Yahweh, and your kindness,
For they are from old.

(Psalm 25:6)

The poet maintains the use of imperative verbal forms and employs again the tetragrammaton as a vocative. The assonance of /a/ and /e/ and consonance of /ḥ/ and /k/ between *raḥămêḵā*, "your compassion," and *waḥăsāḏêḵā*, "your kindness," contribute to the performativity and emphasize these direct objects, which are key for Yahweh to be merciful towards the supplicant.[920] The supplicant is hoping that if Yahweh remembers his "compassion" and "kindness," he will show mercy towards him.

In v. 7, the supplicant presents more petitions to Yahweh:

7 *ḥaṭṭōʾwṯ | nĕʿûray | ʾal-tizkōr*
kĕḥasdĕḵā | zĕḵār-lî-|ʾattā(h)
lĕmaʿan | ṭûḇḵā | YHWH

Do not remember the sins of my youth,
Because of your kindness, remember me, oh you,
For the sake of your goodness, oh Yahweh.

(Psalm 25:7)

The poet employs a verbal polyptoton between vv. 6a and 7a through the repetition of the root *z–k–r* (*zĕḵor* and *ʾal-tizkōr*). Moreover, these lines have chiasmus:

6 *zĕkōr-|raḥămêḵā | YHWH | waḥăsāḏêḵā*
7 *ḥaṭṭōʾwṯ | nĕʿûray | ʾal-tizkōr*

(Psalm 25:6a, 7a)

[919] Regarding this argument, see my macro-level analysis (§5.2.3.1).
[920] These two nouns are sometimes used in parallel to refer to Yahweh's mercy, as in Isa 63:7; Jer 16:5; Hos 2:21; Zec 7:9; Pss 40:12; 51:3; 69:17; 103:4; Lam 3:22; and Dan 1:9.

This chiasmus between the verbs and direct objects highlights the antithesis between the two verses: Yahweh ought to remember his compassion and kindness, but forget the supplicant's sins. The antithesis and polyptoton continue in v. 7b, where the poet uses the imperative *zĕḵār* from the root *z–k–r* and uses again a chiasmus between the verbal form and the object:

6 *zĕḵōr-|raḥămêḵā | YHWH | waḥăsāḏêḵā*
7 *ḥaṯṯōʾwṯ | nĕʿûray | ʾal-tizkōr*
kĕḥasdĕḵā | zĕkār-lî-|ʾattā(h)

(Psalm 25:6a, 7a–7b)

This creates grammatical parallelism between the lines where the supplicant petitions Yahweh to remember and enhances the antithesis.

In v. 7, the poet uses two parallel vocatives: *ʾattāh* in the second line, and the tetragrammaton in the third line. In fact, omitting the verbal form and its object in v. 7b, both lines have grammatical parallelism as they provide a reason (*kĕḥasdĕḵā* and *lĕmaʿan ṭûḇḵā*), followed by a vocative (*ʾattā(h)* and *YHWH*). The vocative *ʾattāh* is particularly interesting because it is the first time the poet uses the independent personal pronoun as a vocative for Yahweh and reiterates the message that only Yahweh can help the supplicant, acting as a rhetorical strategy to secure divine attention and relief.

I have decided to delete *ûp̄šāʿay*, "and my transgressions," in v. 7 as suggested by the critical notes of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgatensia. The Syriac version does not include this term and the metrical balance of 3+3, present in the majority of verses in Psalm 25, is broken by the inclusion of this term. Kraus, Craigie, and Briggs and Briggs also suggest the deletion of this term.[921] Through this deletion, only five lines in the first part of Psalm 25 (vv. 1a, 2b, 4b, 5b, 6a) avoid the three-foot pattern. This balanced pattern at the start

[921] Kraus 1988: 318; Craigie 1983: 217; Briggs and Briggs 1952: 222.

of the prayer could have contributed for the calming of the supplicant, who is in a moment of distress, and Yahweh, who is probably angry because of the supplicant's sins.

5.2.3.2.2. Psalm 25:8–15

In v. 8, the poet starts addressing Yahweh in the third person, contrasting with the direct requests of the previous verses:

8 *ṭôḇ*-|*wĕyāšār* | *YHWH*
ʿal-kēn | *yôre(h)* | *ḥattāʾîm* | *badāreḵ*
Yahweh is good and upright,
Therefore, he directs the sinners in the way.

(Psalm 25:8)

Even though the use of the acrostic can be seen as a limitation on poetic artistry and on a coherent message throughout the psalm,[922] I have identified different structural elements that bring cohesion to the psalm's arrangement and message. In v. 8, the poet does not completely break from the previous section as the root *ṭ–w–b* is used in the last line of v. 7 and in the first line of v. 8 because it is the ט verse, creating a polyptoton. The acrostic limits the number of words the poet could use at the start of v. 8, but he still tries to connect both parts of the psalm through the use of the same root and the repetition of the tetragrammaton. The poet therefore uses the triplet in v. 7 and the change of grammatical person as strategies to show a change in the psalm, but still keeps the different parts united through the vocabulary and the message. Therefore, v. 8a becomes a "pivot line" by maintaining elements from the previous stanza but also introducing the new stanza.[923]

Verse 9 presents petitions in the third person:

9 *yaḏrēḵ* | *ʿănāwîm* | *bammîšpāṭ*

[922] Gunkel 2020: 128.
[923] On "pivot lines," see my comments on Marduk 2:7 (§3.2.2.2.1).

wîlammēḏ | *ʿănāwîm* | *darkô*

May he lead the humble in justice,
And may he teach the humble his way.

(Psalm 25:9)

This verse has a polyptoton with the previous verse as v. 8b and both lines of v. 9 have terms using the root *d–r–k* (*badārek̲*, *yaḏrēk̲*, and *darkô*). This morphologic figure and repetition once more emphasize the "wisdom vocabulary" of Psalm 25, but they also show the poetic artistry of the poet. In v. 9, the poet could have started with any jussive verbal form because it is the ׳ verse, but by using the *d–r–k* root, the poet creates a polyptoton with the noun forms of this root employed in vv. 8b and 9b. The repetition of these sounds in key parts of the sentence, the beginning and ending of lines, emphasizes the importance of these terms for the speaker and the divine audience: the supplicant undoubtedly wants Yahweh to lead him in his way. By the parallel placing of *ḥaṭṭāʾîm*, "the sinners," and the *ʿănāwîm*, "the humble," in these lines, and their assonance of the /a/ and /i/ sounds, the poet is showing that the supplicant is a sinner but also a humble person that respectfully comes before Yahweh and asks for forgiveness. In fact, the supplicant recognizes his sinful state in vv. 7, 11, and 18, making this parallelism between "the sinners" and "the humble" clearer. Both lines of v. 9 have grammatical parallelism, as each starts with a precative verbal form (*yaḏrēk̲* and *wîlammēḏ*), followed by the noun *ʿănāwîm* and another object (*bammîšpāṭ* and *darkô*).

Verse 10 presents a statement about Yahweh:

10 *kol-ʾorḥôṯ YHWH* | *ḥeseḏ* | *weʾĕmeṯ*
lĕnōṣrê b̲ĕrîṯô | *wĕʿēḏōṯâw*

All the paths of Yahweh are kindness and truth,
For the ones who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

(Psalm 25:10)

This verse has the third-time repetition of the noun *ḥeseḏ*, "kindness," also used in vv. 6 and 7. This highlights the positive aspects of Yahweh and reminds him of his ability to show kindness. This is important for the petitions presented by the supplicant, since ultimately, he needs Yahweh's kindness and mercy towards him. This is also important for the supplicant himself as he is reminded of the god's ability to forgive, creating a sense of reassurance.

Verse 11 shifts to a second-person petition:

11 *lĕmaʿan-|šimḵā | YHWH*
wĕsālaḥtā | laʿăwōnî | kî raḇ-|hûʾ
For the sake of your name, oh Yahweh,
Please forgive my iniquity for it is great.

(Psalm 25:11)

The use of the tetragrammaton links this verse to v. 10, which was a positive statement about Yahweh and now the supplicant presents a petition for forgiveness as the god has been reminded of his kindness. Different scholars have highlighted the centrality of v. 11. Human interprets this verse as a "hopeful confession,"[924] and different scholars have placed it as the central part of the psalm which is built in a chiastic structure around this verse.[925] van der Lugt suggests that, numerically, the second line of v. 11 is the centre of Psalm 25, and that includes seventeen letters, a number associated with Yahweh.[926] In the second stanza of the psalm, v. 11 is the only one that shifts to a second-person address to Yahweh, creating a contrast with the other verses and highlighting its importance. This change to the second person is visible in the possessive suffix in *šimḵā*, "your name,"

[924] Human 1994: 93.
[925] Doyle 2001: 202–204; Bazak 1985: 486; Craigie 1983: 217–218; Alden 1974: 18–19; Ruppert 1972: 579; Ridderbos 1963: 62. van der Lugt's (2006: 266–267) numerical approach to the psalms shows that v. 11 is the central verse of Psalm 25.
[926] van der Lugt 2010: 531.

which is immediately followed by Yahweh's name as a vocative, which could act as a strategy to securing the deity's attention.

It is probable that the tetragrammaton in ancient Israel and Judah was pronounced up until the third century BC, as the fifth-century BC Elephantine papyri and the fourth-century BC Wadi Daliyeh papyri suggest.[927] In the case of v. 11, before the third century the speaker would say "For the sake of your name," and then recite Yahweh's name. Following the taboo on pronouncing Yahweh after the third century BC, thereafter in the performance of this psalm the performer would instead recite the title *ʾădōnāy*, "Lord." Nevertheless, Yahweh's name would be in the minds of the speaker and audience as it is the term utilized in the unit. The various poetic features that I have identified in v. 11 which emphasize this verse would therefore also emphasize the name of Yahweh for the speaker and listeners, even after it had ceased to be pronounced aloud.

Therefore, different poetic devices employed in v. 11 highlight not only its importance but also act as a way of securing Yahweh's attention because of their peculiarities and, thus, attaining forgiveness for the supplicant. The poet also uses an emphatic ו in the second line of v. 11,[928] thus highlighting the key request of the supplicant. Dahood understands the "great sin" as idolatry,[929] but there is not enough evidence within the psalm to support this claim.[930] Nevertheless, the use of the superlative *raḇ*, "great," attributes more importance to the supplicant's sin and contributes to the emphasis on this verse as a key passage in the unit. By keeping the sin unspecific, the poet allowed for this psalm to be reused and recited in different circumstances.

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[927] de Troyer 2005: 5–7. The shift is evidenced by the Greek translation of Leviticus in the end of the third century BC and by the Isaiah Qumran scroll 1QIs[a], which uses *ʾădōnāy* in 3:7 whereas the Masoretic text has the tetragrammaton (de Troyer 2005: 5). Therefore, the performers of Psalm 25 would probably have pronounced Yahweh's name before the late first millennium BC.
[928] Dahood 1966: 157. On the emphatic use of ו in Biblical poetry, see Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 39.2.4.b; Brongers 1978: 275–276.
[929] Dahood 1966: 156.
[930] Anderson 1972: 210.

Verse 12–15 moves back to the third person:

12 *mî-ze(h)* | *hāʾîš* | *yĕrēʾ* | *YHWH*
yôrennû | *bĕḏereḵā* | *yiḇḥār*
13 *napšô* | *bĕṭôḇ* | *tālîn*
wĕzarʿô | *yîraš* | *ʾāreṣ*
14 *sôḏ YHWH* | *lîrēʾâw*
ûḇĕrîṯô | *lĕhôḏîʿām*
15 *ʿênay* | *tāmîḏ* | *ʾel-YHWH*
kî hûʾ-⌊*yôṣiʾ* | *mērešeṯ* | *raḡlāy*

Who is this man who fears Yahweh?
He will direct him in the way he chooses.
His life will remain in prosperity,
And his descendants will inherit the earth.
The counsel of Yahweh belongs to those who fear him,
And he reveals his covenant to them.
My eyes are continuously to Yahweh,
For he brings out my feet from the net.

(Psalm 25:12–15)

The use of a rhetorical question in v. 12 can have a structuring effect by marking a new part within the stanza.[931] Rhetorical questions can also have a "dramatic effect,"[932] and the question in v. 12 is an indirect address to Yahweh who is reminded to see the supplicant as someone who fears him. Maloney understands vv. 1–11 as an answer to the question in v. 12, and the following verses as the blessings brought upon those who fear Yahweh.[933] In fact, vv. 12–14 describe the life of those who fear Yahweh and the poet unites these lines through the use of the root *y–r–ʾ* in vv. 12a and 14a. Unlike Maloney, I think the answer to the question comes in v. 15 because, in this verse, the poet uses the first person to refer to the supplicant as the one whose eyes are continuously to Yahweh. The supplicant is the fearful one who deserves all the blessings in vv. 12–14, and one of these blessings is already expressed in the second line of v. 15. The poet therefore

[931] On the structuring effect of rhetorical questions, see Watson 1984: 341–342. Rhetorical questions can be seen as another element of the so-called wisdom literature, as their prevalence in Job suggests (Watson 1984: 340).
[932] Watson 1984: 341.
[933] Maloney 2009: 51–52.

structures vv. 12–15 as a question followed by a description and an answer. The "dramatic effect" of the question is directed to Yahweh who hears this prayer and sees the supplicant as a fearful individual who, for this reason, deserves to "remain in prosperity" and whose descendants "will inherit the earth."

Verse 13 has grammatical parallelism between the first foot of each line, as both lines open with the subject with a third-person masculine singular possessive suffix (*napšô* and *wĕzarʿô*). Both lines also have three poetic feet, further contributing to the balance in v. 13. This verse expresses two of the core blessings bestowed upon the fearful man and both the balanced metre and the grammatical parallelism can reflect the balance and calmness of the life of the one who fears Yahweh as expressed in this same verse.

The shift to the answer is visible in the anastrophic fronting of *ʿēnay*, "my eyes," in v. 15. The poet uses the acrostic form, as this is the ע verse, but chooses a noun with a first-person suffix that emphasizes the change of subject from "the man who fears Yahweh" to the supplicant, who is, in fact, "the man who fears Yahweh." This structural shift accompanies the centrality of v. 11. In this verse, the supplicant addresses Yahweh directly, securing the deity's attention. The rhetorical question and the following verses act as reminders of what a fearful individual is, concluding in v. 15 that identifies the supplicant as "the man who fears Yahweh." Through this poetic structure, the poet and the speaker try to rhetorically secure Yahweh's attention and his action. If the supplicant is "the man who fears Yahweh," he deserves to be treated like the fearful ones and, therefore, his petition in v. 11 should be attended. Verse 15 also has a homeoptoton between the two lines if the tetragrammaton is not pronounced and instead the supplicant says *ʾădōnāy*, "Lord," because of the rhyming /ay/.

5.2.3.2.3. Psalm 25:16–22

Verse 16 shifts the psalm back to the second-person address:

16 *pĕnē(h)-|ʾēlay | wĕḥonnēnî*
kî-yāḥîḏ | wĕʿānî | ʾānî

Turn to me and grant me a favour,
For I am alone and afflicted.

(Psalm 25:16)

Verse 15 acts as a "pivot line" with this stanza by its use of first-person forms which are then used throughout the third stanza, starting with v. 16. In v. 16b, the homeoteleuton between *wĕʿānî*, "and afflicted," and *ʾānî*, "I," contributes to the performativity but also emphasizes the current suffering of the supplicant, an important rhetorical element to move Yahweh to pity and action. There is a rhyme between both lines since they end in *-nî*, which contributes to the strophe's parallelism and performativity. The first imperative form *pĕnēh-ʾēlay*, "turn to me," in v. 16 is chosen not only to respect the acrostic form, but also to secure Yahweh's attention before moving to the other petitions. The use of this expression at the start of petitions is attested, for example, in Pss 86:16 and 119:132, showing that the poet, even though limited by the acrostic, was still able to follow the structure of other lamentation psalms.[934]

Verse 17 continues the second-person petitions:

17 *ṣārôṯ lĕḇāḇî | harḥêḇ*
mimmĕṣûqôtay | hôṣîʾēnî

The distresses of my heart, make room,
And from my straits bring me out.

(Psalm 25:17)

[934] It should be noted that Psalm 119 is also an acrostic psalm.

In these lines, the poet employs grammatical parallelism as each line opens with the object (*ṣārôṯ lĕḇāḇî* and *mimmĕṣûqôtay*), followed by a second-person masculine singular imperative (*harḥêḇ* and *hôṣîʾēnî*). The use of a first-person common singular suffix in *hôṣîʾēnî*, "bring me out," adds some variety to the parallelism. I follow other scholars and the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia critical apparatus in correcting the hiphil perfect verbal form *hirḥîḇû*, "they enlarged," to a hiphil imperative verbal form *harḥêḇ*, "make great," in v. 17a, understanding the ו as copulative and connecting it to the second line of the verse.[935] The usage of *ṣar*, "distress," with an hiphil verbal form of the root *r–ḥ–b* is also attested in Ps 4:2, and it has a similar meaning, making great or large as a means of setting the individual free.[936]

Verse 18 also includes a set of petitions:

18 *rĕʾē(h)* | *ʿonyî* | *waʿămālî*
wĕśāʾ | *lĕḵol-ḥattōʾwṯāy*

See my affliction and my trouble,
And forgive all my sins.

(Psalm 25:18)

These lines have grammatical parallelism as they open with the second-person masculine singular imperatives (*rĕʾē(h)* and *wĕśāʾ*), followed by the objects (*ʿonyî waʿămālî* and *lĕḵol-ḥattōʾwṯāy*). This sets this verse in chiasmus with the previous one:

17 *ṣārôt* | *lĕbābî* | *harḥêḇ*
mimmĕṣûqôtay | *hôṣîʾēnî*
18 *rĕʾē(h)* | *ʿonyî* | *waʿămālî*
wĕśāʾ | *lĕkol-hattōʾwtāy*

(Psalm 25:17–18)

[935] Kraus 1988: 318; Craigie 1983: 217; Anderson 1972: 212; Briggs and Briggs 1952: 225.
[936] Anderson 1972: 212; Briggs and Briggs 1952: 225.

This syntactic figure can contribute to a totalizing view of the petitions since chiasmus can act like a merism.[937] The supplicant wants to cover all petitions to Yahweh and guarantee the god's mercy.

One problem in v. 18 is its use of the imperative *rĕʾēh*, "see," as the first word because one would expect a word starting with the letter ק to maintain the acrostic. Verse 19 opens with the same verbal form and it is possible that a scribal error of dittography, the repetition of part of a text, led to the transmission of the same verbal form at the start of each verse.[938] The critical apparatus in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia suggests correcting to *qĕšōḇ*, "pay attention," and Kraus suggests reading either *qĕšar*, "bind;" *qĕrēh*, "meet;" *qaddēm*, "come upon;" or *qĕḥāh*, "take."[939] Briggs and Briggs suggest the masculine singular imperative cohortative form of the verb *qārāʾ*, "to call,"[940] and Craigie follows their understanding.[941] The term *ʿănî*, "affliction," is commonly used with the verb *rāʾāh*, "to see,"[942] and only in Job 30:27 it is used with the verb *qādam*, "to meet." In Job, *ʿănî* is the subject of the verb and not Yahweh, making *qādam* less likely to be the original verb in Psalm 25. In the acrostic Psalm 119, the first line of the ר stanza (v. 153) has the expression *rĕʾēh-ʿonyî*, "see my affliction." This stands as a parallel to v. 18 and could either justify the scribal error because of the common pairing of these roots or explain why the poet decided to repeat *rĕʾēh*.[943] In fact, the poet might have wanted to pair *ʿănî* with a verb that is commonly used with it and decided to break the acrostic pattern just in this verse, the middle verse in the imperative petitions between vv. 16–20. It is difficult to decide which alternative verbal root to use as the various options are not

[937] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 147.
[938] On dittography in the Hebrew Bible, see McCarter 1986: 29–32.
[939] Kraus 1988: 319.
[940] Briggs and Briggs 1952: 229.
[941] Craigie 1983: 217.
[942] See, for example, Gen 29:32; Exod 3:7; Deut 26:7; 1Sam 1:11; Pss 9:13; 31:7; 119:153; Lam 1:9; 3:1.
[943] The similarities between Psalms 25 and 119 have already been noted in terms of terminology by Lohfink (1991a: 271–295).

commonly used with *ʿănî*. Moreover, the repeated pairing of *rāʾāh* and *ʿănî*, the use of the same expression in the acrostic Psalm 119, and the medial character of v. 18 point to a conscious decision by the poet, thus emphasizing a verse that makes a similar petition to the central verse of the prayer, v. 11. Consequently, I do not agree it is necessary to emend this verse.

Verse 19 continues the petitions:

19 *rĕʾē(h)-|ʾôyḇay | kî-rābbû*
wĕśinʾaṯ ḥāmās | śĕnēʾûnî

See my enemies for they are many,
And with violent hatred they hate me.

(Psalm 25:19)

The first and second feet of vv. 18a and 19a have grammatical parallelism, as the first foot has the imperative *rĕʾē(h)* and the second foot has a direct object with a first-person possessive suffix (*ʿonyî* and *ʾôyḇay*). The repetition of the verb *rĕʾē(h)*, "see," is a rhetorical strategy to cause Yahweh to have pity on the supplicant, as the god is told to see the supplicant's suffering and enemies. The anastrophic fronting of *śinʾā(h)*, "hatred," and *ḥāmās*, "violence," and the *figura etymologica* through the use of a verb (*śĕnēʾûnî*) and a noun (*wĕśinʾaṯ*) of the root *ś–n–ʾ* emphasize the iniquity of the supplicant's enemies. These poetic devices are thus also a rhetorical strategy to convince Yahweh to act in favour of the supplicant, as the god is reminded of the evilness of those who act against the supplicant. The consonance of /b/ and /r/ between *harḥéḇ*, "make room" (v. 17), and *rābbû*, "they are many" (v. 19), and their similar meanings contribute to the parallelism between the strophes.

In v. 20, the poet presents more petitions:

20 *šomrā(h) | napšî | wĕhaṣṣîlēnî*
ʾal-ʾēḇôš | kî-ḥāsîṯî ḇāḵ

Guard my life and save me,
May I not feel ashamed for I seek refuge in you.

(Psalm 25:20)

Verse 20a maintains the grammatical parallelism of vv. 18a and 19a because the first foot has a second-person masculine singular imperative (*šomrā(h)*) and the second foot a direct object with a first-person possessive suffix (*napšî*). This line also has grammatical parallelism with v. 16a since both start with a second-person masculine singular imperative (*pĕnē(h)* and *šomrā(h)*), followed by a direct object with a first-person possessive suffix (*ʾēlay* and *napšî*) and a second-person masculine singular imperative with a first-person suffix (*wĕḥonnēnî* and *wĕhaṣṣîlēnî*). This contributes to the strophic parallelism and emphasizes the petitions. The homeoptoton between *śĕnēʾûnî*, "they hate me" (v. 19b), and *wĕhaṣṣîlēnî*, "save me" (v. 20), also contributes to the strophic parallelism.

Verse 21 continues the petitions with a jussive:

21 *tōm-|wāyōšer | yiṣṣĕrûnî*
kî qiwwîṯîḵā

May integrity and uprightness keep me,
For I wait for you.

(Psalm 25:21)

The use of a jussive parallels the use of the same verbal conjugation in v. 20b. In fact, vv. 21 and 20b have grammatical parallelism, since the jussive verbal forms (*ʾal-ʾēḇôš* and *yiṣṣĕrûnî*) directly precede the reason introduced by the particle *kî* (*kî-ḥāsîṯî ḇāḵ* and *kî qiwwîṯîḵā*). The anastrophic fronting of *tōm*, "integrity," and *yōšer*, "uprightness," adds emphasis to the subject, the elements the supplicant wishes for. The alliteration between *kî*, "for," and *qiwwîṯîḵā*, "I wait for you," highlights the reason why Yahweh should help the supplicant. This is thus another rhetorical strategy to convince the god to act in favour of the supplicant.

The poet creates a ring structure in the psalm by linking the final verses to the first ones. As noted by other scholars, the poet uses *qāwāh*, "to wait," at the start of Psalm 25 (vv. 3 and 5) and in v. 21.[944] The term *ʾōyēḇ*, "enemy," is also used at the start (v. 2) and end (v. 19) of the psalm.[945] This contributes to the ring structure of the psalm in which vv. 1–3 correspond to vv. 19–21.[946] This places emphasis again in the centre of the psalm, v. 11, and shows the artistry of the poet who was able to connect the different parts of the poem despite the formal constraints of the acrostic.

Verse 22 is highly debated because it breaks the acrostic pattern by adding another פ verse and introducing a more communal perspective in a psalm of individual lament:

22 *pĕdē(h)* | *ʾĕlōhîm* | *ʾeṯ-yiśrāʾēl*
mikōl ṣārôṯâw

Redeem, oh god, Israel,
From all its distresses.

(Psalm 25:22)

Because of its peculiarities, some scholars understand v. 22 as a later addition.[947] Nevertheless, the acrostic Psalm 34 also includes an additional פ verse and excludes the ו verse, using the same verbal root, *pāḏāh*, "to redeem," in the final verse. This leads some scholars to see v. 22 not as a later addition but a core part of the original structure of the prayer.[948] Bazak, in his geometric pattern analysis of Psalm 25, views v. 22 as paralleling v. 1,[949] and Alden has the same perspective.[950] Doyle places v. 22 together with v. 21 as the last stanza of the prayer.[951]

[944] Meynet 2012: 253; Maloney 2009: 46; Doyle 2001: 211; Ridderbos 1963: 64.
[945] Doyle 2001: 202.
[946] Craigie 1983: 217–218.
[947] Gunkel 2020: 123; Craigie 1983: 217; Anderson 1972: 213. Human (1996: 79; 1994: 94), in his division of Psalm 25, places v. 22 as an epilogue to the prayer and, thus, apart from the remainder.
[948] Meynet 2012: 258; van der Lugt 2006: 269; Freedman 1992: 127–128.
[949] Bazak 1985: appendix C.
[950] Alden 1974: 19–20.
[951] Doyle 2001: 202–203.

As discussed in §5.2.3.1, my research points to v. 22 being a core part of the psalm and contributing to its unity. The ring structure of the psalm also supports this understanding of v. 22, since there are elements that bring vv. 1 and 22 together. Looking at the accentual metre of these verses, it is noticeable how they form a chiasmus around the entire psalm: 2+3 (v. 1) and 3+1 (v. 22).[952] This link is also visible in the use of the term *ʾĕlōhîm*, "god," in both verses and the direct address to Yahweh. The second line of v. 22, because of its shortness, emphasizes the purpose of the prayer, to release "from all its distresses," and the reference to Israel adds to the idea of completeness already expressed in the acrostic form. Verse 22 also has consonance and assonance with v. 16 because of the repetition of the sounds /p/ and /e/ in the verbs *pĕnē(h)*, "face" (v. 16), and *pĕdē(h)*, "redeem" (v. 22). The assonance extends to the verb *rĕʾē(h)*, "see," employed in vv. 18 and 19. Therefore, v. 22 is a core part of Psalm 25 and is part of the rhetorical strategies to secure Yahweh's attention and action.

Verse 22 has alliteration between *ʾĕlōhîm*, "god," and *ʾeṯ-yiśrāʾēl*, "Israel." Verse 22 parallels vv. 16, 18, 19, and 20 as they all open with a second-person imperative and have an object, but v. 22 introduces a vocative which breaks this parallelism and emphasizes the prayer's divine addressee. Verse 22 is thus a last attempt to secure Yahweh's attention and intervention.

The prevalence of the /i/ sound in vv. 16–22 is noteworthy, particularly the assonance in vv. 16, 17, 20, and 21. Maloney showed the role of this sound in vv. 4–5 as an intensifier of the supplicant's vulnerability in contrast with Yahweh's strength shown in the /a/ sound.[953] In fact, the /i/ sound in Biblical Hebrew is connected to the first-person singular because of its use in first-person common singular suffixes. Because of the

[952] If one counts the construct chain in v. 22b as two separate poetic feet, the last verse would have the metre 3+2.
[953] Maloney 2009: 47–48.

prevalence of first-person suffixes, all the lines in vv. 16–21 end in an /i/ sound with just four exceptions (vv. 17a, 19a, 20b, and 21b). This leads to assonance between the different lines and strophes, contributing to the structural unity of this part of the psalm and its inner parallelism.[954] This assonance not only emphasizes the shift to "I," but also contributes to the idea of vulnerability of the supplicant, as expressed by Maloney for vv. 4–5. The poet focuses on the /i/ sound in direct petitions, a moment of humility where the speaker addresses Yahweh directly and requests his action. By emphasizing the supplicant's vulnerability, the poet is trying to call Yahweh to action. This phonologic figure is thus key in an oral performance.

[954] For sound correspondence as a form of parallelism, see Berlin 1985: 104–112.

5.3. Summary

In the preceding sections, I focused on the Biblical Hebrew comparators: Job 3 (§5.1) and Psalm 25 (§5.2). I identified and analysed their speakers, audiences, and rhetorical purposes (§§5.1.1 and 5.2.1); I also produced a transcription and translation of each rhetorical unit (§§5.1.2 and 5.2.2); and I thoroughly analysed the units' use of poetic devices (§§5.1.3 and 5.2.3).

My analysis indicated that the speaker in Job 3 is the book's protagonist, Job, and that the audience is both Yahweh and Job's friends. I also identified two main rhetorical purposes: cursing Job's day of birth and calling for the intervention of Yahweh in favour of the protagonist. For Psalm 25, I identified the supplicant as the speaker, Yahweh as the main audience, and the main rhetorical purpose as convincing Yahweh to act on behalf of the supplicant and change his situation.

The following five tables outline respectively the prosodic, phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures identified in Job 3:3–26 and Psalm 25.

Prosodic Figures	**Verses in Job 3:3–26**	**Verses in Psalm 25**
Metre	Five feet: 7a Four feet: 3b; 4a; 6a; 17; 19a; 20a; 23a; 24a Three feet: 3a; 4b–5b; 9b; 10b–13; 14b–16; 18a; 19b; 21a; 22; 23b; 24b–25; 26b	Four feet: 6a; 8b; 11b–12a; 15b Three feet: 1b; 2a; 3–4a; 5a; 5c; 7–8a; 9–10a; 11a; 12b–13; 15a; 16; 17a; 18a; 19a; 20a; 21a; 22a Two feet: 1a; 2b; 4b; 5b; 6b; 10b;14; 17; 18b; 19b; 20b

	Two feet: 5c; 6b–6c; 7b; 8a–9a; 9c–10a; 14a; 18b; 20b; 21b; 26a	One foot: 21b; 22b
Strophic patterns	Triplet: 4; 5; 6; 9 Couplet: 3; 7; 8; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26	Triplet: 5; 7 Couplet: 1; 2; 3; 4; 6; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22

Table 24 - Prosodic figures identified in Job 3:3–26 and Psalm 25

Phonologic Figures	**Verses in Job 3:3–26**	**Verses in Psalm 25**
Assonance	/a/: 3; 5b; 6; 9c; 13; 18a; 23; 24; 25 /e/: 6a–6b; 11; 15; 16a; 19b; 20; 21a; 23 /i/: 8; 10a; 12; 13; 22; 24; 25 /o/: 3; 4; 7b; 14; 16; 18b; 19; 25b; 26 /u/: 6a; 12; 17; 21	/a/: 2; 6a; 9; 11 /e/: 3; 4; 5a; 6; 8b; 10; 12; 15; 16a; 22a /i/: 5; 9; 16; 17; 20; 21 /o/: 3; 4; 5b–5c; 7a; 10; 13; 14; 17; 18; 21a; 22 /u/: 3; 19 /ĕ/: 7b
Consonance	/ʔ/: 3; 4a–4b; 6a–6b; 9b–9c; 11; 16; 18; 24; 25; 26 /b/: 3a; 6b–6c; 7b /d/: 3a; 12; 19; 25a /h/: 3b; 4a; 6a–6b; 7; 15 /w/: 26	/ʔ/: 1; 2; 5; 7a–7b; 10a; 12a; 15; 18; 19; 20b; 22a /b/: 2; 3; 12b; 17a; 19a /d/: 4; 5a; 9 /h/: 4a; 5; 6; 7b–7c; 12a; 15; 20a; 22a

	/ḥ/: 17b; 24a; 25a /y/: 4a; 24b; 25 /k/: 9a; 13a; 24 /l/: 3; 4b–4c; 5a–5b; 6a; 7; 10; 11a; 16; 18b; 20; 22a; 24a; 26 /m/: 4a–4b; 6b–6c; 10b; 11; 12; 14; 15; 17; 20; 21; 22; 24 /n/: 5b; 7; 13b; 16a; 18; 21; 24a /ʿ/: 4b–4c; 5b–5c; 8b; 10b; 14a /p/: 25a /ṣ/: 14a /r/: 3b; 8; 9c; 17a; 23a; 25b /š/ś/: 9a; 13; 17; 22; 26a /t/: 8b; 13; 24; 25; 26	/w/: 10 /ḥ/: 6a; 10a /y/: 2b /k/: 4; 5; 6; 7; 8b; 20b; 21b /l/: 2; 3a; 11; 20b; 22 /m/: 3; 5a; 6; 9; 11a /n/: 5a; 16; 19b; 20a /ʿ/: 18a /ṣ/: 17 /r/: 6a; 7a–7b; 8; 10; 12; 13b; 15b; 17a; 19a; 21a /š/ś/: 1b; 19b; 20 /t/: 5; 7a–7b; 10; 13a
Alliteration	3a; 5b; 25a; 25b	1b; 2; 21b; 22a
Homeoteleuton	–	16b
Homeoptoton	21b–22a; 26a–26b	1; 4; 4–5; 15; 19b–20a
Rhyme	4c and 5b; 25a–26a	16

Table 25 - Phonologic figures identified in Job 3:3–26 and Psalm 25

Syntactic Figures	**Verses in Job 3:3–26**	**Verses in Psalm 25**

Grammatical parallelism	3; 4b–5c; 4a and 6a; 10; 11; 13; 14–15; 16; 21a and 22a; 21b and 22b; 25; 26	4; 7b and 7c; 9; 16a, 18a, 19a, 20a, and 22a; 17; 18; 20b and 21
Hymnic parallelism	–	–
Gender-matched parallelism	5b–5c	4
Chiasmus	4b–5c; 6b–6c; 17; 20; 23; 24	3; 4–5a; 6a, 7a, and 7b; 17–18
Rhetorical question	11–12; 20–23	12a
Repetition	*hû*ʾ: 4; 6; 7 *māh*: 11; 12; 20 *šām*: 17(x2); 19 ʾ–*l*–*h*: 4; 23 ʾ–y–n: 9; 21 ʾ–*w*–*r*: 9; 16; 20 *b*–*ṭ*–*n*: 10; 11 *b*–*w*–ʾ: 6; 7; 24; 25; 26 *g*–*b*–*r*: 3; 23 *h*–*y*–*h*: 4; 7; 16 *ḥ*–*š*–*k*: 4; 5; 9 *l*–*y*–*l*: 3; 6; 7 *m*–*w*–*t*: 5; 11; 21 *n*–*w*–*ḥ*: 13; 17; 26 ʿ–*m*–*l*: 10; 20 *p*–*ḥ*–*d*: 25 (x2)	YHWH: 1; 4; 6; 7; 8; 10; 11; 12; 14; 15 ʾ*attā(h)*: 5; 7 ʾ–*l*–*h*: 1; 5; 22 ʾ–*m*–*n*: 5; 10 ʾ–*r*–*ḥ*: 4; 10 ʾ–*y*–*b*: 2; 19 *b*–*r*–ʾ: 10; 14 *b*–*w*–*š*: 2; 3 (x2); 20 *d*–*r*–*k*: 4; 5; 8; 9 (x2); 12 *ḥ*–*s*–*d*: 6; 7; 10 *ḥ*–*ṭ*–ʾ: 7; 8; 18 *l*–*m*–*d*: 4; 5; 9 *m*–ʿ–*n*: 7; 11 *n*–*p*–*š*: 1; 13; 20 *n*–*ś*–ʾ: 1; 18

	r–ʾ–h: 9; 16 *r–g–z*: 17; 26 *s–t–r*: 10; 23 *š–q–ṭ*: 13; 26 *ṭ–m–n*: 16; 21 *y–w–m*: 3; 4; 5; 6	*n–ṣ–r*: 10; 21 *ʿ–n–h*: 9 (x2); 16; 18 *q–w–h*: 3; 5; 21 *r–ʾ–h*: 18; 19 *r–b–b*: 11; 19 *ś–n–ʾ*: 19 (x2) *ṣ–r–h*: 17; 22 *ṭ–w–b*: 7; 8; 13 *y–d–ʿ*: 4; 14 *y–r–ʾ*: 12; 14 *y–r–h*: 8; 12 *y–r–š*: 13; 15 *y–ṣ–ʾ*: 15; 17 *y–š–r*: 8; 21 *z–k–r*: 6; 7 (x2)
Anaphora	–	–
Anadiplosis	–	3
Epanadiplosis	–	–
Hyperbaton	–	–
Anastrophe	4a; 4c; 5b; 6a; 6c; 7a; 11a; 11b; 16a; 17a; 18a; 23a; 24a; 25a	1; 2a; 3a; 4; 5c; 7a; 7b;13; 14b; 15b; 17; 19b; 21a

Table 26 - Syntactic figures identified in Job 3:3–26 and Psalm 25

Semantic Figures	Verses in Job 3:3–26	Verses in Psalm 25
Epithet	–	–
Vocative	–	1a; 1b; 4a; 6a; 7b; 7c; 11a; 22a
Merism	3; 19a; 19b; 24	–
Enumeration	3–9	–
Climax	23	11
Simile	16; 24b	–
Metaphor	–	–
Synonymous parallelism	5; 6b–6c; 7; 9b–9c; 13; 16; 25; 26	–
Antithetical parallelism	–	3; 6a and 7a; 7a–7b
Pun	8a; 22a; 23b	–

Table 27 - Semantic figures identified in Job 3:3–26 and Psalm 25

Morphologic Figures	Verses in Job 3:3–26	Verses in Psalm 25
Polyptoton	–	2a and 3; 6a, 7a, and 7b; 7c and 8a; 8b and 9
Figura etymologica	25a	19b

Table 28 - Morphologic figures identified in Job 3:3–26 and Psalm 25

Besides these five categories of poetic figures, Job 3:3–26 also uses two other devices: an acrostic and allusions. The first is found in vv. 3–5 of the curse and the latter is shown in the "decreation" of traditional Israelite theology and in the play with the psalmic view of Sheol. The acrostic in Job 3 contrasts with the traditional Biblical Hebrew acrostics, since these are alphabetic. This acrostic instead more closely aligns with the Mesopotamian non-alphabetic tradition. Most Akkadian acrostics are found in hymns and prayers, showing a link between this feature, performativity, and religious discourse.[955] Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that the acrostic in Job 3:3–5 has a performative and religious aspect linked to the curse.

Psalm 25 uses an alphabetic acrostic, which can express the totality of petitions and be pleasing for Yahweh, the divine audience. The spelling of *aleph* through the repetition of a פ verse and positioning of the ל verse in the centre was intentional and can be seen as another poetic device to secure divine attention and emphasize v. 11.

This wide variety of poetic devices and their interplay are an expression of the units' eloquence. These poetic figures are also in accord with the speakers, audiences, and rhetorical goals of each unit. In Job 3, for example, the acrostic emphasizes the spell-like nature of the curse and the merism in v. 3 expresses its totalizing character (§5.1.3.2.1). These devices thus contribute to the curse and are also part of the rhetoric of shock that ultimately is an attempt to secure Yahweh's attention. This rhetoric continues in the lament where, for instance, the rhetorical questions are a strategy to force an answer from the god (§§5.1.3.2.2 and 5.1.3.2.3). The parallelism and repetition of v. 26 (§5.1.3.2.3) emphasize Job's suffering and are thus a way to evoke pity from Yahweh and Job's friends, the two main audiences. In Psalm 25, for example, the anastrophic fronting of the prepositions with references to Yahweh in vv. 1 and 2 (§5.2.3.2.1) or the use of

[955] On the Akkadian acrostics, see Soll 1988: 305–311.

vocatives are ways of trying to secure divine attention. The antithetical parallelism and the chiasmus in v. 3 emphasize the contrast between the ones who wait for Yahweh and the treacherous, linking the supplicant to the righteous who deserve to be forgiven by the god (§5.2.3.2.1). The grammatical parallelism employed in the last stanza of the prayer emphasizes the final imperative petitions (§5.2.3.2.3). These different poetic devices are thus not only an expression of literary aesthetics and eloquence, but also strategies to attain specific rhetorical purposes.

My poetic analysis also demonstrated the performative aspects of Psalm 25. This is particularly important given the typical interpretation of acrostic poems in the Hebrew Bible as encountered above (§§5.2.1 and 5.2.3.1). This has instead tended to emphasize the visual aspects of the format, connecting this to scribal culture and education. But as I have argued, the poetry of Psalm 25 shows that it was also at home in a more performative setting.

6 Comparative Poetic and Rhetorical Analysis of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew Sources

In this chapter, I conduct a comparative poetic and rhetorical analysis of the selected Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources. The first half of the chapter focuses on *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 (§6.1), starting with the units' speakers, audiences, and rhetorical purposes (§6.1.1) and then their poetic devices (§6.1.2). The second half of the chapter moves to the three selected Akkadian šuila-prayers (Marduk 2, Ištar 1, Šamaš 1) and Psalm 25 (§6.2), also beginning with the units' speakers, audiences, and rhetorical purposes (§6.2.1) followed by their poetic devices (§6.2.2).

6.1. *Ludlul*'s Hymns and Job 3

6.1.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

Ludlul's opening hymn and Job 3 share a first-person speaker who, in both instances, is a sufferer. Nevertheless, in *Ludlul* I:1–40, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan has already overcome the suffering, while in Job 3, the protagonist is still undergoing it. *Ludlul*'s final hymn has the Babylonians as the speakers, which distinguishes it from both *Ludlul* I:1–40 and Job 3. Regarding the audiences, both *Ludlul* hymns and Job 3 have a divine audience: Marduk in the former and Yahweh in the latter. The religious systems of Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible are different because of the former's polytheism and the latter's tendency to monotheism. Nevertheless, as convincingly argued by Zernecke,[956] these systems and deities are still comparable, since in Mesopotamian hymns and prayers the deity to whom the prayer is addressed is described as the greatest and superior to other gods.[957] This closely parallels Yahweh's role in the Hebrew Bible who is described as the only god (e.g., Deut 4:35, 39; Isa 43:10–11) or as the greatest among the gods (e.g., Exod 15:11; Pss 82:1; 95:3). Therefore, the deities are comparable and this creates a core link between the rhetorical units as they share a similar religious language. Besides the divine audience, *Ludlul* I:1–40 and Job 3 also have a human audience: the wider community in the former and Job's friends in the latter.

The main differences between the units are the rhetorical purposes. In both *Ludlul* hymns, the speakers wish to praise Marduk. In *Ludlul* I:1–40, the protagonist also wishes to teach the wider community about Marduk's mercy, and *Ludlul* V:71–120 has a petitionary character as it includes a set of petitions for recovery of a sufferer (*Ludlul*

[956] Zernecke 2011a: 22–24.
[957] See Metcalf 2015: 40–41, 76.

V:113–118). In Job 3, the protagonist has two main rhetorical purposes: to curse his day of birth and obtain deliverance from his suffering. Because of its doxological character, *Ludlul* has been understood as aligning more closely with thanksgiving psalms,[958] while Job focuses more on pious suffering and dialogic reflection. Job 3 more specifically is contrary to praise or blessing, because it is composed of a curse (Job 3:3–10) and a lament (Job 3:11–26). Therefore, the speakers of the units have distinct rhetorical purposes. Nevertheless, both *Ludlul* V:71–120 and Job 3 wish to secure change and divine intervention, thus showing a parallel between these two units.

Overall, *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120, and Job 3 have different rhetorical purposes, as the Akkadian sources are hymns, while Job 3 includes a curse and a lament. Moreover, *Ludlul* I:1–40 has someone who has recovered from suffering as a speaker, while Job 3 has someone who is currently suffering as a speaker. Nevertheless, all three units still have a similar divine audience which influences the type of language employed, and *Ludlul* V:71–120, like Job 3, also wishes to persuade the deity to intervene in favour of a supplicant.

6.1.2. Poetic Analysis

6.1.2.1. Prosodic Figures

The Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew prosodic rules are distinct,[959] and thus they employ the figures differently. For example, an Akkadian line usually consists of four poetic feet, while a Biblical Hebrew line usually consists of three poetic feet. Despite these

[958] Newsom 2009: 74; Dhorme 1967: cxi.
[959] See my introductions to Akkadian poetry (§1.5.1) and Biblical Hebrew poetry (§1.5.2).

differences, it is still possible to identify one similarity between the units in the use of metrical parallelism and another similarity in the use of strophic divisions.

6.1.2.1.1. Metre

The parallelism between poetic lines extends to metre in *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3. For example, *Ludlul* I:33–36 has metrical parallelism, as all lines in the quatrain have the same number of poetic feet. In Job 3:15–16, the poet employs parallelism, since each line has three poetic feet. This shows how parallelism in both poetic traditions goes beyond grammar or semantics.

6.1.2.1.2. Strophic Patterns

In *Ludlul* and Job, the poets use "counterpatterning" strophes for structuring effects.[960] The use of two triplets in *Ludlul* V:77–82 sets this stanza apart within the hymn and highlights its theme of humanity's praise of Marduk. In the curse of Job 3:3–10, the poet employs two triplets in the curse on the day (Job 3:4–5) and again two triplets in the curse on the night (Job 3:6, 9). Therefore, the triplets, which are not the basic pattern in either unit, have a structuring effect within the hymn and the curse.

[960] On the term "counterpatterning," see my comment on the term *tayyārat* in *Ludlul* I:8 (§2.2.2.2.2). See also how monostichs and triplets can mark the opening and closing of stanzas in Akkadian and Ugaritic poetry (Steinberger 2024: 94–98, 107).

6.1.2.2. Phonologic Figures

Despite the uncertainty regarding *Ludlul*'s and Job's *Sitz im Leben* and contexts of use,[961] the rhetorical units employ phonologic figures that are traditionally for the ear rather than the eye. All rhetorical units employ assonance, consonance, alliteration, and rhyme. Moreover, *Ludlul* I:1–40 and Job 3 use homeoptoton, and *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120 use homeoteleuton. All these poetic devices have an aural impact and contribute to the oral performance of the hymns (*Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120), the curse (Job 3:3–10), and the lament (Job 3:11–26).

6.1.2.2.1. Assonance and Consonance

Assonance in *Ludlul*'s hymns employs the vowels /a/ and /u/ the most, while in Job 3, it employs the vowel /i/ the most. This shows a contrast between the strength of the sounds /a/ and /u/ and the softness of the sound /i/.[962] My analysis thus suggests that *Ludlul*'s hymns tended to emphasize stronger sounds linked to praise, while Job 3 emphasizes the sound /i/ which can reflect the speaker's weakness, a moment when he is suffering and tries to shock Yahweh and his friends and also secure their pity. However, other reasons can be proposed for the use of these sounds and more research on Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew assonance needs to be conducted before reaching definitive conclusions.

The patterns in consonance are less clear, since in Job 3, the sounds /ʔ/, /l/, and /m/ are used the most for consonance, while in *Ludlul*'s hymns the sounds /b/ and /l/ are used the most. The use of /l/ in all three units can suggest a common pattern in Semitic

[961] On *Ludlul*'s and Job's *Sitze im Leben*, see §1.4.1.1 and §1.4.2.1 respectively.
[962] On this contrast, see Plett 2010: 127–128; Maloney 2009: 48.

languages, but more research needs to be done. Consonance can have an emphatic effect and, for example, in *Ludlul* I:31–32, the consonance of the sound /m/ emphasizes Marduk's name, while in Job 3:11–12, the consonance of the sound /m/ emphasizes the rhetorical questions and the start of the lament.[963]

6.1.2.2.2. Alliteration, Homeoteleuton, Homeoptoton, and Rhyme

The poets employ alliteration, homeoteleuton, homeoptoton, and rhyme in the rhetorical units to emphasize certain ideas, Watson's "*enargaeic* function."[964] For example, In *Ludlul* I:2 and 4, the use of alliteration between *mūši*, "night," and *muppašir*, "forgiving," highlights the antithesis between Marduk's wrath and mercy, the core theme of the hymn. In Job 3:3a, the alliteration between *yōʾbaḏ*, "may it perish," and *yôm*, "day," emphasizes the opening of the curse and its main wish. Therefore, these poetic devices have similar effects despite the different purposes for their use, as the example from *Ludlul* aims to praise Marduk's all-encompassing power and the example from Job aims to enact the curse and shock Yahweh.

6.1.2.3. Syntactic Figures

6.1.2.3.1. Grammatical Parallelism

Grammatical parallelism, the main syntactic figure, is present in all three rhetorical units and creates internal cohesion and balance, contributing to the flow of recitation. This is

[963] On the emphatic function of consonance, see Rozzi 2024b: 259–260; Watson 1984: 228.
[964] Watson 1984: 228.

visible, for example, in *Ludlul* I:33–34, where the grammatical parallelism contributes to the solemnity of these lines, emphasizing the central ideas of wrath and mercy. In Job 3:4–5, the use of grammatical parallelism enhances the spell-like language and rhythm of the curse and contributes to the synonymy of the different terms referring to darkness. Therefore, grammatical parallelism is a key part of the units contributing to their rhetorical purposes. The breaks in parallelism are also important in both *Ludlul* and Job.[965] For example, the parallelism of *Ludlul* I:33–36 is broken in I:37–40, drawing the audience's attention to the hymn's concluding stanza. In Job 3:6, the poet breaks the grammatical parallelism of vv. 4 and 5, highlighting the move to the curse on the night.

6.1.2.3.2. Hymnic Parallelism

Hymnic parallelism is used three times in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn (*Ludlul* I:1–4, 9–12, 29–32), but is absent in Job 3. This demonstrates the units' different rhetorical purposes and natures, because *Ludlul* I:1–40 has a hymnic purpose, praising Marduk, and Job 3 is meant to curse Job's day of birth and shock Yahweh. Hymnic parallelism and its doxological character are thus more in accord with the hymn's purposes. Moreover, *Ludlul* is more direct in its praise to Marduk, while Job 3 is subtler and more indirect in its references to Yahweh.

Despite this device's more common use in Akkadian poetry, it is still possible to identify a similar figure in Biblical Hebrew poetry:

1 *hallû | yāh*
hallû | ʾeṯ-YHWH | min-haššāmayîm
hallûhû | bammĕrômîm

Praise Yah!
Praise Yahweh from the heavens!

[965] On the emphatic effect of breaks in grammatical parallelism, see Steinberger 2024: 426–427.

Praise him in the heights!

(Psalm 148:1)

This is another example of the doxological character of hymnic parallelism.

6.1.2.3.3. Gender-Matched Parallelism

Gender-matched parallelism is employed in all three rhetorical units, but, while in *Ludlul* I:19–20 it emphasizes an antithesis, in Job 3:5b–5c and *Ludlul* V: 73–74 and 75–76, it expresses a merism.[966] However, in Job 3:5b–5c, this syntactic figure reflects the wish for darkness to completely envelop Job's day of birth, whereas in *Ludlul* V:73–74 and 75–76, the gender-matched parallelism emphasizes how only Marduk and Zarpānītu could have saved Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. Therefore, this poetic device is employed according to the different rhetorical purposes of the units.

6.1.2.3.4. Chiasmus

Regarding chiasmus, the structuring functions of this syntactic figure are visible in both *Ludlul* and Job. In *Ludlul* I:5–8, the chiasmus marks the beginning of the second stanza, and, in Job 3:20, the chiasmus marks the beginning of the final stanza. The expressive functions common to both *Ludlul* and Job are "merismus," "emphatic negation or prohibition," "emphasis," and "simultaneity and harmony."[967] The first expressive function is employed in *Ludlul* V:84–85 and 113–118:[968]

84 […‖ *k*]*al* (|) *nišī* | *libēlma*

[966] On these functions of gender-matched parallelism, see Watson 1984: 125–126.
[967] This categorization follows Watson's proposal (1984: 205–206; 1981: 146–149), already employed in §4.2.3.4.
[968] On chiasmus as a way to emphasize merism, see Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 147.

85 […‖ *li*]*rē* | *kal* (|) *dadmē*

[...] may he rule over all the people,
[... may he shepherd] all the inhabited world,

(*Ludlul* V:84–85)

113 [*ša*ʔ *maruš*]*ta*ʔ | *īmuru* ‖ *lippaṭir* | *aranšu*
114 [...] ‖ *mānaḫtašu* | *lištapšiḫ*
115 [*ilšu*ʔ ...] ‖ *ištartašu* | *likabbissu*
116 [... *n*]*išū* ‖ *lišeʾā*ʔ | *šulmāniš*
117 [...] ... ‖ *šarrašu* | *likabbissu*
118 [*ṭūb* (|) *šīri*] | *u*ʔ *ḫūd* (|) *libbi* ‖ *libaʾʾi* | *ūmīšam*

[The one who?] experienced [distress?], may his transgression be absolved,
[...] may his weariness be assuaged,
[May his god?...], may his goddess honour him,
[...] may the people seek? in peace,
[...] may his king honour him,
May he daily look for [sweetness of flesh] and? joy of heart.

(*Ludlul* V:113–118)

The syntactic figure expresses the totalizing character of the petitions.

In Job, chiasmus is employed for a merism in vv. 4b–5c, 23, and 24:

4 *hayyôm* | *hahûʾ* | *yĕhî* | *ḥōšeḵ*
ʾal-yidrĕšēhû | *ʾĕlōah* | *mimmāʿal*
wĕʾal-tôpāʿ | *ʿālâw* | *nĕhārā(h)*
5 *yiḡʾāluhû* | *ḥōšeḵ* | *wĕṣalmāweṯ*
tiškān-|*ʿālâw* | *ʿănānā(h)*
yĕbaʿătuhû | *kamrîrê yôm*

May that day be darkness,
May Eloah from above not be concerned about it,
And may light not shine on it.
May darkness and the deepest gloom claim it,
May a cloud lie down on it,
May eclipses of the day terrify it.

(Job 3:4–5)

23 *lĕḡeḇer* | *ʾăšer-*|*darkô* | *nistārā(h)*
wayyāseḵ | *ʾĕlôah* | *baʿăḏô*

To a man whose way is hidden,
And whom Eloah shuts in?

(Job 3:23)

24 *kî-lipnê* | *laḥmî* | *ʾanḥātî* | *ṯāḇōʾ*
wayyittĕḵû | *ḵammayim* | *šaʾăḡōtay*

For before my food comes my groaning,
And my roarings pour out like water.

(Job 3:24)

In Job 3:4b–5c, the chiasmus has a similar effect as in *Ludlul* V:84–85 and 113–118 because it is also a way of emphasizing the totalizing character of the petitions, in this case, the wishes in the curse. In Job 3:23 and 24, the chiasmi create a totalizing picture of Job's suffering.

Regarding "emphatic negation or prohibition," *Ludlul* I:30 and 32 use chiasmus to praise Marduk by emphasizing that no other god can understand him:[969]

30 *manāma* | *i*[*na ilī*] || *alaktašu* | *ul īde*
32 *ilu* | *ayyumma* || *ul ilammad* | *tēnšu*

No one among [the gods] knows his way.
No god can understand his thought.

(*Ludlul* I:30, 32)

In Job 3:6b–6c, chiasmus emphasizes the negation, but in this case, it refers to the curse on Job's night of conception:

6 *hallaylā(h)* | *hāhûʾ* | *yiqqāḥēhû* | *ʾōp̄el*
ʾal-yēḥad | *bîmê šānā(h)*
bĕmispar yĕrāḥîm | *ʾal-yābōʾ*

That night, may darkness seize it,
May it not be counted among the days of the year,
May it not enter among the number of months.

(Job 3:6)

The syntactic figure is thus used to guarantee the "decreation" of Job's existence.

The poet uses chiasmus for emphasis in *Ludlul* I:9–12 in order to highlight Marduk and his mercy:[970]

9 *ša nakbat* | *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*
10 *rittuššu* | *rabbat* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*
11 *marūtuk* | *ša nakbat* (|) *qātīšu* || *lā inaššû* | *šamāʾū*

[969] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148.
[970] On the emphatic function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.

12 *rabbat* | *rittašu* || *ukaššu* | *mīta*

The weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.
Marduk, the weight of whose hands heaven cannot bear,
Whose grasp is gentle, he holds up the dying one.

(*Ludlul* I:9–12)

In Job 3:20, the poet uses chiasmus to emphasize the rhetorical questions and the direct objects *ʾôr*, "light," and *ḥayîm*, "life:"

20 *lāmmā(h)* | *yittēn* | *lĕʿāmēl* | *ʾôr*
wĕḥayyîm | *lĕmārê nāp̄eš*

Why did he give light to the sufferer?
And life to those bitter of spirit?

(Job 3:20)

The direct objects stand in contrast with the wishes for darkness and death set by Job in his curse and lament.

In *Ludlul* V:79, the chiasmus expresses the simultaneity and balance of nature:[971]

79 *mû* | *illakū* || *iziqqu* | *šāru*

The water flows, the wind blows.

(*Ludlul* V:79)

In Job 3:17, the use of chiasmus to express simultaneity and balance is in contrast with *Ludlul* V:79:

17 *šām* | *rĕšāʿîm* | *ḥoḏlû* | *rōḡez*
wĕšām | *yānûḥû* | *yĕḡîʿê* | *koaḥ*

There the wicked cease trouble,
And there the weary of power rest.

(Job 3:17)

In this verse, the poet displays the balance and calmness of Sheol, that is, death, a clear opposition to the view of life and nature in *Ludlul* V:79.

[971] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1981: 149.

6.1.2.3.5. Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are an important syntactic figure, particularly in Job.[972] Regarding their structuring effects, they are visible both in *Ludlul* and Job, as the rhetorical questions in *Ludlul* V:71–74 open the final hymn and the rhetorical questions in Job 3:11–12 and 20–23 open two stanzas in the chapter. This syntactic figure ultimately directs the audience's attention,[973] and this is its goal in *Ludlul* I: 35–36 and V:71–74, and Job 3:11–12 and 20–23. However, in *Ludlul*, the rhetorical questions direct the audience to Marduk's and Zarpānītu's power and ability to deliver from suffering, while in Job, they direct the audience to Job's desire for Sheol and his suffering.

6.1.2.3.6. Repetition

Repetition has a structuring effect by creating unity and cohesion within the rhetorical units,[974] and this effect is visible in *Ludlul* and Job. As previously mentioned (§4.2.3.6), in *Ludlul*, repetition contributes to the ring structure of the composition. In Job 3, the repetition, for example, of the noun *ʾôr*, "light," in vv. 9, 16, and 20 or the root *m–w–t* in vv. 5, 11, and 21 creates cohesion between the three stanzas. Repetition can also emphasize the most important ideas in a composition through the use of key words.[975] In *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 these key words are different. In *Ludlul* I:1–40, the poet emphasizes the address to the divine through the use of *ilu*, "god" (*Ludlul* I:1, 3, 16, 28,

[972] Magary 2005: 292; Watson 1984: 340.
[973] Watson 1984: 341.
[974] On the structuring effects of repetition, see Wisnom 2023: 117; Black 1992: 72; Watson 1984: 279.
[975] Watson 1984: 288.

29, 30, 31, 32), and Marduk's name (*Ludlul* I:3, 11, 31) and to emotions through the use of *libbu*, "heart" (*Ludlul* I:29, 31, 33, 35), and *kabattu*, "liver" (*Ludlul* I:8, 17, 33, 34, 36), the seats of emotions. In *Ludlul* V:71–120, through the repetition of the roots *b–l–ṭ* (*Ludlul* V:73, 75, 96, 99, 107) and *n–p–š* (*Ludlul* V:74, 81, 96, 99, 100), the poet highlights the importance of life's restoration in the history of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan as well as in the petitions. In Job 3, the repetition of the noun *yôm*, "day" (Job 3:3, 4, 5, 6), plays an important role by emphasizing the curse on Job's day of birth. The poet also repeats the root *b–w–ʾ* (Job 3:6, 7, 24, 25, 26) referring to "enter," which highlights both Job's wishes in the curse (Job 3:6, 7) and Job's suffering in the lament (Job 3:24, 25, 26). The poets of *Ludlul* and Job thus employ repetition for the same effects, structuring and emphasis, but with different rhetorical purposes in mind.

6.1.2.3.7. Anaphora, Anadiplosis, and Epanadiplosis

These syntactic figures are not used either in *Ludlul*'s hymns or in Job 3.

6.1.2.3.8. Anastrophe

Anastrophe, a variation in traditional word order, is a common syntactic figure in both Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew poetry,[976] and it is found in all rhetorical units. The fronting of certain terms emphasizes them in the clause. For example, in *Ludlul* I:1, fronting the verb *ludlul*, "may I praise," highlights the main rhetorical purpose of the unit: to praise Marduk. In Job 3, fronting *hayôm hahûʾ*, "that day" (Job 3:4), and *hallaylā(h)*

[976] In Akkadian poetry, see Rozzi 2024b: 266; Lenzi 2019a: 51; George 2003: 433–435; Groneberg 1987: 175–179; Hecker 1974: 120–138. In Biblical Hebrew poetry, see Lunn 2006.

hāhûʾ, "that night" (Job 3:6), emphasizes the subjects of Job's curse. However, no striking comparative patterns emerge from the use of anastrophe in these units.

6.1.2.4. Semantic Figures

6.1.2.4.1. Epithets and Vocatives

Regarding the use of semantic figures, a striking difference is the absence of epithets or vocatives in Job 3, in comparison to *Ludlul*'s hymns. While in *Ludlul*, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and the Babylonians clearly refer to Marduk, Job indirectly refers to Yahweh, only using the name Eloah in vv. 4 and 23, possibly because of a fear of directly accusing the god.[977] This comparison shows how the purpose of the *Ludlul* hymns is clearly distinct from Job 3, as the former are meant to praise Marduk, while the latter is meant to curse Job's own existence. This is also a demonstration of *Ludlul*'s direct eloquence and persuasion in contrast with Job's indirect eloquence and persuasion.

6.1.2.4.2. Merisms

Merisms are employed in *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3, as shown in the following tables.

Categories	**Merisms**	**Lines in *Ludlul* I:1–40**	**Lines in *Ludlul* V:71–120**

[977] See Pope 1965: 32.

Time	*mūšu*/*urru* “night/dawn”	2, 4	
Human or divine groups	*ilu*/*ištaru* “god/goddess”	28	115
Space	*šamû*/*erṣetu* “heaven/earth”		88
	erṣetu/*šamāmū* “earth/heaven”		77
Nature	*ūmi meḫê*/*mānit šēreti* “storm of tempests/breeze of morning hours”	5–6	
	rīmu/*arḫu* “wild bull/cow”	19–20	

Table 29 - Merisms identified in *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120

Categories	**Merisms**	**Verses in Job 3:3–26**
Time	*yôm*/*laylāh* “day/night”	3
Human or divine groups	*qāṭōn*/*gādôl*, “small/great”	19a
	ʿeḇeḏ/*ʾădōnāy* “slave/master”	19b
Nourishment	*leḥem*/*mayim*,	24

	"bread/water"	

Table 30 - Merisms identified in Job 3:3–26

The only comparable pairs in terms of themes are *mūšu*/*urru*, "night/dawn" (*Ludlul* I:2, 4), and *yôm*/*laylāh*, "day/night" (Job 3:3), that open the respective units. While in *Ludlul* this merism emphasizes the totalizing character of Marduk, in Job it emphasizes the totalizing character of Job's curse.[978] Therefore, the poets use them in accordance with the specific rhetorical purposes of each unit despite their thematic similarities. The same applies to the remaining merisms. In *Ludlul* I:5–6 and 19–20, the merisms emphasize the antitheses and Marduk's totalizing character and power, which is also highlighted through the merism in *Ludlul* I:28. In *Ludlul* V:77, the merism contributes to the totalizing description of the natural world. The other two merisms in *Ludlul* V:88 and 115 are reconstructed, but possibly reflect the totalizing nature of the petitions. In Job 3, the merisms with human groups (Job 3:19) refer to the idea that everyone is in Sheol, a more peaceful place. The merism with the pair *leḥem*/*mayim*, "bread/water" (Job 3:24), creates a totalizing image of Job's suffering.

This comparative analysis of merisms shows that this semantic figure is employed in all three rhetorical units with a totalizing effect but in accordance with different purposes. In *Ludlul* I:1–40, they emphasize the antitheses and Marduk's all-encompassing character. In *Ludlul* V:71–120, they highlight Marduk's praise by all realms and possibly the totalizing character of the petitions. In Job 3, the merisms underline the totalizing effect of the curse, the equality in Sheol, and the totalizing nature of Job's suffering.

[978] On merism's totalizing effects, see Rozzi 2024b: 275; Wasserman 2021: 66; Watson 1984: 321.

6.1.2.4.3. Enumeration

The use of enumeration has a similar totalizing effect and, like the merisms, its use is dependent on the rhetorical purposes of the units.[979] In *Ludlul* I:25–28, the enumeration of diseases, deities, and spirits expresses Marduk's absolute power. In *Ludlul* V:77–79, the enumeration of natural elements points to the extension of the praise to Marduk. In Job 3:3–9, the enumeration of wishes expresses the idea that the curse covers all possible options for "decreation."

6.1.2.4.4. Climax

The semantic figure of climax is used in *Ludlul* V:82 and Job 3:23, but again with different purposes. In *Ludlul*, it emphasizes how everyone ought to praise Marduk. In Job, it highlights the accusation against Yahweh, who is considered to be responsible for "shutting in" a sufferer.

6.1.2.4.5. Similes and Metaphors

Regarding the use of imagery, namely similes and metaphors, these semantic figures are more commonly used in *Ludlul* I:1–40. In this hymn, the similes and metaphors contribute to the vividness of the antitheses that contrast Marduk's wrath and mercy. In Job 3, the poet uses two similes (Job 3:16, 24b). The first refers to stillborns and how Job could be

[979] These are not traditional enumerations as they are not sequences of terms grouped as a list, but they still have a totalizing effect.

like them at peace in Sheol. This image continues the rhetoric of shock employed by the protagonist to lead Yahweh to action. The second simile compares Job's groaning and crying to the pouring out of water. This adds vividness to the protagonist's suffering and its amount.

6.1.2.4.6. Synonymous and Antithetical Parallelism

In terms of semantic parallelism, antithetical parallelism plays a key role in *Ludlul* I:1–40, which contrasts with its absence in *Ludlul* V:71–120 and Job 3. While *Ludlul*'s opening hymn uses this parallelism to praise Marduk's all-encompassing power, the final hymn focuses on the god's mercy and power to restore since it is recited by the Babylonians in face of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's recovery. In Job 3, despite the absence of clear antithetical parallelism, the poet still sets a contrast between Job's suffering and the peace of Sheol, a core part of the rhetorical strategy of shock.

Synonymous parallelism is found in all three rhetorical units and its main function is to emphasize the idea expressed in the lines.[980] In *Ludlul* I:30 and 32, the synonymous parallelism highlights how no other god can know Marduk's ways or thoughts, reflecting his superiority and contributing to his praise. In *Ludlul*'s closing hymn, the use of synonymous parallelism emphasizes the praise of Marduk by the totality of humankind (*Ludlul* V:80–82), the petitions for Marduk to rule over all the earth (*Ludlul* V:84–85),[981] and growth (*Ludlul* V:97–98). In Job 3, the synonymous parallelism highlights the curse's wishes (Job 3:5, 6b–6c, 7, 9b–9c), the peace in Sheol for Job (Job 3:13, 16), and Job's

[980] On this function of synonymous parallelism, see Steinberger 2024: 265.
[981] The subject is not preserved in *Ludlul* V:84–85, but, as Marduk is mentioned in *Ludlul* V:82 and the petitions point to rulership over the whole world, Marduk is probably the subject.

suffering (Job 3:25, 26). Like the other poetic devices, the poets use semantic parallelism with similar effects but for different rhetorical purposes.

6.1.2.4.7. Puns

Ludlul V:71 uses a pun with the genitive construction *amār šamšīšu*, "the seeing of his sun," alluding to Marduk's name ^{d}amar.utu. This semantic figure emphasizes Marduk's name. In Job 3:8a, the pun between *yôm*, "day," and *yām*, "Yamm," highlights the curse's decreation of nature. In Job 3:22a, the readings *gîl*, "rejoicing," or *gal*, "heap," can be a pun alluding to death. The use of the verbal form *sûḵ*, "to shut in," in Job 3:23b to refer to Yahweh's role in Job's punishment contrasts with the use of this verb in Job 1:10, where this verb denotes Yahweh's protection of Job. The use of this semantic figure thus also reflects the poetic units' different rhetorical contexts.

6.1.2.5. Morphologic Figures

Morphologic figures are the least common poetic devices in all three rhetorical units. In *Ludlul*'s introductory hymn, the poet uses one verbal polyptoton (*Ludlul* I:23, 25) and in *Ludlul*'s concluding hymn, the poet uses two *figurae etymologicae* (*Ludlul* V 80, 119). In Job 3, the poet uses one *figura etymologica* (Job 3:25a). These morphologic figures are used for emphasis, namely of Marduk's actions (*Ludlul* I:23, 25), humanity's creation (*Ludlul* V:80), Marduk's praise (*Ludlul* V:119), and Job's suffering (Job 3:25a). Therefore, these figures' emphatic functions are similar, but the poets employ them for different purposes.

6.1.2.6. Poetic Tradition and Complexity

My analysis of the use of poetic devices in *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 situates these rhetorical units within a shared ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic tradition. Parallelism is a key feature of Semitic poetry,[982] and it plays an important role in all three rhetorical units. Different forms of grammatical, semantic, and prosodic parallelism are attested in the *Ludlul* hymns and Job 3, showing the various levels of parallelism at interplay in these rhetorical units. The hymns and Job 3 also follow the traditional poetic structuring into couplets or triplets, another example of their place within a common Semitic poetic tradition.

My analysis has also shown how the poets use the poetic devices in complex ways, creating interplays between them that form highly sophisticated compositions. In Job 3, for example, verse 3 opens the curse and uses a variety of poetic devices to emphasize it:

3 *yōʾbaḏ* | *yôm* | *ʾiwwāleḏ bô*
wĕhallaylā(h) | *ʾāmar* | *horā(h)* | *gāḇer*
"May the day on which I was born perish,
And the night that said "A man was conceived."

(Job 3:3)

This verse has grammatical parallelism between the lines and uses a merism, *yôm*/*laylāh*, "day/night," which defines the entire curse. Moreover, the alliteration of the first two feet of v. 3a further highlights the curse and its opening.

In *Ludlul* I:1–40, the opening also includes a merism:

1 *ludlul* | *bēl* (|) *nēmeqi* || *ila* | *muštāla*
2 *eziz* | *mūši* || *muppašir* | *urri*
3 *marūtuk* | *bēl* (|) *nēmeqi* || *ila* | *muštāla*
4 *eziz* | *mūši* || *muppašir* | *urri*
May I praise the lord of wisdom, thoughtful god,

[982] On parallelism as a defining feature of different ancient Near Eastern traditions of Semitic poetry, see Steinberger 2024: 11; Jiménez 2017: 74; Annus and Lenzi 2010: xxx; Streck 2007: 167; Watson 1984: 114.

Furious at night, forgiving at dawn.
Marduk, the lord of wisdom, thoughtful god,
Furious at night, forgiving at dawn.

(*Ludlul* I:1–4)

The merism emphasizes the antithetical parallelism between Marduk's wrath and mercy, which is also emphasized by the caesura and the alliteration between *mūši* and *muppašir*. The hymnic parallelism in the quatrain places Marduk and the praise to him in the centre.

In *Ludlul* V:71–120, the poetic complexity is found, for example, in the opening rhetorical questions:

71 *mannumma | iqbi || a**mār** | šam**šī**šu*
72 *ina libbi* (|) *manni | ibbaši || e**tēq*** (|) *sū**qī**šu*
73 *ša lā marūtuk | mannu || mītūtašu | uballiṭ*
74 *ela zarpānītu | ištartu | ayyītu || iqīša | napšassu*

Who indeed (would have) said (he would) see his sun? (lit. Who indeed said the seeing of his sun?)
Who (would have) thought (he would) pass along his street? (lit. In the heart of whom did the passing along of his street exist?)
Who but Marduk could have revived (him) from his death?
Apart from Zarpānītu, which goddess could have granted (him) his life?

(*Ludlul* V:71–74)

Besides the use of rhetorical questions, these lines have grammatical parallelism in each couplet and a repetition of the interrogative pronoun *mannu*, "who?" *Ludlul* V:71–72 also has prosodic parallelism and there is a pun between *amār šamšīšu*, literally "the seeing of his sun," and Marduk's name ^{d}amar.utu.[983] *Ludlul* V:73–74 has gender-matched parallelism with Marduk and Zarpānītu and chiasmus that emphasizes how only these gods can save, they encompass the totality of salvation.

These examples of poetic complexity found in the three rhetorical units are an attestation to their eloquence. They demonstrate how the poets employed different poetic devices simultaneously, creating an intricate interplay of poetics.

[983] On this word-play, see Hurowitz 2010: 90.

6.2. Akkadian Šuila-Prayers and Psalm 25

6.2.1. Rhetorical Context: Speakers, Audiences, and Purposes

The šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, and Psalm 25 have a first-person supplicant as the speaker. In Psalm 25, the speaker states *kî-yāḥîḏ wĕʿānî ʾānî*, "for I am alone and afflicted" (Psalm 25:16b), and one manuscript of Marduk 2 and two of Šamaš 1 preserve the statives *palḫāku adrāku* (*u*) *šutādurāku*, "I am frightened, afraid, (and) terrified."[984] These show the current suffering of the speaker as he addresses the prayer.

Both the Akkadian and the Biblical Hebrew prayers have a divine audience. Psalm 25 is addressed to Yahweh and the three selected šuila-prayers are each addressed to a high deity of the Mesopotamian pantheon: Marduk, Ištar, and Šamaš. The Biblical Hebrew monotheistic system and the Mesopotamian polytheistic system set a difference in terms of the addressee, which is further developed in the šuila Ištar 1 as the divine addressee is a female goddess. Despite these differences, the audiences are still comparable as each šuila-prayer treats its god as the most powerful, similar to the perception of Yahweh in the Biblical Hebrew psalms of individual lament.[985]

The rhetorical purposes of the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25 are similar. The units have a petitionary character as they are attempts to persuade the deities to act in favour of the suffering supplicant. They also have an impact on the speaker himself who is undergoing hardship and needs the reassurance of divine favour and help.

Despite the theological differences between the Mesopotamian and Biblical Hebrew religious systems, the rhetorical contexts of the Akkadian šuila-prayers Marduk

[984] The cuneiform manuscripts are CBS 1701 (o. 6′), SU 1951.45+ (o. 26), and CBS 1519 (o. 20).
[985] On the comparison between Mesopotamian gods in Akkadian šuila-prayers and Yahweh in the psalms of individual lament, see Zernecke 2011a: 22–24. See also my comments regarding Marduk and Yahweh in §6.1.1.

2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, and Psalm 25 are very similar, as they are all prayers of petition addressed to a divine audience and spoken by a sufferer.

6.2.2. Poetic Analysis

6.2.2.1. Prosodic Figures

As previously mentioned regarding *Ludlul* and Job (§6.1.2.1), the prosodic features of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew are different, and thus a comparison between both traditions is difficult. Nevertheless, the patterns already attested in *Ludlul* and Job are again identified in the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25.

6.2.2.1.1. Metre

In these prayers, the poets use metrical parallelism alongside grammatical parallelism. For example, in Marduk 2:3–6, each line has four feet and each colon has a construct chain. In Psalm 25:18–20, the first line of each couplet opens with an imperative and has three poetic feet and the second line of each couplet has two poetic feet. These examples show how metrical parallelism is used in combination with other forms of parallelism, contributing to the rhythm and cohesion of the rhetorical units.

6.2.2.1.2. Strophic Patterns

The use of "counterpatterning" strophes, such as monostichs and triplets, for structuring purposes is also found in these prayers.[986] For example, Šamaš 1:34 is a monostich and marks the end of the petition stanza, and Psalm 25:7 is a triplet marking the end of the first stanza.

6.2.2.2. Phonologic Figures

Phonologic figures, because of their aural impact, play an important role in the prayers' performance.[987] They contribute to the rhetorical effectiveness of the words and suggest a performative context for the rhetorical units.[988] In the three selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and in Psalm 25, the use of different phonologic figures is an expression of the rhetorical units' aurality. They also contribute to the inner cohesion of the prayers as phonologic figures have a structuring effect.[989]

6.2.2.2.1. Assonance and Consonance

Psalm 25 does not have a specific assonance pattern, but the vowel /o/ is the sound used the most for assonance. In the šuila-prayers, the vowel /i/ played an important role, since it can express the speaker's distress and weakness in a moment of suffering and humility.

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[986] On "counterpatterning," see my comment on *tayyārat* in *Ludlul* I:8 (§2.2.2.2.2). See also how monostichs and triplets can mark the opening and closing of stanzas in Akkadian and Ugaritic poetry (Steinberger 2024: 94–98, 107).
[987] See Rozzi 2024b: 260; Schwemer 2014: 281.
[988] Regarding the possible performative context of Akkadian šuila-prayers and biblical psalms of individual lament, see §1.4.1.2 and §1.4.2.2.
[989] On this role of phonologic figures, see Watson 1984: 224, 227, 233.

In Psalm 25, the vowel /i/ plays a similar role in the petitions of the third stanza (Psalm 25:16, 17, 20, 21), showing a possible parallel with the Akkadian prayers. Nevertheless, more research on assonance is required before reaching definitive conclusions.

Patterns in consonance were not identified, since in Psalm 25 the sounds /ʾ/, /h/, and /r/ are employed the most for consonance, while in the šuila-prayers the sounds /b/ and /l/ are used the most for consonance, with /k/ also playing an important role in Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1. Consonance's emphatic effects are found in all units.[990] For example, in Šamaš 2:3–4, the poet uses the consonance of the sounds /m/ and /š/ to highlight Šamaš's name. In Psalm 25:4–7, the consonance of the sound /k/ emphasizes the direct addresses to Yahweh, the prayer's audience, because of the use of this sound in second-person forms.

6.2.2.2.2. Alliteration, Homeoteleuton, Homeoptoton, and Rhyme

The poets also employed alliteration, homeoteleuton, homeoptoton, and rhyme for emphatic purposes, and, in the case of the prayers, their use is similar. For example, in Marduk 2:11–12, the poet employs alliteration in *lubluṭ lušlimma luštammara ilūtka*, "May I live, may I become well, may I praise your divinity," emphasizing the first petitions of the prayer. In Psalm 25:2, the poet uses alliteration between *ʾal-ʾēḇôšā(h)*, "may I not feel ashamed," and *ʾal-yaʿalṣû*, "may they not exult," adding emphasis to the negative petitions. Another example is the use of homeoptoton with the first-person possessive suffix *-ya* in Šamaš 1:28–31 and with the first-person object suffix *-nî* in Psalm 25:19b–20a. This phonologic figure, like the examples of alliteration, emphasizes the

[990] On the emphatic function of consonance, see Rozzi 2024b: 259–260; Watson 1984: 228.

petitions. Moreover, because of its first-person referents, it highlights the speaker, an important reminder for the divine audience and a calming element for the speaker himself.

6.2.2.3. Syntactic Figures

6.2.2.3.1. Grammatical Parallelism

Grammatical parallelism plays a key role in all rhetorical units contributing to their inner cohesion and balance. For example, the grammatical parallelism of Marduk 2:1–6 links the first two strophes of the prayer and creates a sense of balance. The grammatical parallelism of vv. 16a, 18a, 19a, 20a, and 22a of Psalm 25 creates cohesion within the last stanza of the prayer and contributes to the balance of the direct petitions. The breaks in grammatical parallelism are also important as they are particularly striking for the audience.[991] The poet breaks the grammatical parallelism of Marduk 2:1–6 in the following triplet and this contributes to the focus on Marduk's power over all the earth, the climax of the address. Psalm 25:20b and 21 has grammatical parallelism which is broken in v. 22, the last verse of the prayer and the last imperative petition.

6.2.2.3.2. Hymnic Parallelism

Hymnic parallelism does not play an important role in any of the selected prayers, and the only possible example (Marduk 2:1–3) does not fully follow traditional hymnic parallelism. Nevertheless, this syntactic figure is used in other Akkadian šuila-prayers and psalms. For example, the šuila Papsukkal 1 opens with hymnic parallelism:

1 *ilu* | *šūpû* || *bukur* | *ani*

[991] Steinberger 2024: 426–427.

2 *sukkallu* | *gitmālu* || *ilitti* | *enmešarra*
3 *papsukkal* | *šūpû* || *bukur* | *ani*
4 *sukkallu* | *gitmālu* || *ilitti* | *enmešarra*

Resplendent god, the son of Anu,
Perfect minister, the offspring of Enmešarra.
Resplendent Papsukkal, the son of Anu,
Perfect minister, the offspring of Enemšarra.

(Papsukkal 1:1–4)[992]

As mentioned in §6.1.2.3.2, Psalm 148:1 also has a form of hymnic parallelism. This was thus a poetic device present in both Akkadian šuila-prayers and biblical psalms, but not in my chosen examples.

6.2.2.3.3. Gender-Matched Parallelism

Regarding gender-matched parallelism, its core function is to create a totalizing description or a merism.[993] This is the role played by this syntactic figure in all rhetorical units, but with different focal points. In most instances in the Akkadian šuila-prayers, gender-matched parallelism is employed in the petitions referring to the full protection of the supplicant (Marduk 2:17–18; Ištar 1:32–33; Šamaš 1:18–19, 28–29, 32–33). In Psalm 25:4, the use of gender-matched parallelism is also within the petitions but in reference to the ways and paths of Yahweh that the supplicant wishes to learn. Ištar 1 also has two instance of gender-matched parallelism in the address (Ištar 1:15–16, 17), which emphasize the totalizing power of the goddess. Šamaš 1:7–8 is another example of gender-matched parallelism in the addess underlining the god's power.

[992] The transcription of these lines follows Mayer's transcription (1976: 40).
[993] See Watson 1984: 125.

6.2.2.3.4. Chiasmus

The structuring functions of chiasmus are found both in the Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25. The chiasmi of Ištar 1:21–22 and 23–24 mark respectively the end of the address stanza and the beginning of the petition stanza. The chiasmus in Psalm 25:6a, 7a, and 7b marks the end of the first stanza.

The expressive functions common to both the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and Job are "merismus" and "strong contrasts or antithesis."[994] The chiasmi in vv. 4–5a and 17–18 of Psalm 25 are used for "merismus:"[995]

4 *dĕrākêkā* | *YHWH* | *hôḏîʿēnî*
ʾōrḥôtêkā | *lammĕḏēnî*
5 *haḏrîḵēnî* | *baʾămittekā* | *wĕlammĕḏēnî*

Make your ways known to me, oh Yahweh,
Teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me

(Psalm 25:4–5a)

17 *ṣārôt lĕbābî* | *harḥêḇ*
mimmĕṣûqôtay | *hôṣîʾēnî*
18 *rĕʾē(h)* | *ʿonyî* | *waʿămālî*
wĕśāʾ | *lĕkol-ḥattōʾwtāy*

The distresses of my heart, make room,
And from my straits bring me out.
See my affliction and my trouble,
And forgive all my sins.

(Psalm 25:17–18)

In both instances, the use of chiasmus expresses the totality of the petitions, that is, the supplicant wants to cover all petitions and guarantee that Yahweh will help him. The use

[994] This categorization follows Watson's proposal (1984: 205–206; 1981: 146–149), already employed in §4.2.3.4.
[995] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 205–206; 1981: 147.

of chiasmus for "merismus" in terms of petitions is also attested in the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers:

32 *lurši* | *šēda* || *damqa* | *ša pāniki*
33 *ša arkīki* | *ālikat* || *lamassa* | *lurši*

May I acquire the good male protective spirit which is before you,
The female protective spirit which goes behind you, may I acquire.

(Ištar 1:32–33)

34 *ša imnukki* | *mešrâ* | *luṣṣib*
35 *dumqa* | *lukšuda* | *ša šumēlukki*

May I multiply the riches which are on your right side,
May I achieve the goodness which is on your left side.

(Ištar 1:34–35)[996]

28 *kittu* | *lizziz* | *ina imittīya*
29 *mīšaru* | *lizziz* | *ina šumēlīya*
30 *littallak* | *ilu* || *mušallimu* | *ina idīya*
31 *ayy ipparku* | *rābiṣ* (||) *šulmi* | *ina arkīya*

May truth stand at my right side,
May justice stand at my left side.
May a protecting god constantly go at my side,
May a guardian for good not cease to be behind me.

(Šamaš 1:28–31)

In these instances, the chiasmus reinforces the idea that the supplicant wishes to be fully protected.

Psalm 25 has also two instances of the use of chiasmus for "strong contrasts or antithesis:"[997]

3 *gam* | *kol-qōwêkā* | *loʾ yēḇōšû*
yēḇōšû | *hābôḡĕdîm* | *rêqām*

Indeed, all who wait for you will not feel ashamed,
The treacherous who act in vain will feel ashamed.

(Psalm 25:3)

6 *zĕkōr-*|*raḥămêḵā* | *YHWH* | *waḥăsāḏêḵā*

[996] The chiasmus employed in Ištar 1:5–6, 17–18, and 19–20 also has a totalizing effect, but in this case is directed towards the goddess and used in the address stanza.
[997] On this function of chiasmus, see Watson 1984: 206; 1981: 148.

kî mēʿôlām | hēmmā(h)
7 *ḥaṭṭōʾwṯ | nĕʿûraỵ | ʾal-tizkōr*
kĕḥasdĕḵā | zĕkār-lî-|ʾattā(h)
lĕmaʿan | ṭûḇḵā | YHWH

Remember your compassion, oh Yahweh, and your kindness,
For they are from old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth,
Because of your kindness, remember me, oh you,
For the sake of your goodness, oh Yahweh.

(Psalm 25:6–7)

In v. 3, the poet emphasizes the antithesis between those who wait for Yahweh and the treacherous, and, in vv. 6–7, the poet emphasizes the opposition between what Yahweh ought to remember and to forget. These antitheses are important for the supplicant, as he is equated with those who wait for Yahweh and he hopes that the god will remember him and forget his sins.

In the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers, there is only one instance of the use of chiasmus for "strong contrasts or antithesis:"

10 *eṭla | ēda || tappâ | tušarši*
11 *ana lā išari | tanamdin | apla*
12 *edlūti | sikkūr (||) šamê | tupatti*
13 *ana lā nāṭili | tašakkan | nūra*
14 *tuppa | arma || lā petâ | tašassi*
15 *ina libbi | immeri || tašaṭṭar | šīra*

You provide the lonely young man with a companion,
You give a son to the impotent.
You open the locked bolts of heaven,
You set light for the blind.
You read an unopened, enclosed tablet,
You inscribe a flesh-omen on the insides of a sheep.

(Šamaš 1:10–15)

In this example, the poet highlights Šamaš's ability to change impossible situations, acting as a reminder for both the god and the supplicant. Therefore, the use of chiasmus to emphasize antitheses has a different purpose in Psalm 25 and the šuila Šamaš 1.

6.2.2.3.5. Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are only attested in Psalm 25 and the šuila Ištar 1:

12 *mî-ze(h)* | *hāʾîš* | *yĕrēʾ* | *YHWH*
yôrennû | *bĕḏereḵā* | *yiḇḥār*

Who is this man who fears Yahweh?
He will direct him in the way he chooses.

(Psalm 25:12)

11 *šumma* | *ina igigī* || *ayyu* | *māḫirki*
12 *šumma* | *ina anunnakī* || *ali* | *šāninki*

If among the Igigī, who is your opponent?
If among the Anunnakī, where is your rival?

(Ištar 1:11–12)

In both instances, the rhetorical questions play a structuring role, as Psalm 25:12 marks the return to a third-person address, and Ištar 1:11–12 marks the end of the comparison between Ištar and other deities (Ištar 1:5–12).[998] However, these rhetorical questions have different purposes, as v. 12 of Psalm 25 draws the attention of Yahweh to the supplicant and how he is a man who fears Yahweh, while lines 11 and 12 of Ištar 1 emphasize Ištar's power and are thus part of reminding the goddess of her attributes.[999] This difference could be understood based on the traditional view that the Akkadian šuila-prayers require flattery showing a distance between the Mesopotamian gods and the supplicants, while the biblical prayers show proximity between Yahweh and the supplicants.[1000] However, as convincingly argued by both Zernecke and Lenzi,[1001] the šuila-prayers include more hymnic language because they are addressed to the higher gods of the pantheon following

[998] On the structuring effects of rhetorical questions, see Watson 1984: 341–342.
[999] On the emphatic effects of rhetorical questions, see Watson 1984: 341.
[1000] On this view of the šuila-prayers and the biblical psalms of individual lament, see Zernecke 2011a: 329–330; 2011b: 174–175; Lenzi 2010: 306–308; Begrich 1928: 221–260.
[1001] Zernecke 2011a: 331–335; 2011b: 178–182; Lenzi 2010: 311–315.

the structure of an audience.[1002] Thus, the rhetorical questions in Ištar 1:11–12 are part of the flattery and politeness to the goddess, characteristic of the first address to a superior in an audience. Yahweh, on the other hand, is also the personal god of the supplicant and thus the closeness to the god is clearer in the psalms, as exemplified in the rhetorical question of Psalm 25:12. Therefore, the syntactic figures are employed differently because of this difference in audience.

6.2.2.3.6. Repetition

Psalm 25 has a distinguishing characteristic because of its repeated use of wisdom vocabulary.[1003] For example, the root *d–r–k* is used seven times (Psalm 25:4, 5, 8, 9a, 9b, 12). The name of Yahweh is also repeated more times (Psalm 25:1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15) than the names of Marduk (Marduk 2:3, 10, 22), Ištar (Ištar 1:1, 5), and Šamaš (Šamaš 1:3, 4, 17, 34).[1004] This difference will be discussed in §§6.2.2.4.1 and 6.2.2.4.2, where I will focus on the use of epithets and vocatives. Another difference is the repetition of roots of the semantic fields of speech and listening. As previously shown (§4.2.3.6), these roots play a key role in the Akkadian šuila-prayers, but they are absent from Psalm 25. This does not imply a bigger prevalence of these semantic fields in the Akkadian šuila-prayers, since they also play an important role in other biblical psalms of individual lament.[1005] The absence of these roots in Psalm 25 might be a conscious decision by the poet to focus on other elements such as wisdom or sin.

[1002] On the audience model of the šuila-prayers, see my comments and references in §3.1.
[1003] On wisdom as a central theme of Psalm 25, see Abernethy 2015: 339–351; Doyle 2001: 209; Human 1996: 76–88; Ruppert 1972: 581–582.
[1004] Psalm 25 is longer than the other prayers since it has forty-six lines in total, which could justify the higher number of direct references to Yahweh's name. However, Ištar 1 has forty-four lines and Šamaš 1 has thirty-seven lines, showing that even in comparable length the frequency of Yahweh's name in the psalm is much higher.
[1005] See, for example, Pss 86 and 143.

A parallel between the prayers is the use of "pivot lines," lines that include elements from the previous strophes and the following ones, creating a link between them.[1006] Psalm 25:8a introduces the new stanza but repeats the root *ṭ–w–b* from the previous verse. Marduk 2:7 has parallelism with the previous triplet and the following triplet, and Šamaš 1:18 introduces the petition stanza but repeats the root *š–ʾ–m* also employed in line 17, the last line of the address. Another similarity in terms of repetition, is how this syntactic figure is employed to create a ring structure. In Psalm 25 and all three selected šuila-prayers, the poets use repeated elements at the start and ending to create a ring structure. This emphasizes v. 11 and its petitions in Psalm 25 and the praise to the deities in the šuila-prayers. The repetition of the cognate roots *ṭ–ʾ–b*/*ṭ–w–b* and *n–p–š* is another parallel between the prayers. Psalm 25 repeats *ṭ–w–b* three times (Psalm 25:7, 8, 13) and *n–p–š* also three times (Psalm 25:1, 13, 20). Marduk 2 uses *ṭ–ʾ–b* two times (Marduk 2:9, 27) and *n–p–š* three times (Marduk 2:5, 22, 23). Ištar 1 repeats the root *ṭ–ʾ–b* four times (Ištar 1:21, 26, 38, 44), but does not use the root *n–p–š*. In Šamaš 1, the poet only uses *ṭ–ʾ–b* once (Šamaš 1:37) and does not use *n–p–š*. Despite some differences, the repetition of these roots still points to shared concerns in the prayer regarding the life of the supplicant and the goodness he wishes to achieve.

6.2.2.3.7. Anaphora, Anadiplosis, and Epanadiplosis

Anaphora and Epanadiplosis are syntactic figures found in all three selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and absent from Psalm 25. However, they can be used in other biblical psalms of individual lament and this does not represent a particularity of the šuila-

[1006] On the definition of "pivot lines," see my comments on Marduk 2:7 (§3.2.2.2.1) with reference to De Zorzi 2022: 385.

prayers.[1007] Anadiplosis is found in Ištar 1:38–39, Šamaš 1:19–20, and Psalm 25:3, but, because of its rarity, I could not identify any striking parallels.

6.2.2.3.8. Anastrophe

Anastrophe is found in all rhetorical units and it is used to emphasize certain terms. For example, in Psalm 25:1a and 2a, fronting the prepositions with the second-person suffixes referring to Yahweh emphasizes the god to whom the prayer is addressed as a way to secure his attention. Fronting the first-person verbal forms in Ištar 1:15–16 highlights the supplicant's diligence, a way of reminding the goddess of the supplicant's respect for her.

Regarding the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers, I noted the importance of fronting imperative verbal forms (§4.2.3.8). In Biblical Hebrew, verbs usually take the first position and thus the fronting of verbs is not particularly significant. However, in Biblical Hebrew poetry, syntax is more flexible and thus keeping the imperatives fronted might be a conscious decision by the poet. Psalm 25 has sixteen imperative verbal forms in total, seven in the first stanza and nine in the third. Eleven imperatives follow the traditional biblical Hebrew syntax, while five do not. There is thus a preference to front the imperatives highlighting the direct petitions. Nevertheless, when this reasoning is applied to the other verbal forms, a similar pattern is found. There are another twenty-three verbal forms, fourteen that follow the traditional syntax and nine that do not.[1008] It is still striking that in the third stanza (Psalm 25:16–22) which has nine imperatives, only one does not follow the traditional syntax (Psalm 25:17b), showing the emphasis placed on the series of final petitions of the prayer.

[1007] See, for example, the anaphora with *rabîm*, "many," in Ps 3:2b–3a.
[1008] I have excluded active participles and infinitives from these numbers.

6.2.2.4. Semantic Figures

Overall, the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers use more semantic figures than Psalm 25. This difference, with the exception of the use of epithets, does not reflect a specificity of each literary culture, but is rather dependent on poetic choices, as other examples of biblical psalms of individual lament include more semantic figures. When analysing each semantic figure, I will thus include examples from other psalms that parallel the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers.

6.2.2.4.1. Epithets

Epithets play a crucial role in all three šuila-prayers and they define the address stanza of each šuila as they are used successively. The poets can also employ these semantic figures in other stanzas, as, for example, in Marduk 2:22, a line of the petition stanza. In Psalm 25, the poet does not use any epithets to Yahweh. In other biblical psalms of individual lament, these devices are relatively scarce and are not used in succession. The epithets in the biblical psalms of individual lament can be an adjective describing Yahweh, as the expression *ʾĕlōhîm ṣaddîq*, "righteous god," in Psalm 7:10, or the expression *ʾĕlōhîm ʿelyôn*, "god most high," in Psalm 57:3. They can also be active participles in a construct chain, such as *môšîāʿ ḥôsîm*, "saviour of those who seek refuge," in Psalm 17:7. The poets also use nouns to describe Yahweh, such as *malkî wēʾlōhāy*, "my king and my god," in Psalm 5:3, and *ʾēl salʿî*, "El, my rock," in Psalm 42:10. These examples attest to the use of epithets to describe Yahweh, but these devices are not employed in the same systematic way as in the šuila-prayers.

As previously mentioned regarding the use of rhetorical questions (§6.2.2.3.5), the lists of epithets in the šuila-prayers and their absence in the psalms have been traditionally understood as a difference between the distant Mesopotamian gods who require flattery and the close Yahweh.[1009] However, as convincingly argued by both Zernecke and Lenzi,[1010] this difference is due to Yahweh being a personal god, while the šuila-prayers are addressed to the higher gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon. Therefore, following Zgoll's audience structure,[1011] the epithets in the address of the šuila-prayers are an element of politeness as the supplicant first addresses a superior. In the psalms, these are not as important because they are addressed to Yahweh as a personal god.[1012]

6.2.2.4.2. Vocatives

The divine names and/or independent personal pronouns are employed as vocatives in all rhetorical units and these devices are particularly important in securing divine attention.[1013] In the selected prayers, the poets use them particularly in the first stanzas. In Psalm 25, six of eight vocatives are used in the first stanza (Psalm 25:1a, 1b, 4a, 6a, 7b, 7c); in Marduk 2, two of three vocatives are used in the address stanza (Marduk 2:3, 10); in Ištar 1, four of five vocatives are used in the address stanza (Ištar 1:1, 3, 5, 7); and in Šamaš 1, three of four vocatives are used in the address stanza (Šamaš 1:3, 4, 17). There is thus a preference for using the divine names and/or independent personal pronouns as vocatives at the start of the rhetorical units, which is the moment when the

[1009] See Zernecke 2011a: 329–330; 2011b: 174–175; Lenzi 2010: 306–308; Begrich 1928: 221–260.
[1010] Zernecke 2011a: 331–335; 2011b: 178–182; Lenzi 2010: 311–315.
[1011] On this audience structure, see Lenzi 2024b: 202–210; 2010: 311; Zernecke 2011a: 334; 2011b: 181; Zgoll 2003a: 181–203.
[1012] See how Zernecke (2011a: 334–335; 2011b: 181–182) and Lenzi (2010: 312–315) show that the Akkadian diĝiršadaba-prayers are closer to the biblical psalms of individual lament in terms of epithets, as they are also addressed to personal gods and use fewer epithets.
[1013] On the importance of vocatives for drawing the attention of the audience, see Piccin 2021a: 91–92.

supplicant is first addressing the deity and needs to secure his or her attention. The use of these vocatives in other key moments of the prayers is also striking. In Marduk 2:22, the poet uses the god's name as vocative, and this is the last triplet of the petition stanza, a particularly important stage in the prayer. As mentioned before (§4.2.4.2), the poet in Šamaš 1 also uses the divine name as a vocative in the last petition (Šamaš 1:34). In Ištar 1:23, the first petition of the prayer and another key point, the poet uses the vocative *bēltī*, "my lady." This pattern of use is also found in Psalm 25, because the poet also uses vocatives at important moments besides the start of the prayer. In v. 11, the poet uses Yahweh's name, and this verse corresponds to the climax and central point of the prayer. In v. 22, the poet uses *ʾĕlōhîm*, "god," and this correspond to the last petition, a similarity with the šuila-prayers Marduk 2 and Šamaš 1. These patterns of use thus suggest that divine names and/or independent personal pronouns as vocatives tended to be employed usually at the start of the prayers or in key components to secure divine attention.

In her comparative study of the šuila-prayers Ištar 2 and 10 and Psalms 22 and 38, Zernecke highlighted how, through the address, the supplicant becomes closer to Ištar, changing from referring to Ištar by her name to referring to her by *bēltu*, "lady," or *bēltī*, "my lady."[1014] This pattern is also found in Ištar 1, where the first four vocatives use her names Ištar (Ištar 1:1, 5), Innini (Ištar 1:3), or Mummu (Ištar 1:7), while the vocative in line 23, the first line of the petition stanza, uses *bēltī*, "my lady." This shows the proximity achieved through the address. In Psalm 25, on the other hand, the supplicant uses *ʾĕlōhay*, "my god," in the first verse, expressing this proximity from the start.

[1014] Zernecke 2011a: 332.

6.2.2.4.3. Merisms

Merisms play an important role in the selected šuila-prayers as emphasizing the deities' power and the full protection of the supplicant,[1015] particularly in Ištar 1. In Psalm 25, the poet does not employ any merisms, but this does not indicate a usage specific to the Akkadian šuila-prayers, as they are attested in other biblical psalms of individual lament.[1016] For example, the merism *šāmayīm*/*ʾereṣ*, "heaven/earth," is used in Psalm 69:35 to reinforce the idea that everyone ought to praise Yahweh, and in Psalm 102:26 to highlight that Yahweh created everything. Psalm 102:10 uses a merism with *leḥem*/*šiqqûy*, "bread/drink," to refer to the supplicant's all-encompassing suffering.[1017] Therefore, merisms can have a totalizing effect in all prayers and emphasize the deities' power as well as elements referring to the supplicant.

6.2.2.4.4. Enumeration

Enumerations like the ones attested in the selected šuila-prayers are not found in Psalm 25. However, other psalms of individual lament include enumerations. For example, in Psalm 109:9–11, the poet mentions *bānîm*, "children," *ʾiššā(h)*, "wife," *nôše(h)*, "creditor," and *zārîm*, "strangers," related to the punishment of a *rāšāʿ*, "wicked." Therefore, all social and familial bonds of a wicked person ought to be broken and this enumeration has a totalizing effect, similar to the effect of enumeration in the Akkadian šuila-prayers.

[1015] See my comments in §4.2.4.3.
[1016] As Psalm 25 does not have any merisms and a table with these poetic devices found in the three selected Akkadian šuila-prayers has already been presented in §4.2.4.3, I have not included a table for the merisms in this comparative analysis between šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, and Psalm 25.
[1017] This is similar to the merism with *leḥem*/*mayim*, "bread/water," in Job 3:24.

6.2.2.4.5. Climax

Regarding the use of climax, this poetic device is employed in all four rhetorical units, but in different moments and for different purposes. In Marduk 2:7–9 and in Ištar 1:11–12, the climaxes are within the addresses and refer to the absolute power of the deities. In Šamaš 1:34 and Psalm 25:11, the climaxes are part of the petitions, emphasizing key requests of the supplicant.

6.2.2.4.6. Similes and Metaphors

The use of imagery, namely through metaphors and similes, is attested in the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1, but not in the other two rhetorical units. However, imagery is found in other biblical psalms of individual lament, such as Psalm 102, where in vv. 7–8, the supplicant compares himself and his suffering to different birds of the wilderness, which are alone and abandoned. The light metaphors employed in the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1 is also used in the psalms, as in Psalm 27:1, the supplicant states: *YHWH ʾôrî wĕyišʿî*, "Yahweh is my light and my salvation."[1018]

6.2.2.4.7. Synonymous and Antithetical Parallelism

In all rhetorical units, the poets use forms of semantic parallelism. In Psalm 25, antithetical parallelism is employed to emphasize the distinction between the righteous

[1018] On Yahweh as a solar deity and his links to light, see Kutter 2008: 355–417.

and the wicked (Psalm 25:3) and to ask Yahweh not to remember the supplicant's sins, but rather his own compassion and the supplicant himself (Psalm 25:6a, 7a, 7b). The antithetical parallelism employed in Šamaš 1:10–14 has a different purpose, since it highlights the god's ability to change difficult or impossible situations. The other two šuila-prayers do not have antithetical parallelism, but rather synonymous parallelism emphasizing the deities' epithets (Marduk 2:5–6; Ištar 1:2).

6.2.2.4.8. Puns

A pun was only identified in Šamaš 1:3, which does not allow for an in-depth comparative analysis.

6.2.2.5. Morphologic Figures

Morphologic figures play a bigger role in the prayers than in *Ludlul*'s hymns or Job 3. For example, polyptotons are used in all four prayers, and, with the exception of Marduk 2, more than once. Morphologic figures are employed for emphasis.[1019] In vv. 6a, 7a, and 7b of Psalm 25, for instance, the verbal polyptoton with the root *z–k–r* plays with the antithetical parallelism, both emphasizing the wish of the supplicant for Yahweh to remember his compassion and the supplicant and forget the supplicant's sins. In Marduk 2:20–21 and Ištar 1:36–37, the polyptotons with the root *q–b–ʾ* adds emphasis to the motif of speech, hoping the deities will accept the supplicant's own speech, the prayer.

[1019] See Rozzi 2024b: 286.

6.2.2.6. Poetic Tradition and Complexity

In the preceding sections, I analysed the prosodic, phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures employed in the Akkadian šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, Psalm 25, and other Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew prayers, highlighting similarities and differences in their uses. This analysis showed how these rhetorical units are part of the ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic tradition. Parallelism is a defining feature of this tradition,[1020] and all four rhetorical units make use of this poetic device in its prosodic, grammatical, and semantic forms. The structuring of the units in couplets or triplets also points to this common poetic tradition.

My analysis has also shown how the poets employed different poetic devices in intricate ways, creating highly sophisticated compositions that interweave a complex of poetic features. For example, in Psalm 25:6–7, the poet uses antithetical parallelism, chiasmus, and verbal polyptotons to highlight the petitions:

6 *zĕkōr-|raḥămêḵā | YHWH | waḥăsāḏêḵā*
kî mēʿôlām | hēmmā(h)
7 *ḥaṭṭōʾṯ | nĕʿûray | ʾal-tizkōr*
kĕḥasdĕḵā | zĕḵār-lî-|ʾattā(h)
lĕmaʿan | ṭûḇḵā | YHWH

Remember your compassion, oh Yahweh, and your kindness,
For they are from old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth,
Because of your kindness, remember me, oh you,
For the sake of your goodness, oh Yahweh.

(Psalm 25:6–7)

This interplay of syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures emphasizes the requests put forward by the supplicant and shows the artistry and eloquence of these lines.

[1020] See Steinberger 2024: 11; Jiménez 2017: 74; Annus and Lenzi 2010: xxx; Streck 2007: 167; Watson 1984: 114.

In the šuila Šamaš 1, a similar joint use of antithetical parallelism and chiasmus occurs:

10 ***e***ṯ*la* | ***ē**da* || *tap**pâ*** | *tu**šar**ši*
11 *ana lā **i**šari* | *ta**nam**din* | ***ap**la*
12 *ed**lū**ti* | *sik**kūr*** (||) *ša**mê*** | *tu**pat**ti*
13 *ana lā **nā**ṭili* | *ta**šak**kan* | ***nū**ra*
14 ***tup**pa* | ***ar**ma* || *lā pe**tâ*** | *ta**šas**si*
15 *ina **lib**bi* | ***im**meri* || *ta**šaṯ**ṯar* | ***šī**ra*

You provide the lonely young man with a companion,
  You give a son to the impotent.
You open the locked bolts of heaven,
  You set light for the blind.
You read an unopened, enclosed tablet,
  You inscribe a flesh-omen on the insides of a sheep.

(Šamaš 1:10–15)

Besides antithetical parallelism and chiasmus, these lines also employ similar stress-patterns, grammatical parallelism, and anastrophes that further emphasize the god's power to change impossible situations.

These are two examples of the poetic complexity found in the Akkadian šuila-prayers and biblical psalms of individual lament.[1021] They attest to these units' high register, literary language, and eloquence, which are appropriate for a divine audience needing to be persuaded in order to act in favour of the supplicant.

[1021] Other examples in the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers can be found in §4.2.6.

6.3. Summary

In the preceding sections, I comparatively analysed the speakers, audiences, and rhetorical purposes of *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 (§6.1.1), and the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25 (§6.2.1). It is evident that *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 have different rhetorical purposes, as the hymns have a doxological character, while Job 3 is meant to curse Job's day of birth and ultimately secure Yahweh's intervention. Moreover, in *Ludlul* I:1–40, the speaker, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, has already overcome his suffering, whereas Job, in chapter 3, is still undergoing his suffering. Despite these differences, all three rhetorical units have divine and human audiences.

The speakers, audiences, and purposes of the Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25 are very similar because they all have a suffering supplicant who addresses a prayer to a deity, hoping to persuade him or her to change the situation and favour him. Despite the differences in terms of theological system between the Akkadian sources and Psalm 25, they all are prayers from an individual and have a petitionary rhetoric aimed at persuasion.

I also comparatively analysed the use of poetic devices in *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 (§6.1.2.) and the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25 (§6.2.2). All seven rhetorical units show the intricate and complex use of poetic devices (§§6.1.2.6 and 6.2.2.6), a demonstration of their literariness and their shared ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic context.

My comparative analysis of the prosodic, phonologic, syntactic, semantic, and morphologic figures in *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 shows that the poetic devices were employed with similar effects, but in accordance with the rhetorical purposes of each unit. For example, the merisms had a totalizing effect in the *Ludlul* hymns and Job 3

(§6.1.2.4.2), but while in the hymns they emphasize Marduk's all-encompassing character and his praise by all realms, in Job 3 they emphasize the curse's overarching effects, the equality in Sheol, and Job's intense suffering. Another example is the use of chiasmus in *Ludlul* I:30 and 32 and Job 3:6 for "emphatic negation or prohibition" (§6.1.2.3.4). In the former, this syntactic figure emphasizes Marduk's inscrutability, contributing to his praise. In the latter, chiasmus highlights the curse on the night, contributing to the rhetoric of shock and the curse's effectiveness. This research demonstrates the existence of an ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic tradition common to both *Ludlul* and Job, which comprised a similar set of poetic devices.[1022] Simultaneously, it shows that the ancient poets employed these shared poetic devices and techniques according to the rhetorical context of the units, that is, the poetic devices in *Ludlul*'s hymns contribute to the praise of Marduk while in Job 3 they emphasize the speaker's rhetoric of shock and pity.

My comparative poetic analysis of the šuila-prayers Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1, and Psalm 25 demonstrates that the poetic devices were used in similar ways and according to the rhetorical purposes of the prayers. For example, the preponderance of vocatives in the beginning of the units or in key moments attests to the need to secure divine attention from the start of the prayer and for important petitions (§6.2.2.4.2). All units also use repetition to create ring structures and the repetition of the cognate roots *ṭ–ʾ–b*/*ṭ–w–b* and *n–p–š* is also a parallel between the prayers emphasizing similar motifs (§6.2.2.3.6). However, I have also identified important differences, particularly in the use of epithets (§6.2.2.4.1). While the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers make use of a series of epithets, these are absent from Psalm 25. This difference is probably due to the view

[1022] The majority of these poetic devices are attested already in the Old Babylonian period, as shown in my poetic analyses of the Akkadian sources (§§2, 3, and 4). This is another important piece of evidence for this common ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic background.

of Yahweh as a personal god and the deities in the šuila-prayers as high gods of the pantheon who need to be addressed as a superior would. The rhetorical units also sometimes employ the poetic devices with different focal points, as chiasmus to create "merismus" emphasizes the totality of the petitions in Psalm 25, but the full protection of the supplicant in the šuila-prayers Ištar 1 and Šamaš 1 (§6.2.2.3.4). However, despite the differences, the poetic devices are in accord with the rhetorical purposes of the units and contribute to persuade the deity and secure a change in the supplicant's circumstances.

7 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to understand the rhetorical impacts of different poetic devices in two types of Akkadian sources, *Ludlul*'s hymns and selected šuila-prayers (Marduk 2; Ištar 1; Šamaš 1), investigating how they converged or diverged within and between the two types. It then aimed to broaden this analysis to another ancient Near Eastern Semitic poetic tradition by comparing the Akkadian sources to related Biblical Hebrew sources, Job 3 and Psalm 25. This chapter summarizes the methodology and key findings of the preceding chapters (§§2–6). It closes with an overview of the rhetorical impacts of poetic devices in the selected ancient Near Eastern corpora and how this can inform us about the relationships between the two Akkadian sets of sources and between the Akkadian sources and their Biblical Hebrew comparators.

In chapter 1, I outlined the thesis's research questions and aims (§1.1) and the main studies on rhetoric and poetry in Assyriology and Biblical Studies (§1.2), showing the need for a methodological approach that combined rhetoric and poetics. I offered a detailed description of my innovative three-step methodology (§1.3): identification of the rhetorical units; identification of the rhetorical context, i.e., speakers, audiences, and purposes; and poetic analysis. The second and third steps are interrelated since my poetic analysis is guided by the poetic devices' effects according to the units' rhetorical contexts. The third step focuses on five types of rhetorical figures first outlined by Plett: prosodic; phonologic; syntactic; semantic; and morphologic. Finally, I introduced the key primary sources (§1.4) and the main features of poetry in Akkadian (§1.5.1) and Biblical Hebrew (§1.5.2).

Chapter 2 conducted a poetic and rhetorical analysis of the two *Ludlul* hymns, starting with an identification of their speakers, audiences, and purposes (§2.1). *Ludlul*

I:1–40 had Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan as the speaker, while *Ludlul* V:71–120 had the Babylonians. Both units shared a divine audience, Marduk, and a human audience, the wider community, in alignment with their purposes of praising Marduk and showing humankind his greatness. The final hymn also had a petitionary purpose as it included a set of petitions for someone undergoing hardship. After this identification, I focused on *Ludlul* I:1–40 (§2.2), offering a transcription and translation (§2.2.1), and a poetic analysis (§2.2.2). I took a similar approach with *Ludlul* V:71–120 (§2.3), also giving a transcription and translation (§2.3.1), and a poetic analysis (§2.3.2). My research demonstrated the diversity and complexity of poetic devices employed in the rhetorical units, an expression of their eloquence and sophistication which reflected Marduk's own sophistication and power. Moreover, my poetic analyses showed that the poetic devices were employed according to the rhetorical context identified, as they emphasized Marduk's mercy and power, praising the god and reminding the wider community of his attributes. For example, the ring structure of *Ludlul* created through the two hymns attests to this emphasis on divine mercy. In *Ludlul* I:35–36 (§2.2.2.2.2) and *Ludlul* V:71–74 (§2.3.2.2.1), the rhetorical questions emphasized Marduk's power. The petitionary character of the final hymn was also taken into account in the use of poetic devices. For example, the use of chiasmus in the petitions of *Ludlul* V:115–118 (§2.3.2.2.5) created a merism, emphasizing that these lines cover all petitions.

Chapter 3 has a similar structure, but focuses on the Akkadian šuila-prayers, starting with an identification of the rhetorical context of Marduk 2, Ištar 1, and Šamaš 1 (§3.1). The speaker of all three prayers was in general a first-person sufferer, a supplicant, and the main audience was the deity to whom the šuila was addressed.[1023] The key purpose of these prayers was to persuade the deities to act and change the supplicant's

[1023] Some manuscripts identify the speaker (§3.1).

circumstances, defining the petitionary character of the prayers. For each šuila (§§3.2; 3.3; 3.4), I gave a transcription and translation (§§3.2.1; 3.3.1; 3.4.1), and a poetic analysis (§§3.2.2; 3.3.2; 3.4.2). As in the previous chapter, my research into the use of poetic devices in the three šuila-prayers revealed the range and intricacy of poetic devices used, an expression of eloquence and sophistication. My analysis also demonstrated how the poetic devices were deployed in accordance with the speakers, audiences, and purposes. For example, the use of epithets and merisms in the address (§§3.2.2.2.1; 3.3.2.2.1; 3.4.2.2.1) emphasized the deities' power with three different goals: flattering and politely addressing the deity to secure divine attention and action; reminding the deity of his or her ability to help the supplicant; and reassuring the supplicant by reminding him that the deity had the power to help. The poetic devices also emphasized the petitions. For example, the use of merisms and chiasmus in petition stanzas (§§3.2.2.2.2; 3.3.2.2.2; 3.4.2.2.2) contributed to the requests' all-encompassing character, that is, the supplicant wanted to be fully protected and the poetic devices deployed emphasized this.

In chapter 4, I conducted a comparative analysis of the selected Akkadian sources, focusing on their rhetorical context (§4.1) and their use of poetic devices (§4.2). *Ludlul*'s opening hymn and the šuila-prayers have sufferers as speakers and all five rhetorical units have divine audiences. Their key difference lies in their purposes, as *Ludlul* I:1–40 and V:71–120 are meant to praise Marduk, while the šuila-prayers are meant to persuade the deities to act through petition. Nevertheless, *Ludlul*'s final hymn also has a petitionary character, which aligns it more closely with these prayers. My poetic analysis showed how this hymn and the šuila-prayers share the repetition of the roots *b–l–ṭ* and *n–p–š* (§4.2.3.6) and use chiasmus (§4.2.3.4) and merisms (§4.2.4.3) to express the full protection of the sufferer in the petitions. My comparative poetic analysis also demonstrated how the units use the poetic devices according to their own speakers,

audiences, and purposes, showing that the same poetic device can have different impacts and goals depending on the rhetorical unit in which it is employed. The similarities between the poetics of the three šuila-prayers were particularly striking, evidenced, for example, in the anastrophic use of imperatives (§4.2.3.8), the use of vocatives at the start of the prayers and in particularly important moments (§4.2.4.2), and the repetitive use of the roots *d–m–q* and *š–l–m* (§4.2.3.6). This indicates that these prayers stem from a similar poetic background and share similar purposes. Nevertheless, each prayer also maintained its unique character designed by the poet and specific poetic devices were highlighted, such as the merisms in Ištar 1 (§4.2.4.3) or the light metaphors in Šamaš 1 (§4.2.4.6). Lastly, my comparative analysis demonstrated that all five rhetorical units made an intricate and complex use of poetic devices (§4.2.6), combining different poetic devices from different categories and thus enhancing the units' literariness.

Chapter 5 analysed the Biblical Hebrew sources as the ancient Near Eastern Semitic comparators. I focused on Job 3 (§5.1), identifying its speakers, audiences, and purposes (§5.1.1), which were respectively: Job; Yahweh and Job's friends; and obtaining deliverance from suffering. I offered a transcription and translation of Job 3 (§5.1.2), followed by a poetic analysis (§5.1.3). My analysis evidenced how the poetic devices were employed for a rhetoric of shock, particularly in the curse (Job 3:3–10), and a rhetoric of pity, particularly in the final stanza (Job 3:20–26). Both were means to persuade Yahweh to act in favour of Job and to evoke pity from his friends, showing how form and function are interrelated. Overall, my analysis demonstrated the complex use of poetics in Job 3 and its variety of poetic devices. I then considered Psalm 25 (§5.2), starting with the identification of its rhetorical context (§5.2.1). The speaker of Psalm 25 was a first-person sufferer, a supplicant, and its main audience was Yahweh. The purpose of this prayer was to persuade the god to act in favour of the supplicant and change his

situation. This was followed by a transcription and translation of Psalm 25 (§5.2.2) and a poetic analysis (§5.2.3). I concluded that the poetic devices employed in the prayer were meant to persuade Yahweh to act and help the supplicant. For example, the fronting of prepositions directly referring to the god (§5.2.3.2.1) or the use of vocatives (§§5.2.3.2.1–5.2.3.2.3) emphasized Yahweh as the audience and were strategies to secure his attention for the petitions. The poet, therefore, used the psalm's poetics to achieve its purposes and secure help for the supplicant. This analysis also revealed the variety and complexity of poetic devices employed and this is an expression of the unit's eloquence and sophistication.

In chapter 6, I conducted a comparative analysis between the Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources, first focusing on *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job 3 (§6.1). My analysis of the hymns' and Job's speakers, audiences, and purposes (§6.1.1) showed that all three units have a divine audience and that both *Ludlul* I:1–40 and Job 3 have a sufferer as a speaker. However, while in *Ludlul*, the sufferer has already overcome the tribulations, in Job 3, the sufferer's tribulations are ongoing. Chapter 6.1.1 particularly highlighted the different purposes of the *Ludlul* hymns and Job 3, as the former were meant to praise Marduk and the latter was meant to lead Yahweh to action in favour of Job. In fact, the rhetorical nature of the units is distinct, as the *Ludlul* units are hymns and Job 3 is a curse and a lament, determining different uses of poetics. I demonstrated this in the comparative poetic analysis (§6.1.2). Based on the five different categories of figures, this showed how the same poetic devices could be used differently depending on the rhetorical unit and its purposes. For example, the merisms in *Ludlul* I:2 and 4 and Job 3:3 (§6.1.2.4.2) are similar in their form since the former is *mūšu*/*urru*, "night/dawn," and the latter is *yôm*/*laylāh*, "day/night." However, while in *Ludlul*, this merism emphasizes Marduk's all-encompassing nature, praising his wrath and mercy, in Job, it emphasizes the curse's

all-encompassing nature, showing that Job wishes for complete "decreation." My analysis also revealed the complexity of each rhetorical unit's poetics (§6.1.2.6), an attestation to their eloquence and intricacy, and this is a shared feature of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew poetry.

I then considered the selected Akkadian šuila-prayers and Psalm 25 (§6.2), producing a comparative analysis of their rhetorical contexts (§6.2.1). According to this analysis, the Akkadian prayers and the biblical psalm have a sufferer as a speaker, different deities as an audience, and persuasion of the deities to act in favour of the speaker as a purpose. Therefore, these rhetorical units share a similar rhetorical context, which determined their use of poetic devices. My comparative analysis of the poetic devices (§6.2.2) demonstrated how these different prayers employ poetic devices in similar ways. For example, both the selected Akkadian prayers and Psalm 25 tend to use the divine name as a vocative in the openings or at key moments (§6.2.2.4.2) and these units also share a repeated use of the roots *ṭ–ʾ–b*/*ṭ–w–b* and *n–p–š* (§6.2.2.3.6). The units have some attested differences, such as the rhetorical questions (§6.2.2.3.5), which in Psalm 25 express the close relationship between the speaker and Yahweh, while in Ištar 1 they are part of the flattery and politeness of the address. Another difference is the use of epithets (§6.2.2.4.1), a key feature of the šuila-prayers but absent in Psalm 25. However, all four rhetorical units used poetics to secure divine help and intervention, showing again a link between form and function. Moreover, the sophistication and complexity evidenced by the intricate use of poetic devices attests to these prayers' literariness (§6.2.2.6).

My poetic analysis, based on the categorization into five types of poetic or rhetorical figures, demonstrated the wide range of poetic devices employed in Akkadian. It also showed their use across different text types and their intricate deployment (§4.2.6),

situating the rhetorical units in the poetic traditions of late second-millennium BC Mesopotamia but with roots tracing to earlier periods of Mesopotamian literary history. My thesis thus offered an answer to my first research question by categorizing and thoroughly analysing the different poetic devices used in the rhetorical units.

The overall picture emerging from my rhetorical and poetic analysis is that a close connection between poetics and rhetoric existed in Akkadian, as the poetic devices employed had a real rhetorical impact on the units. Grammatical parallelism (§4.2.3.1), for instance, brought balance and flow to the units, while breaks in this parallelism emphasized certain passages. Chiasmus (§4.2.3.4), for example, had various effects and its emphasis on the antitheses between Marduk's wrath and mercy was clear in *Ludlul* I:1–40, while its link to merisms was deployed in the šuila-prayers to emphasize the deities' power and the supplicant's protection. Repetition (§4.2.3.6) contributed to the creation of a ring structure in all units, emphasizing the praise of Marduk in *Ludlul* and the flattering of the addressed deities in the šuila-prayers. Merisms (§4.2.4.3) had a totalizing effect, enhancing the praise of the deities or the protection of the supplicant. These examples attest to the different rhetorical impacts poetic devices had in Akkadian and are part of the answer to my second research question. This thesis did indeed demonstrate the rhetorical impact of poetics in Akkadian texts.

My research also showed how the use of poetic devices within the five categories of rhetorical figures is dependent on the rhetorical units' speakers, audiences, and purposes. For example, on the one hand, the use of chiasmus (§4.2.3.4) in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn is closely linked to the antitheses between Marduk's wrath and mercy, the praise of the god's dual character. On the other hand, in the selected šuila-prayers, chiasmus regularly has a totalizing effect, which, when identified in the address, emphasizes the deities' absolute power, and, when identified in the petition, emphasizes

the need for full protection of the supplicant. Another example is the deployment of assonance (§4.2.2.1) in *Ludlul*'s hymns which tends to use the vowels /a/ and /u/, an expression of the units' doxological strength, while the prevalent use of the assonance of /i/ in the prayers expresses the moment of distress and weakness of the speaker. A third example is the prolific use of antitheses (§4.2.4.7) in *Ludlul* I:1–40 to praise Marduk's all-encompassing character, while in Šamaš 1:10–14, the use of antithetical parallelism expresses the god's power to change impossible situations. It is thus evident that the specific use of these figures depends on the rhetorical unit's own speakers, audiences, and purposes, an answer to my third research question.

This understanding of poetics as dependent on context leads to considerations about how the poetics and rhetoric of the different Akkadian units relate to each other. My research demonstrated how *Ludlul*'s opening hymn mostly shared poetic devices with the addresses in the šuila-prayers, but was quite distinct from the other parts of the prayers. The similarities in terms of poetic devices and purposes between *Ludlul*'s final hymn and the šuila-prayers were more striking, and suggest a closer link between these units. It is possible to posit that *Ludlul*'s final lines (*Ludlul* V:71–120) closely align with the structure of Akkadian prayers, including not only hymnic elements but also petitions. This suggests a common background between these sources and places *Ludlul* within the literary hymnic and prayer traditions of late second-millennium BC Mesopotamia.

My thesis also broadened the scope of research by comparing the Akkadian units to two Biblical Hebrew units, bringing this poetic and rhetorical analysis into dialogue with the wider ancient Near Eastern Semitic context and providing an answer to the fourth research question. My analysis demonstrated the similarities between uses of poetic devices in the two traditions, suggesting a common ancient Near Eastern Semitic background that shaped the structures and core elements of poetics for both Akkadian

and Biblical Hebrew. The central role of parallelism and the use of similar merisms are among these shared traditions of Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew poetry. My analysis also showed differences between corpora that have traditionally been viewed as similar. The striking differences in terms of purposes and the use of poetic devices between *Ludlul*'s hymns and Job's poetic opening are evidence that *Ludlul* is not the "Babylonian Job." The depictions of suffering in Tablets I–III of *Ludlul* align more closely with Job's own descriptions. Nonetheless, the rhetorical purposes, and subsequently the use of poetic devices, are quite distinct because of *Ludlul*'s hymnic nature and Job's lamentful and reflective nature. Based on my analysis, the traditions of petition prayer tend to be more similar and the ultimate purpose of securing divine attention and intervention guides the use of poetics in both textual traditions. Nevertheless, the Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew petition prayers analysed still have important differences, such as the use of epithets, that highlight how the šuila-prayers are directed to higher gods of the pantheon and not the personal gods, while the psalms are directed to Yahweh, both a high and personal god.

My thesis offered a new approach to ancient Near Eastern literature by combining the analysis of poetry and rhetoric, showing how persuasion and eloquence were woven into the fabric of both Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew compositions. By demonstrating a link between form and function, my research prepares the ground for further studies into poetics and their rhetorical impact. Other Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew sources can be subject to similar analyses, offering insight into other rhetorical impacts of poetic devices and how different textual genres incorporated persuasion and eloquence. My thesis also opens up the opportunity of exploring how *Ludlul* as a hymnic composition relates poetically and rhetorically to other Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew hymnic traditions. The study of prayer in Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible can also gain valuable insights from rhetorical and poetic analyses of other prayer genres. By bridging a gap between

form and function in this poetic analysis, I hope that my thesis will be a useful resource for further research on poetry and rhetoric in Assyriology, Biblical Studies, and beyond.

8 Appendix

	***Ludlul* I**	***Great Prayer to Šamaš***	**Šuila Ištar 2**	**Approximate Average**
a	10	11.47	9.82	10
e	1.47	2.21	1.64	2
i	6.57	7.32	6.11	7
u	5.80	5.02	4.73	5

Table 31 - Average of vowels per couplet in *Ludlul* I, *Great Prayer to Šamaš*, and šuila Ištar 2, and approximate average

	***Ludlul* I**	***Great Prayer to Šamaš***	**Šuila Ištar 2**	**Approximate Average**
ʾ	0.94	1.11	0.88	1
b	2.03	2.29	1.98	2
d	1.86	2.71	1.79	2
g	1.40	1.94	1.31	2
ḫ	3.31	3.92	3.05	3
k	2.98	3.55	2.81	3
l	3.82	4.38	3.66	4
m	5.68	6.61	5.21	6
n	4.21	5.01	3.94	4
p	1.22	1.46	1.18	1
q	1.65	1.95	1.52	2

r	4.99	5.81	4.72	5
s	6.08	7.21	5.89	6
ṣ	1.36	1.64	1.29	1
š	7.52	8.95	7.11	8
t	5.35	6.18	5.02	6
ṭ	0.94	1.10	0.88	1
y	1.12	1.26	1.05	1
z	1.78	2.08	1.63	2

Table 32 - Average of consonants per couplet in *Ludlul* I, *Great Prayer to Šamaš*, and šuila Ištar 2, and approximate average

	Job 4	**Lamentations 1**	**Psalm 38**	**Approximate Average**
a	6.59	9.21	7.04	8
e	2.64	3.88	3.01	3
i	2.82	3.42	2.63	3
o	1.64	2.76	2.21	2
u	0.14	0.32	0.21	1
ĕ	3.27	5.94	4.18	5

Table 33 - Average of vowels per couplet in Job 4, Lamentations 1, and Psalm 38, and approximate average

	Job 4	**Lamentations 1**	**Psalm 38**	**Approximate Average**

ʾ	1.91	2.67	2.42	2
ʿ	1.05	1.27	1.21	1
b	1.36	1.88	1.67	2
d	1	1.38	1.25	1
g	0.23	0.55	0.46	1
h	1.36	2.85	2.29	2
ḥ	0.64	0.65	0.58	1
k	1.18	1.15	1.08	1
l	1.77	2.55	2.13	2
m	2.18	2.27	1.92	2
n	1.36	1.77	1.54	2
p	0.68	0.94	0.83	1
q	0.50	0.70	0.63	1
r	1.82	2.18	1.83	2
s	0.27	0.42	0.33	1
ṣ	0.32	0.85	0.71	1
š/ś	1	1.52	1.33	1
t	1.50	2.41	2	2
ṭ	0.09	0.15	0.13	1
w	2.64	3.45	2.96	3
y	3.36	4.03	3.58	4
z	0.23	0.27	0.25	1

Table 34 - Average of consonants per couplet in Job 4, Lamentations 1, and Psalm 38, and approximate average

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