

**THE SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE OF SMELL
IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WORLD:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF OLFATORY REFERENCES
IN AKKADIAN AND HEBREW TEXTS**

**A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION**

**BY
JEFFREY DUERLER**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

First Reader: Dr. Nili Fox

Second Reader: Dr. Samuel Greengus

February 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My fascination with the ancient Near Eastern world was sparked by Dr. Bryan Widbin in grad school. Thank you, Dr. Widbin, for showing me how ancient texts are a window to the culture and vice versa. Understanding the languages, history, beliefs, and daily life of the ancient Fertile Crescent can feel like trying to hoist an awkward piece of furniture. Thankfully, each professor I studied under at Hebrew Union College helped me get a better grip.

I'll never forget those moments in Akkadian classes when the late Dr. David Weisberg *insisted* we read aloud our transliterations. Eyes closed, it was as if he was literally taken back to the time when the language was spoken. His connection to the past and his kind spirit fueled my learning. Dr. Samuel Greengus, a verifiable walking encyclopedia of ANE information, graciously became my second reader when Dr. Weisberg passed away. Thank you, Dr. Greengus, for your insatiable curiosity, probing questions, and gentle challenge.

Dr. Nili Fox, my academic advisor and first reader, has taken me deeper into the ancient world than anyone else. Studying with her provided the opportunity to go beyond customary coursework in language and history to investigate social science methodologies and cultural dynamics. Thank you for giving me the freedom to explore and yet appropriately calling me back when I may have wandered too far. There were seasons of slow progress, rapid advancement, and total standstill. If you didn't believe in me, I don't know if I would have made it.

The library staff at HUC made it possible to access the resources I needed to complete my research, but they also made it enjoyable. I'm so grateful for what you do and how you do it. On those days when I felt lost in the desert, seeds of hope were planted by those who gave me the gift of a friendly "hello." To my friends from the early

years of coursework who led the way, I thoroughly enjoyed tilling the soil together and following your footsteps.

I am indebted to all my friends and family who asked me what I was studying and cheered me on even when they didn't understand what I was doing. I am so grateful for the support of my faith community at *LifeSpring* and its leaders who encouraged research sabbaticals. In this journey, I made every effort not to sacrifice my family on the academic altar. That said, I know my dear wife Julie and precious girls, Kayla and Rachel, had less of me than they might have had otherwise. Thank you for understanding, for supporting this mission, for nourishing my soul, and for holding on to hope. More than anything, I thank the One who supplied the strength and courage to keep going and to overcome all the obstacles.

ABSTRACT

Using an interdisciplinary, comparative methodology, olfactory references in the Akkadian corpus and Hebrew Scriptures are comprehensively identified, evaluated, and compared to better understand the significance and role of smell in the ancient Near Eastern world. A lexical, literary-contextual investigation of these references (both literal and figurative) demonstrates olfaction played a significant role in ancient Mesopotamia and Israel. Both cultures upheld a general dichotomy of positive aromas and negative stenches, and this bifurcation characterized deities, humans, their relationship, natural substances, products, elements, features, and geographic regions. Logical appeals to the sense of smell, sensuous metaphors, and a common stock of idiomatic expressions were artfully expressed to further ideological agendas. Beyond aesthetic and rhetorical functions in literature, the sense of smell played a crucial psychological and socio-cultural role in religious ritual and interpersonal relationships. Ritual smells bond groups in very powerful ways and have an “other-worldly” way of stimulating spiritual experiences. As a means of knowing, the human olfactory system served a diagnostic, revelatory function and, symbolically, it was and always will be an effective social branding tool.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Overview	1
Contribution	2
History of Research	3
The Natural and Applied Sciences	3
The Social Sciences	4
The Humanities	9
Methodology	15
Scope and Limitations	20
Chapter 2: Contextual Analysis of Akkadian Olfactory Terms	22
Introduction	22
Lexical	30
Summary Introduction	30
Individual Analysis	39
Myth	61
Summary Introduction	61
Individual Analysis	66
Hymns and Prayers	71
Summary Introduction	71
Individual Analysis	78
Divination (Omens)	89
Summary Introduction	89
Individual Analysis	93
Prophetic Oracle	106
Summary Introduction	106
Individual Analysis	107
Incantations and Rituals	110
Summary Introduction	110
Individual Analysis	113
Cultic Calendar	116
Summary Introduction	116
Individual Analysis	118
Medical	119
Summary Introduction	119
Individual Analysis	123
Commentary	131
Summary Introduction	131
Individual Analysis	132
Love Lyrics	134
Summary Introduction	134
Individual Analysis	135
Epic/Legend	138
Summary Introduction	138
Individual Analysis	140
Popular Sayings (Wisdom)	145
Summary Introduction	145

Individual Analysis	146
Royal Inscriptions	148
Summary Introduction	148
Individual Analysis	153
Treaty.....	161
Summary Introduction	161
Individual Analysis	163
Letters.....	165
Summary Introduction	165
Individual Analysis	172
Chapter 3: Contextual Analysis of Hebrew Olfactory Terms	222
Introduction.....	222
Torah.....	227
Genesis	227
Exodus.....	234
Leviticus.....	244
Deuteronomy	246
Nevi'im.....	248
Judges	248
1 and 2 Samuel	250
Isaiah	257
Jeremiah.....	265
Joel	266
Amos	268
Hosea	270
Ketuvim	273
Psalms.....	273
Job.....	276
Proverbs	279
Song of Songs	282
Ecclesiastes.....	287
1 Chronicles.....	289
Chapter 4: Comparison of Akkadian and Hebrew Olfactory Terms	292
Summary of Akkadian Olfactory Words.....	292
Summary of Hebrew Olfactory Words.....	297
Akkadian and Hebrew Comparison	304
Chapter 5: The Function of Olfaction in Religious Ritual.....	314
Introduction.....	314
Symbolic and Pragmatic Function.....	316
Recent Archaeological Evidence	322
Modern Physical and Social Science Insights.....	326
Social and Spiritual Function	334
Chapter 6: The Function of Olfaction in Interpersonal Relationships.....	339
Introduction.....	339
Revelatory Function	342
Judging Function	347

Chapter 7: The Function of Olfaction in Literature	361
Introduction.....	361
Aesthetic Function	365
Rhetorical Function.....	368
Chapter 8: Conclusion	384
Bibliography.....	391

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bibliographic abbreviations follow *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* with the addition of the following:

<i>BDB</i>	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907.
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Edited by I. J. Gelb, B. Landsberger, and A. L. Oppenheim. 26 vols. Chicago, 1921-2011.
<i>DCH</i>	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by D. J. A. Clines. Sheffield, 1993–.
<i>NASB</i>	<i>New American Standard Bible</i> .
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997.
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976.
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 14 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–.
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by E. Jenni, with assistance from C. Westermann. Translated by M. E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass., 1997.
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr. 2 vols. Chicago, 1980.

Other abbreviations

Akk.	Akkadian
ANE	ancient Near Eastern
corr.	corrected
cpl	common plural
cs	common singular
D	D-stem
ed.	edition
fpl	feminine plural
fs	feminine singular
G	G-stem
Heb.	Hebrew
I.	line
II.	lines
LB	Late Babylonian
MA	Middle Assyrian
MB	Middle Babylonian
ms	masculine singular
mpl	masculine plural
MT	Masoretic Text
N	Niphal

NA	Neo-Assyrian
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no page
NB	Neo-Babylonian
OA	Old Assyrian
OB	Old Babylonian
p.	page
pp.	pages
rev.	revised
SB	Standard Babylonian
Sum.	Sumerian
vol.	volume

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Despite a cultural repression of smells and lack of knowledge about the olfactory sense in modern, western society, a number of scholars in different fields (including history, sociology, and anthropology) have increasingly sought to explore this profound and fascinating subject.¹ Various historical periods and cultures have been studied, but olfaction in the general ANE context has yet to be surveyed. More specifically, the diverse Akkadian textual sources, which contain a wealth of information about the sense of smell, have not been excavated. The purpose of this dissertation is to survey olfactory references in Akkadian texts and the Hebrew Scriptures in order to better understand the significance and role of smell in the ANE world. Using an interdisciplinary, comparative methodology, this study has two primary objectives: 1) to comprehensively identify, evaluate, and compare olfactory references in the Akkadian corpus and Hebrew Scriptures, drawing general conclusions about olfaction in the ANE based on these findings, and 2) to explore the importance and impact of smells and the act of smelling in religious ritual, interpersonal relationships, and literature.

¹ Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London: Routledge, 1994), 2–3. Smell was devalued in the 18th/19th century, as sight was considered the pre-eminent sense of reason/civilization and smell was thought to reflect “madness and savagery.” Evolutionists argued the sense of smell was left behind as sight took priority. The powerful denigration of smell by intellectual elite of Europe resulted in large-scale cultural repression or neglect of olfactory significance. Olfaction was marginalized in the modern West because it threatened “the abstract and impersonal regime of modernity by virtue of its radical interiority, its boundary-transgressing propensities and its emotional potency.” Ibid., 5. See also Corbin’s explanation of the “olfactory silence.” Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (trans. Miriam Kochan, Roy Porter, and Christopher Prendergast; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1986).

CONTRIBUTION

This study makes three essential contributions: 1) it provides the only existing comprehensive survey and comparative assessment of olfactory references in both Akkadian and Hebrew texts, 2) it is the first focused exploration of the significance and function of olfaction in ancient Mesopotamian and Israelite cultures, and 3) the integrative, interdisciplinary methodology uniquely serves both scholars who concentrate on ANE texts *and* those who focus on socio-cultural dynamics.² The consolidation of primary Akkadian and Hebrew smell-related references is an especially important contribution to sociologists, social historians, and others involved in sensory studies who, perhaps due to language limitations, have focused their discussion of odors or smelling in “ancient” times on the Greco-Roman period and classical literature. ANE literature is rich with olfactory references, but it is usually only the most popular incense or perfume-related references that are cited. This comprehensive compilation introduces new material for cross-discipline access and study. Likewise, Biblical and ANE scholars will benefit from the interdisciplinary methodology. Elucidating the value and function of smell in religious rituals, socio-political dynamics, and literary constructions of the ANE milieu not only helps in understanding specific phenomena or practices, but the manner in which analytic tools are integrated may be transferable to other subjects. This dissertation has the potential to propose new and provocative insights and interpretations, and it can serve as a scholarly stimulus for new approaches, fields of research, and a number of specialized studies. All of this holds great prospect

² This type of contribution is similar to that of Bahrani who simultaneously made available a vast amount of neglected visual and textual evidence from Assyro-Babylonian society pertaining to conceptions of sex/gender and women’s history in the ANE for a broader readership while introducing feminist criticism to students of ancient history and Near Eastern studies. Zainab Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 6.

in helping extend our knowledge of the peoples of the ANE and expand our understanding of the remarkable and enigmatic sense of smell.

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Before turning attention to history of olfactory-related studies in the humanities, a brief synopsis of scholarly research concerning the sense of smell in the natural and social sciences is in order.

The Natural and Applied Sciences

To date, most contemporary research on smell is of an objective, scientific nature and has concentrated on either 1) investigations of the biological/chemical nature of olfaction (including the faculty of smell and odor perception/preference),³ 2) experiments attempting to determine the effects of odors on behaviors, memory, emotions, pheromonal mechanisms, dieting, etc.,⁴ or 3) modern technologies of odor pollution control.⁵ Even with this burgeoning volume of physiological, psychological, and

³ This area of scientific research has seen major advances in recent years. The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for 2004 was awarded to two American researchers who made a significant breakthrough in the science of smell. In a series of pioneering studies, they clarified how the human olfactory system works—through nerve processes, the combined stimuli of about 347 different types of olfactory receptor cells (each detecting only a limited number of inhaled odorant molecules) are relayed to the cortex of the brain to produce the perception of one of approximately 10,000 different recognizable smells.

⁴ For pre-1980's research, see William S. Cain, "History of Research on Smell," in *Tasting and Smelling* (ed. E. C. Carterette and M. P. Friedman; Handbook of Perception 6a; New York: Academic, 1978), 197–229. Some more recent summaries can be found in Steve Van Toller and George H. Dodd, eds., *Perfumery: The Psychology and Biology of Fragrance* (New York: Chapman & Hall, 1988); Piet Vroon, *Smell: The Secret Seducer* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994). Whether driven by the consumer fragrance industry or the postmodern revival of aromatherapy, psychological and therapeutic interest in olfaction has accelerated. With respect to manufactured fragrances, the modern focus extends beyond impression management to include commercial interests in improving productivity in the workplace.

⁵ For example, Guy Martin and Paul Laffort, eds., *Odors and Deodorization in the Environment* (trans. Kathie M. Bersillon; New York: VCH, 1994); Douglas Porteous, "Smellscape," *Progress in Human Geography* 9, no. 3 (1985): 356–78.

environmental study, the “how” and “why” of the sense of smell continues to perplex researchers.⁶

The Social Sciences

Beyond the biological and psychological, smell has become recognized as a legitimate and important subject of cultural and historical study. A history, anthropology, and sociology of smell has emerged, thanks to the work of 20th century scholarly “pioneers” in the social sciences.⁷ Georg Simmel (1908/1921) initiated the sociology of senses, contributing a few insightful comments on smell, though the olfactory sense was mostly ignored or neglected for a number of decades.⁸ In the early 1960’s, Marshall McLuhan began to develop a new framework for the senses,⁹ and then later in the 1960’s, Walter Ong and Edward Hall took the study of the sensorium in yet another direction.¹⁰ In 1972, Gale Peter Largey and David Rodney Watson called for a “sociology of odors and olfaction” to develop as one part of the more general sociological

⁶ Unanswered questions linger for researchers and theorists. For instance, is smell one sense or two—one responding to odors proper and the other registering the air-borne chemicals?

⁷ Classen, Howes, and Synnott, *Aroma*, 3.

⁸ In exploring seemingly insignificant, everyday social experiences, Simmel’s early investigations drew attention to the neglected role of the senses, especially sight and hearing, in social interaction and cultural differentiation. David Frisby, “Introduction to the Texts,” in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (ed. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone; London: Sage, 1997), 9.

⁹ McLuhan controversially sought to explain all of human history and contrasting social organizations in the West and the “tribal” societies of Africa and the Orient in terms of transformations in the “ratio of the senses” (especially the shift from a primarily oral/aural mode of sensing reality to a primarily visual mode) that were brought on by changes in the technology of communications (i.e., the invention of writing, print, radio, television, and computer). Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1962); *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1964).

¹⁰ Ong suggested that the relations between the senses should be studied and not the senses themselves. Walter J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967). In *Hidden Dimension*, a best-selling study of proxemics, Hall argued people inhabit different sensory worlds, offering numerous examples of sensory universes relating to touch, gaze behavior, thermal space, tactile space, auditory space, oral styles, and olfaction. Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), 131–64.

concern with the senses. Noting the neglect or avoidance of odors by sociologists, they emphasized the significant role of odors on human interaction and instigated a series of questions derived from a sociological approach to odors.¹¹

Alain Corbin was the first social historian to trace the changing way smells have been perceived and analyzed.¹² In *Le Miasme et le Jonquil* (1982), translated into English four years later as *The Foul and the Fragrant* (1986), Corbin traced the conflict-laden history of the perception of smells in the early modern period, especially the 18th and 19th centuries, proposing that a series of factors led to a more refined alertness to smell which produced a sudden lowering threshold of tolerance for stench beginning in the mid-18th century.¹³ The mysterious and alarming shift in evaluative schemas and symbolic systems produced a strategy of deodorization with far-reaching social stakes.¹⁴ The bourgeois hegemony, he argues, intentionally implemented public works of sanitation and personal practices of deodorizing for social control.

From the late 1980's on, three scholars in particular have devoted themselves to the "Anthropology of the Senses."¹⁵ David Howes edited and contributed to *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991) and *Empire of the Senses* (2005), an interdisciplinary collection of articles demonstrating how the patterning of sense

¹¹ Gale Peter Largey and David Rodney Watson, "The Sociology of Odors," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972): 1021–34.

¹² Hans J. Rindisbacher's *The Smell of Books* is a historical-cultural investigation of literature from the late nineteenth century up through the present (1992) through a descriptive-phenomenological approach. *The Smell of Books: A Cultural-Historical Study of Olfactory Perception in Literature* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

¹³ Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ "Sensory anthropology" includes both the synchronic evaluation of sensoria and their hierarchy within a given culture and the diachronic changes in the valuation of any given sense over time. Constance Classen, "Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses," *International Social Science Journal* 49, no. 153 (1997): 409–10.

experience varies in cultures (in accord with the meaning or emphasis attached to each modality of perception) and tracing the influence of such variations on social organization, conceptions of self/cosmos, regulation of emotions, etc.¹⁶

In *Worlds of Sense* (1992), Constance Classen provided a broad investigation into the field of senses in culture, exploring alternate sensory worlds in all their diversity.¹⁷ Anthony Synnott demonstrated how the human body, its parts, and the senses are socially constructed in different ways by different groups of people in *The Body Social* (1993).¹⁸ Besides their individual contributions to the subject, Classen, Howes, and Synnott produced the first comprehensive exploration of the cultural role of odors in Western and non-Western societies from antiquity to present, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (1994).¹⁹

Jenner's survey of early modern English culture (2000) delineates some of the multifaceted meanings and representations of smell in this period.²⁰ Contrary to the work of some social and cultural historians mentioned above (specifically, Corbin), he rejects the idea that the sensory regime of an entire culture can be generalized and protests evolutionary efforts to determine whether olfaction played a greater or lesser role in

¹⁶ David Howes, *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991); *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2005). See also "Notes on the Olfactory Classification and Treatment of Disease in Non-Western Societies," *Santé/Culture/Health* 4, no. 3 (1987): 5–18; "Olfaction and Transition: An Essay on the Ritual Uses of Smell," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 24 (1987): 398–416; and *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

¹⁷ Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 1993). See also Classen, "Foundations"; "The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories," *Ethos* 20, no. 2 (1992): 133–66.

¹⁸ Anthony Synnott, *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁹ Classen, Howes, and Synnott, *Aroma*.

²⁰ Mark S. R. Jenner, "Civilization and Deodorization? Smell in Early Modern English Culture," in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack; Oxford: University Press, 2000), 127–44.

modern or pre-modern cultures. Framing research in terms of a sensory shift from odoriphile to odoriphobe culture is not only synesthetic, he claims, it overlooks the fact that the practices of everyday life do not observe a fixed hierarchy of the senses. Banishing so-called “foul” odors from public space need not presume a devaluation of odors or olfaction, he claims, nor should the elevation of one sense presume the devaluation of another. Rather than tracing a history of smell, he advocates tracing a history of smells (that is, “the cultural meanings of particular odours in specific locations or within particular discourses”).²¹ This he does as a case study with the history of the smell of garlic in early modern England.

Also highlighting the premise that the cultural meanings and functions of smells are contextual, local, and sometimes elusive, Brant steers away from an emphasis on olfaction in medical history to probe the 18th century uses of smell in political, travel, and fantasy narrative writings. By drawing examples from these previously neglected textual sources, she reveals how foul and fragrant coexist in complex ways without conforming to the customary binary of “good” and “bad.”²² As she demonstrates, a foul smell can be good and fragrant one bad, or the terms can be linked in an oxymoron like “the sweet stinks of London.” Both social and personal preferences render olfactory meanings unstable.²³

In addition to these authors, other contemporary sociologists and scholars have contributed on both theoretical and popular levels to the ongoing exploration of the

²¹ Ibid., 138.

²² In describing the complex semiotics of smell, she states, “The ‘odour of sanctity,’ for instance, may be sweet to Christians and repellent to everyone else. Smelling a rat may be pleasing if you are a detective.” Clare Brant, “Fume and Perfume: Some Eighteenth-Century Uses of Smell,” *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 446.

²³ Ibid., 463.

olfactory sense in culture.²⁴ Influential scholars such as Paul Stoller have envisioned a “sensuous awakening,” calling scholars to rediscover the importance of diverse forms of sensory perception.²⁵ For decades now, anthropologists have been concentrating their research on how people use the human senses differently and live in different sensory worlds and, though it was the last of the non-visual modes of perception to be singled out as a research topic unto itself, numerous ethnographic studies since the late 1970’s and early 1980’s have drawn attention to the significance and role of smell.²⁶ Dorland’s *Scent’s Appeal: The Silent Persuasion of Aromatic Encounters* consolidates, excerpts, classifies, and studies classic and current ethnographies and anthropological accounts dealing with the role and importance of odor and olfaction in ancient, medieval, and contemporary societies as expressed in folklore, mythology, ritual, ceremony, medicine, romance, sexuality, hunting methods, and other practices/customs. These

²⁴ For theoretical discussion, see Uri Almagor, “Odors and Private Language: Observations on the Phenomenology of Scent,” *Human Studies* 13, no. 3 (1990): 253–74; Fiona Borthwick, “Olfaction and Taste: Invasive Odours and Disappearing Objects,” *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11, no. 2 (2000): 127–40; and Kelvin E. Y. Low, “Ruminations on Smell as a Sociocultural Phenomenon,” *Current Sociology* 53, no. 3 (2005): 397–417. For a consolidation of anthropological, sociological, scientific perspectives on the role of odors throughout the world in past and present societies, see Boyd Gibbons, “The Intimate Sense of Smell,” *National Geographic* 170, no. 3 (1986): 324–60; A. N. Gilbert and C. J. Wysocki, “The Smell Survey,” *National Geographic* 172, no. 4 (1987): 514–25; Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses* (New York: Random House, 1991); Annick Le Gu  rer, *Scent: The Mysterious and Essential Powers of Smell* (trans. Richard Miller; New York: Kodansha International, 1992).

²⁵ Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997).

²⁶ In chronological order: Anthony Seeger, *Nature and Society in Central Brazil: The Suya Indians of Mato Grosso* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1981); Alfred Gell, “Magic, Perfume, Dream . . .,” in *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism* (ed. I. M. Lewis; London: Academic, 1977), 25–38; Bruce Knauft, “On Percussion and Metaphor,” *Current Anthropology* 20 (1979): 189–91; Seeger, *Nature and Society*; James T. Siegel, “Images and Odors in Javanese Practices Surrounding Death,” *Indonesia* 36 (1983): 1–14; Uri Almagor, “The Cycle and Stagnation of Smells: Pastoralists-Fishermen Relationships in an East African Society,” *RES* 14 (1987): 106–21; Erik Cohen, “The Broken Cycle: Smell in a Bangkok Soi (Lane),” *Ethnos* 53, no. I-II (1988): 37–49; Walter E. A. Van Beek, “The Dirty Smith: Smell as a Social Frontier Among the Kapsiki/Higi of North Cameroon and North-Eastern Nigeria,” *Africa* 62, no. 01 (1992): 38–58; Nils Bubandt, “The Odour of Things: Smell and the Cultural Elaboration of Disgust in Eastern Indonesia,” *Ethnos* 63, no. 1 (1998): 48–80; Susan Rasmusen, “Making Better ‘Scents’ in Anthropology: Aroma in Tuareg Sociocultural Systems and the Shaping of Ethnography,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1999): 55–74. See also Paul Stoller, *The Taste of Ethnographic Things* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989).

anthropological and historical references to aromatic materials provide circumstantial evidence of a sameness or functional pattern across cultures and times.²⁷

More recently, Vannini, Waskul, and Gottschalk's *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture* (2012) bridges cultural sciences (qualitative sociology, social and cultural anthropology, human geography, and cultural studies) to track more recent developments in the study of the senses, providing a comprehensive "map" to the field of sensory study.²⁸ Waskul and Vannini's "somatic work" employs empirical studies to demonstrate how olfaction, as part of the ritualized framework of everyday life, intersects with social, cultural, and moral order.²⁹

The Humanities

Consistent with the trend already demonstrated in the sciences, olfaction has now received fresh emphasis in various disciplines of language, history, and religion. Until recent times, though, only cursory attention has been given to olfaction in the fields of Hebrew Bible and ANE studies. Beyond sporadic comments dealing with manners and customs of the biblical world (daily life, food, health and hygiene conditions, etc.)³⁰

²⁷ Gabrielle J. Dorland, *Scents Appeal: The Silent Persuasion of Aromatic Encounters* (Mendham, NJ: W. Dorland Company, 1993).

²⁸ Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk, *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture: A Sociology of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

²⁹ Dennis D. Waskul and Phillip Vannini, "Smell, Odor, and Somatic Work: Sense-Making and Sensory Management," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 53–71.

³⁰ Jean Bottero, "The Cuisine of Ancient Mesopotamia," *Biblical Archaeologist* 48, no. 1 (1985): 36–47; Edward Neufeld, "Hygiene Conditions in Ancient Israel (Iron Age)," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 34 (1971): 42–66.

and a handful of articles on odors or olfaction in the Bible,³¹ the sense of smell was usually addressed in one the following manners:

1. Dictionary or encyclopedia articles dedicated to olfactory-related subject matter, such as cosmetics, frankincense, herbs, incense, myrrh, nose, nostrils, perfume, spices, etc.
2. Theological lexicons/dictionaries or biblical commentaries dealing with specific terms like קֶטֶרֶת (“incense”), the most extensive olfactory-related term in the Hebrew Bible, or רִיחַ נִיחָח (“soothing odor” or “pleasing aroma”), a technical cultic expression highlighting the divine response in accepting a sacrifice.
3. Articles dealing with more popular occurrences of olfactory language in the Hebrew Bible, especially the incense altar and holy anointing oil (Exodus 30).³²
4. In-depth study of perfumes and incense in the ANE world. Of these two overlapping subjects, incense has received a more thorough treatment, as explained here.³³

The first comprehensive scholarly treatment of incense use in the ancient world came from E. G. Cuthbert F. Atchley in 1909 (*A History of the Use of Incense in Divine*

³¹ A. Brenner, “Aromatics and Perfumes in the Song of Songs,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983): 75–81; Kjeld Nielsen, “Ancient Aromas: Good & Bad,” *Bible Review* 7, no. 3 (1991): 26–33; John J. Pilch, “A Window Into the Biblical World: Slow to Anger and Long of Nose,” *Bible Today* 34, no. 5 (1996): 307–10; “A Window Into the Biblical World: Smells and Tastes,” *Bible Today* 34, no. 4 (1996): 246–51; Mary Jean Winn Leith, “Divine Scents: God Doesn’t Just See and Hear the Israelites, He Can Smell Them Too,” *Bible Review* 19, no. 4 (2003): 8, 61; S. Bachar, “Perfume in the Song of Songs: An Erotic Motif and Sign of Social Class,” *Shnaton* 15 (2005): 39–51.

³² P. A. H. de Boer, “An Aspect of Sacrifice: II. God’s Fragrance,” in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 23; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 37–47; C. Houtman, “On the Function of the Holy Incense (Exodus XXX 34-8) and the Sacred Anointing Oil (Exodus XXX 22-33),” *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 4 (1992): 458–65; Victor (Avigdor) Hurovitz, “Salted Incense—Exodus 30,35; Maqlû VI 111-113; IX 118-120*,” *Biblica* 68 (1987): 178–94.

³³ With perfume, the emphasis is on the substances or ingredients, their sources and usages, and the profession of the perfumer. Michal Dayagi-Mendels, *Perfumes and Cosmetics in the Ancient World* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1989); Piers Crocker, “Apothecaries, Confectionaries, and a New Discovery at Qumran,” *Buried History* 25, no. 2 (1989): 36–46; Marcel Detienne, *Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology* (trans. Jean Pierre Vernant; Princeton: Princeton University, 1994); Nigel Hepper, “Trees and Shrubs Yielding Gums and Resins in the Ancient Near East,” *Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture* 3 (1987): 107–14; Alfred Lucas, “Cosmetics, Perfumes and Incense in Ancient Egypt,” *Egypt Exploration Fund* 16 (1930): 41–53; Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982).

Worship), and it remains a well-cited source for the history of incense use.³⁴ Atchley collected diverse examples of incense use among the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians. With the Hebrew Bible, he focused on the introduction and development of ceremonial incense use in Israelite history. After surveying the more abundant Greek and Roman references, Atchley presented his theories for the use of incense in the ancient orient. About a decade after Atchley, G. Elliot Smith argued the “true” origin and explanation for incense and libation offerings comes from the ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts—the pouring of libations and burning of incense revived the statue of a god and body of a man by restoring the lost moisture and odor of the living body.³⁵ Smith attempted to reconstruct the complex of circumstances setting the stage for the ritual invention and diffusion of incense and libations and demonstrate the far-reaching diffusion of practices and beliefs.

A number of studies of incense in the ANE appeared half a century after the writings of Atchley and Smith. In *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (1981), Nigel Groom produced a reference compendium that assessed much of the pertinent information from classical sources about incense, the areas where it grew, and the caravan routes by which it was transported.³⁶ Though Groom’s emphasis was on the incense trade and the substances themselves, he touched on the religious significance of incense from the ancient civilizations to the present day. Kjeld Nielsen’s *Incense in Ancient Israel* sought to identify incense substances mentioned in ANE textual sources (Egypt, Arabia, Syria-Mesopotamia, and especially Israel) and their

³⁴ E. G. Cuthbert F. Atchley, *A History of the Use of Incense in Divine Worship* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), 3–6.

³⁵ G. Elliot Smith, “Incense and Libations,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 4 (1917): 226.

³⁶ Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (New York: Longman, 1981).

religious and secular uses, he effectively integrated archaeological and linguistic analysis to provide a broad interpretive background for the use of incense in Israel.³⁷

The more general scholarly debate as to whether incense was used in ancient Israelite rituals is narrowed by Paul Heger in *The Development of the Incense Cult in Israel*.³⁸

Assuming the results of modern critical scholarship, that the incense ceremony asserted in Exodus 30-40 was introduced later, Heger aimed at determining exactly when this ceremony was introduced and what historical and social circumstances were behind its development.

In the last decade, olfaction in the Hebrew Bible and its subsequent interpretation has received more scholarly attention. Though not the first to consider the phenomenon of smell in antiquity or ancient Christianity,³⁹ Susan Ashbrook Harvey has contributed more than others for this time period, and her recent book, *Scenting Salvation* (2006), is the most comprehensive.⁴⁰ After highlighting the importance of smell in the cultural

³⁷ Kjeld Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 38; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), xi.

³⁸ Paul Heger, *The Development of the Incense Cult in Israel* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997). See also *The Three Biblical Altar Laws: Developments in the Sacrificial Cult in Practice and Theology* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999).

³⁹ Béatrice Caseau, "Christian Bodies: The Senses and Early Byzantine Christianity," in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium* (ed. L. James; Aldershot: Variorum, 1999), 101–9; "Euodia: The Use and Meaning of Fragrances in the Ancient World and Their Christianization (100-900 AD)" (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1994); "Les Usages Médicaux de l'encens et des parfums: un aspect de la médecine populaire antique et de sa Christianisation," in *Air, Miasmes et Contagion: les épidémies dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age* (ed. S. Bazin-Tachella, D. Quérueu, and E. Samama; Langres: Dominique Guéniot, 2001), 74–85; Constance Classen, "Heaven's Scent: The Odour of Sanctity in Christian Tradition," *Journal of Religion and Culture* 4, no. 2 (1990): 87–92; Saara Lilja, *The Treatment of Odours in the Poetry of Antiquity* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 49; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1972); Nathan Mitchell, "Smells and Bells," *Worship or Orates Fratres* 72 (1998): 539–47; Lionel Rothkrug, "The 'Odour of Sanctity,' and the Hebrew Origins of Christian Relic Veneration," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 8, no. 2 (1981): 95–134.

⁴⁰ Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 2006); "Incense Offerings in the Syriac Transitus Mariae: Ritual and Knowledge in Ancient Christianity," in *The Early Church and Its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson* (ed. J. J. Malherbe, F. W. Norris, and J. W. Thompson; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 175–91; "Olfactory Knowing: Signs of Smell in the Vitae of Simeon Stylites," in *Change and Continuity in Syriac Christianity: Festschrift for H. J. W. Drijvers* (ed. G. Reinink and A. C. Klugkist; Louvain: Peeters, 1999), 23–34; "On Holy

landscape of the ancient Mediterranean, Harvey deals with five major issues: the post-Constantinian shift in Christian ritual life from an ambivalent relationship toward scent-producing agents to a new prominence, beliefs about the role of smell in knowing God and others, the relationship of asceticism and the positive valuation of human senses, the dissonance between admirable ascetic devotion and the resulting stench of these practices, and the relevance of smell for the resurrected Christian body.

Deborah Green's *The Aroma of Righteousness: Scent and Seduction in Rabbinic Life and Literature* (2011) furthers sensory study in the history of religion.⁴¹ Green's work utilizes an interdisciplinary methodology melding literary contextual analysis with cultural/societal understandings of aromatics to explore ancient rabbinic use of aromatic imagery (fragrant only, not foul) to propagate social, theological, and religious claims. Green's literary analysis is informed by what is known about the context of everyday practices like bathing, eating, fumigating garments, and burial from the historical, archaeological, and cultural data of perfume and incense use in the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods (late Roman and early Byzantine) in Palestine. After a thorough review of this background, her literary analysis begins with the scent images in the Bible that form the basis of rabbinic interpretations (especially Song of Songs) and then shows how inner-biblical reinterpretation, primarily in the prophets, integrates erotic perfume metaphors with those of sacred incense. Engaging literary constructions of the erotic, sacrifice/suffering, and death/martyrdom, rabbinic beliefs expressed in *Genesis Rabbah* and *Song of Songs Rabbah* intimate varied structural antinomies of scent (inside-outside, up/down, pleasing aroma/stench, arousal/calm. So preoccupied with

Stench: When the Odor of Sanctity Sickens," in *Studia Patristica XXV, Ascetica, Gnostica, Liturgica, Orientalia* (ed. M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold; Louvain: Peeters, 2001), 90–101; "St. Ephrem on the Scent of Salvation," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 109–28.

⁴¹ Deborah A. Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness: Scent and Seduction in Rabbinic Life and Literature* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University, 2011).

fragrance, these 4th century interpreters *found* ways to introduce aromatic images into biblical texts that have nothing to do with smell. These understandings reflect deeply encoded cultural constructions of what daily experience with perfume, incense, and spice represent.

Most recently yet, Yael Avrahami joins Harvey and Green in concentrating attention on the biblical sensorium. In *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible* (2012), Avrahami illustrates how a cultural septasensory model (sight, hearing, kinaesthesia, speech, touch, taste, and smell) is both explicitly referenced and implicitly embedded in the Hebrew Bible.⁴² Despite geographic proximity between Israel and ANE neighbors, she argues the Hebrew materials merit their own study because of their complexity and diversity.⁴³ Using a phenomenological approach, she studies linguistic associative patterns found in word pairs/clusters and contextual patterns to reveal unconscious cultural perceptions about the different modalities. Avrahami shows how the actions of different senses are linked to related body organs in the Hebrew Bible and perceived to function through them. In addition, it reflects a common understanding that the senses (with hearing, speech, and sight given prominence) are created by God as a means for cognitive, emotional, and social experiences, and to have a sensory disability is to suffer divine rejection and be relegated to a marginalized status. Her final chapter explores the associative patterns and semantic load associated with sight and seeing, concluding that vision plays the dominant role conceptually, linguistically, and practically in ancient Israel (more so than hearing, contra some scholars).

⁴² Yael Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 545; New York: T&T Clark, 2012).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 36.

To summarize, the social sciences have (re)discovered the cultural importance and function of olfaction, especially in the recent decades, yet these studies either fall short of dealing with the early periods of written history to focus on the past millennium, or they limit investigation of sensory perception to biblical literature and culture (not Egyptian or Mesopotamian). The phenomenon of smell in ancient Israelite, Judaic, and Christian practice has received attention, but no comparable effort to systematically and comprehensively assess its significance and role in Akkadian literature exists. Perfume and incense have been studied cross-culturally in the ANE, but these subjects represent only one facet of the broader subject. Avrahami states, invitingly, "...any study of sensory perception making use of texts from the ANE will enrich the conclusions of this book, and further explain the cultural similarities and differences between the respective cultures."⁴⁴ This study contributes a wider assessment of both fragrant and foul in early textual references from the geographically proximate and culturally contextual regions of Mesopotamia and Israel.

METHODOLOGY

An interdisciplinary,⁴⁵ comparative approach best suits the intentionally broad scope of this project. By "comparative approach," I am referring to the mainstream comparative or contextual approach which involves attempting to reconstruct and evaluate the geographical, historical, religious, political, and literary setting in which a text was created and disseminated, noting both similarities and differences in

⁴⁴ Ibid., 277.

⁴⁵ I use the term "interdisciplinary" in the sense of approaching a subject from various angles and methods, cutting across and uniting disciplines to form a holistic method for understanding.

geographically and temporally proximate texts.⁴⁶ The dangers with this approach are well-known, but the many errors and exaggerations of an earlier period should not deter scholars from the effort of comparison.⁴⁷ The simultaneous and mutually illuminating study of diverse ANE traditions is more fertile than an inspection of each in isolation.⁴⁸

Chapters 2-4 of the dissertation involves a lexical, literary-contextual analysis of a focused group of ANE olfactory references, first Akkadian and then Hebrew, with comparisons between the two.⁴⁹ The focus is on the more prevalent and explicit smell-related words in Akkadian and Hebrew texts from no later than the Achaemenid Empire,⁵⁰ excluding the incense and perfume terminology that has already been studied.⁵¹ For the Akkadian, this includes *ba'āšu* (“to smell bad”), *bīšu* (“malodorous”), *bu'su* (“stench”), *erīšu/erēšu/irīšu* (“scent, fragrance”), *eṣēnu* (“to smell”), and *nipšu*

⁴⁶ William W. Hallo, “Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Their Relevance for Biblical Exegesis,” in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 1, 3 vols.; New York: Brill, 1997), 1:xxv. See also Carl D. Evans, W. Hallo, and John B. White, eds., *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method* (Pittsburg: Pickwick, 1980); William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue, eds., *Scripture in Context: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983); William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and George L. Mattingly, eds., *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature* (Scripture in Context III, Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8; Lewiston NY: Mellen, 1990).

⁴⁷ Mistakes to avoid include the obsession with tracing dependence of one text upon the other, the tendency to see a given text as superior or inferior to others, overlooking the particularity of specific cultures in the broader generalization, contrasting elements from dissimilar stages, etc.

⁴⁸ Karl van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985), 2.

⁴⁹ With a broad audience in mind, including Assyriologists, biblical scholars, ANE historians, and social science scholars, there will probably be too much technical analysis for some and not enough to satisfy others. The frustration and criticism from both sides is understood and expected as an inherent part of this venture.

⁵⁰ The geographic and time restraints (particularly the loose *terminus ante quem*) for this study are selective but not altogether arbitrary. While there are olfactory references in other languages (Egyptian, Ugaritic, and Hittite, for instance), the quantity and accessibility of Akkadian and Hebrew terms provides a manageable body of material for my evaluation.

⁵¹ Atchley, *A History of the Use of Incense*; Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*; Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*. See also Dayagi-Mendels, *Perfumes and Cosmetics*; Crocker, “Apothecaries, Confectionaries, and a New Discovery at Qumran”; Detienne, *Gardens of Adonis*; Hepper, “Trees and Shrubs Yielding Gums and Resins in the Ancient Near East”; Lucas, “Cosmetics, Perfumes and Incense in Ancient Egypt”; Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*; Friedrich Blome, *Die Opfermaterie in Babylonien und Israel* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1934), 274.

“smell”). The Hebrew includes *בָּאֵשׁ* (“to stink”), *בְּאֵשׁ* (“stench”), *רִיחַ* (“to smell”), and *רִיחַ* (“smell”).

For each reference (approximately 250), I will evaluate the context and usage, attempting to establish not only genre and historical/literary context, but also whether the term is used literally or figuratively, to refer to positive or negative odors, in a consequential or incidental manner, etc.⁵² Original languages will be used to identify, describe, and evaluate the olfactory references, though contextual and comparative analysis will usually utilize English translations. The lexical analyses employ a literary approach as well as a linguistic one, as I try to pay close attention to the details, tensions, and subtle nuances of the language. With Akkadian and Hebrew narrative, this involves watching for character development, gaps, ambiguity, suspense, retrospection, surprise, prolepsis, repetition, selectivity, loaded language, rhetorical devices, etc.⁵³ Then, in Chapter 4, “Comparison of Akkadian and Hebrew Olfactory Terms,” I will consider how odors and olfactory perception may or may not differ with respect to different ANE peoples and time periods. To what extent does olfaction have the same significance and role cross-culturally, and to what extent are there any distinctive changes or notable shifts within traditions? Summary observations will be made about the how the olfactory sense is manifested in Akkadian and Hebrew languages.⁵⁴

⁵² This will help in constructing a general typology that will serve as a framework for comparison in Chapter 4, “Comparison of Akkadian and Hebrew Olfactory Terms.”

⁵³ More will be said about this methodology in Chapter 7, “The Function of Olfaction in Literature.”

⁵⁴ Admittedly, any broad characterization of the ancient Near Eastern world is problematic, but making generic observations has some value in comparison with modern, western civilization.

The introductions to the both Akkadian and Hebrew chapters will address more specifically the challenge of genre designations and dating. With respect to genre,⁵⁵ the Akkadian texts will receive more attention because Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries, and other scholarly works abound for the Hebrew Scriptures, whereas Akkadian genres are more obscure or unfamiliar to many readers, and secondary literature providing a comprehensive survey is meager. With respect to dating, a diachronic approach analyzes the evolution of something over time and a synchronic approach does so at a given, fixed point in history. Rather than trying to establish the development in textual history (diachronic), I will analyze the structure of both Akkadian and Hebrew texts in their “current” state (synchronic). By comparison, the Hebrew Scriptures are relatively static texts farther removed from their autographs, so tracing their history is inherently hypothetical.⁵⁶ Whatever the developmental origins of various texts, at some point they arrived at their final shape and were discovered, so texts will be organized according to that respective time period, assuming and at times referencing the extensive prehistory.

After the contextual and comparative analysis of olfactory terms, the last three chapters of this study utilize an interdisciplinary, integrative approach to explore the importance and impact of olfaction in three functional domains: 1) religious ritual, 2) interpersonal relationships, and 3) literature. First, in Chapter 5, “The Function of Olfaction in Religious Ritual,” I will assess how modern scientific, psychological, sociological, anthropological, and archaeological research helps illuminate the

⁵⁵ I use the term “genre” in the sense of a common set of literary and linguistic features such as style, form, structure, tone, and content deriving from the time a text was written.

⁵⁶ A multi-edited Gilgamesh is empirically verifiable, as there are early Sumerian sources, a more integrated second millennium OB version, and a final, “standard” NA one. A multi-edited Genesis is a hypothesis that only the recovery of antecedent editions can prove.

significance and role of smell in the most prominent, cross-cultural ritual of the ANE— incense in religious worship. More specifically, I will explore how the complex effects of incense on the human body/psyche and its socio-cultural role in ritual activity contribute a previously undeveloped perspective to the existing studies of ANE incense use. Then in Chapter 6, “The Function of Olfaction in Interpersonal Relationships,” I incorporate sociological and anthropological evidence for how olfactory codes construct and convey social, political, and moral categories in a variety of ways to demonstrate the revelatory and judging function of olfaction in interpersonal relationships. Finally, in Chapter 7, “The Function of Olfaction in Literature,” I refocus on the respective texts not as windows into the cultural and social world of the ANE but as literary works that aesthetically enthrall and rhetorically persuade the reader. Chapter 8 draws everything together and highlights related areas needing further investigation.

Socio-cultural realities assumed by texts are more complex than they appear, and the process used to understand them requires the use of a variety of tools— linguistic, historical, literary, sociological, anthropological, etc. The choice between social-scientific approaches and standard methodologies is not an “either-or,” it is a “both-and.” Data and theories from the social sciences are a helpful addition to the repertoire of conventional interpretive strategies, and explorations of social dimensions are far more useful when employed in conjunction with more traditional interpretive tools. By capitalizing on and applying insights from multiple disciplines to the ANE textual data, the combined methodologies of chapters 2-4 and chapters 5-7 complement and expand our awareness of the significance and role of olfaction in a time and place far removed from our own.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

There are several primary limitations to this study, the first being that of purpose. The goal is not to demonstrate literary borrowing, cultural influence, historical development, or theological truth, nor is there a tracing of textual history. No attempt is made to validate or recreate the “true” historical circumstance behind narratives. Rather, the focus is on how the ancients experienced their world, specifically with respect to the olfactory sense. Ancient writings can be a plausible and sufficient reflection of social or cultural features, even if they are not an accurate “historical” record of the incidents they propose to reflect and only a narrow segment of the population is cognizant of or even responsible for them.

Another limitation involves the linguistic evidence. In my lexical analysis, I depend on existing dictionaries and lexicons for the initial acquisition of olfactory references. While this is not a problem with respect to the Hebrew material, Akkadian dictionaries are themselves limited, as they cannot survey the vast and growing body of known ANE texts. I do not intend to provide an exhaustive catalogue of the available references, though effort is made to be as comprehensive as possible in hopes that it provides a fairly well represented sampling of what may be out there. Since there is a consistent and significant reduction in the textual data base from modern to ancient times, the references are not so vast that heavy selectivity needed be employed.

Seeking to recover knowledge of the past is risky business, especially when it involves the phenomenon of smell. Fieldwork is an impossibility, and there is no known discourse on the identification or perception of odors in ANE texts. Because the cultural significance and role of odors is assumed and integral to society, much like our modern, western ocularcentric bias and visualist epistemology, I readily admit the limitations of a 20th century author attempting to understand something from ages past and worlds

away. However, even a biased examination of ANE textual evidence pertaining to olfaction has the potential to contribute a great deal to our present knowledge of ancient and modern societies. This interdisciplinary, comparative study of olfactory references in Akkadian and Hebrew texts will enable us to better discern the significance and role of smell in the ANE world.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF AKKADIAN OLFATORY TERMS

INTRODUCTION

Akkadian texts contain a diversity of olfactory terms including verbs, nouns, and adjectives of both positive and negative nuance. What follows is a comprehensive, contextual analysis of almost 200 occurrences of the Akkadian olfactory terms *ba'āšu* / *be'ēšu* / *be'āšu* (to stink, smell bad), *bīšu* / *bi'iltu* (malodorous, bad, evil), *bu'šu* (stench), *erīšu* / *erēšu* / *irīšu* (smell, scent, fragrance), *eṣēnu* (to smell), and *nipšu* (smell, breath).⁵⁷

For the lexical and contextual analysis, 126 different texts will be organized by genre then date and provenance of the text (where possible or applicable), though it must be emphasized again that both are not always known or discernible. Often, the dating reflects the time when the text was discovered and used or at least when it was archived, not necessarily when it originated, which could have been much earlier. This would be the case for a bulk of material found in ancient libraries of the first millennium, such as the canonical incantation collections which were already taking shape during the Old Babylonian period with traditions evidenced back to the Sumerian Ur III period.”⁵⁸

Reiner highlights this dilemma:

Interpreters of first-millennium Akkadian literature have long struggled with the problem of literary periodization. It is generally assumed that a single corpus represented by late copies found in royal or scribal libraries quite possibly—and in some cases, most certainly—goes back to second-millennium originals. While there may have been historical developments from an earlier to later and

⁵⁷ As stated in the introduction, this analysis does not address specific and generic terms used for olfactory substances or ingredients (perfumes, oils, incense, spices, etc.), as well as the terms for incense and incense offering in general.

⁵⁸ Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 178.

eventually a final version, it is extremely difficult to trace these because of insufficient data.⁵⁹

While attempts are made to distinguish in textual references the type of Akkadian employed, this is not always possible or certain. For example, the fuzzy boundaries between Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian letters and differences in scholars' use of the terms complicate things. The general periods of Akkadian language used here are Old Akkadian (2500–1950 BCE), Old Babylonian/Old Assyrian (1950–1530 BCE), Middle Babylonian/Middle Assyrian (1530–1000 BCE), Neo-Babylonian/Neo-Assyrian (1000–600 BCE), Late Babylonian (after 600 BCE), and Standard Babylonian, the artificial literary language using archaizing syntactic and morphological features and a selected vocabulary).

Organizing and arranging texts by genre has two significant obstacles. First, not every text has a clear genre, and second, many genres overlap and intersect in different ways. While it is helpful for our purposes to ascribe genre “handles” to related texts from a broad swathe of historical periods and contexts, the categories can also be “crude and simplistically dyadic.”⁶⁰ A great level of caution should be exercised any time definitions or categories are used that do not correspond to ancient and indigenous ones. That said, for the purposes of cultural analysis, and because the ancient Babylonians do not appear to have developed their own native classification system, the interpreter must be able to categorize and organize data so that it will communicate with her or his contemporary audience. As a result, indigenous titles inform contemporary scholarship

⁵⁹ Erica Reiner, “First-Millennium Babylonian Literature,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History* (vol. 3; Cambridge: University Press, 1991), 3:294–5.

⁶⁰ I. Tzvi Abusch, “Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Mesopotamia,” in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide* (ed. Sarah Iles Johnston; Harvard University Press Reference Library; Cambridge: Belknap, 2004), 353.

but “*should not dictate* the interpretive results,”⁶¹ for sometimes they simply reflect a librarian’s interest in proper shelving.⁶²

This tension is felt with some of the most prominent taxonomical genre divisions used by Akkadian scholars to distinguish between various types of texts within the rubric of Mesopotamian ritual speech: hymns, prayers, laments, and incantations. To illustrate the challenge of overlapping or interrelated genres, consider what the Mesopotamians identified as *šullas* (what modern scholars refer to as “incantation prayers”). On the one hand, these texts have the form and thematic makeup of laments or prayers directed to the gods of Babylonian pantheon by an individual, but on the other hand, they contain the rubrics of incantations, the verbal formula recited in midst of a ritual procedure (Akkadian *šiptu*, Sumerian ÉN).⁶³ As will be demonstrated below, though, not all incantations are prayers, as many do not rely on a divine response or attempt to leverage divine will.

The Sumerian and Akkadian “letter prayers” represent another example of genre confusion. In an attempt to establish a tangible presence before the gods, Mesopotamian worshippers might place in the temple a votive object or statue of themselves inscribed with prayers for prosperity, longevity, or health, or they might inscribe a prayer on a tablet, thus producing a “letter prayer” (Gottesbriefe). Classic letter prayers include Sargon’s letter to Ashur, which is part of the Assyrian Annals, and the letter prayers of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, written on tablets.⁶⁴ In terms of

⁶¹ Alan Lenzi, ed., *Reading Akkadian Hymns and Prayers. An Introduction* (Ancient Near East Monographs 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, n.d.), 13.

⁶² Reiner, “First-Millennium Babylonian Literature,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3:294.

⁶³ Abusch, “Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Mesopotamia,” 353.

⁶⁴ Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 96.

content or function, these texts are prayers because they address deity with requests, but their form is quite comparable to a letter.

Consider also a number of more familiar texts typically characterized as “myth” or “epic.” Often, “epic” is used in contradistinction with “myth” to refer to traditional or legendary stories dealing with cultural heroes and institutions (often from the remote past), while “myth” involves stories about gods or supernatural beings. However, this dichotomy is somewhat arbitrary and simplistic. For instance, the poem of Erra has been variously designated both a “myth” and an “epic.” This poetic work is introduced with the formula of an oral epic (“I sing of the son of the king [Erra]”), but this epic formula is not always used to introduce direct speech throughout. More importantly, though, the epic literary genre is typically characterized by a human (or semi-divine) protagonist engaged in heroic deeds of some sort, whereas this text contains direct discourse in which the poet (in first person) and, moreover, divine characters (Erra, Ishum, and Marduk) all render speeches in rhetorical style. There is no clear and sequential narrative of events, as in Gilgamesh, and no heroic action taken against an adversary.

The literary genre of myth is equally problematic for this text, if one understands myth as referring to that which “falls outside of time and has a paradigmatic, atemporal value as well as a capacity for anthropological universalization,” which is a common view.⁶⁵ The poem of Erra references a precise time in Mesopotamian history (the end of the second millennium BCE), and while it does have mythic qualities, it obviously stands in a class distinct from other accepted myths such as Atrahasis and Enuma Elish. There are didactic elements evident in the work, and potentially cultic applications, but these

⁶⁵ Luigi Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (vol. 1; Sources and Monographs. Sources From the Ancient Near East; Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977), 12.

too are not strong enough to characterize its genre. The Erra poem is a truly unique piece of ancient Mesopotamian literature.⁶⁶

Enuma Elish, a Babylonian creation account, also resists a universally accepted classification. It is frequently entitled either “The Epic of Creation” or, less often, “The Babylonian Creation Myth” (though it is typically included among popular Akkadian myths such as Atrahasis, Anzu, the Story of Adapa, Nergal and Ereškigal). The epic genre is applied in a different sense than more explicitly “epic” works like Gilgamesh, as it narrates pre-historical cosmic events and divine beings involved in the victory of order over chaos. If the epic genre of ancient Near Eastern literature is more loosely defined as “texts that narrate the acts of gods and cultural heroes in extended poetry,” then Enuma Elish could be classified as an “epic myth” in contrast to an “epic legend,” the former treating primarily the deeds of the gods and the latter the deeds of great men, though this would be an arbitrary decision.⁶⁷

Finally, The Descent of Ishtar is an Akkadian literary composition usually tagged as a myth. However, its obvious association with a large Sumerian corpus of materials featuring the relationship of Dumuzi (a primeval Mesopotamian king) and Inanna (a fertility goddess), the divine couple associated with love and fertility, has also resulted in its treatment in the “love lyrics” genre camp.⁶⁸

Without any known Akkadian terms for “myth” and “epic” applied to these texts, our modern distinctions between these types of writings is often blurred in Mesopotamian texts. To move forward, despite its shortcomings, the criteria of content/focus rather than style/form will be used here to help with genre designations.

⁶⁶ See *Ibid.*, 6ff. for full discussion.

⁶⁷ Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 271.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

So, for instance, this organization of Akkadian texts according to “myth” and “epic” genres considers as paradigmatic whether the basic subject is more about gods or humans, or, to put it another way, whether there is a divine or royal focus rather than the style or form in which it is written. Using similar criteria, other references taken from texts with debatable genres, such as “letter prayers” and “incantation prayers,” will be treated as prayers and not letters or incantations because of their function despite their form. Likewise, The Descent of Ishtar will retain its familiar position as myth and not love lyrics, primarily because the content centers on divine activity and lacks the familiar and pervasive characteristics of love lyrics.

Even when texts are clearly identified within respective genres, the ordering and arrangement of those genres in sequence is not a given. Because ANE authors did not pass on a standardized approach to organizing different types of genres, scholars today use various criteria, some or much of which is subjective and based on cultural or personal presuppositions. This explains why, for example, genres such as myths and epics have greater visibility than the more voluminous scholarly and technical literature.⁶⁹ If volume is used as a factor, then omen literature or incantation texts would precede myths and epics, which are often treated first among the genres.⁷⁰

While some survey approaches treat myths and epics first and distinguish them individually in that order, others distinguish the two groups with respect to an overarching schema, such as texts dealing with human experience (epics) or divine

⁶⁹ Reiner, “First-Millennium Babylonian Literature,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3:295.

⁷⁰ The magnitude of omen literature within the Akkadian corpus is one of the peculiar distinguishing features of this language’s legacy. According to Oppenheim’s estimates, 30% of all documents of this tradition are of this genre. William W. Hallo, *The World’s Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 38; Boston: Brill, 2009), 1. Adam Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der Sumerischen Beschwörung. Literarisch Untersucht* (Leipziger semitistische Studien, n. f. 1; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1931), 4.

experience (myths). Others cluster “myths,” “epics,” and “legends” into one composite category.⁷¹ Similar issues emerge with hymns, prayers, incantations, and rituals. If “liturgical literature” is used categorically, because there are no known books/tablets of private devotion, then incantations containing prayers and confessions to various gods along with ritualistic directions are associated with the psalms and prayers said in the temples.⁷² From a different perspective, if “ritual” is understood as symbolic religious act that is repeated, sacred, formalized, traditional, and intentional, then not only “formal” ritual texts and related incantations but also sacrificial texts, medical texts, prayers, hymns, lamentations, omens, and genealogies should be treated together.⁷³

In this study, the sequential order of genres will follow the overarching framework of *The Context of Scripture* with the three-fold division of “Canonical,” “Monumental,” and “Archival.” “Canonical” refers to an authoritative text with a reasonably fixed number and sequence of individual compositions which are grouped into recognizable books or subdivisions. Canonical documents are sub-categorized as “Divine Focus,” “Royal Focus,” and “Individual Focus” based on the concept of life setting (“Sitz im Leben”).⁷⁴ “Monumental” as a category includes royal, building, memorial, display, votive, mortuary,

⁷¹ James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3d, With Supplement.; Princeton: Princeton University, 1974). The approach of ANET represents a common tact, starting with and clustering myths, epics, and legends, and then clustering additional genre types such as legal texts (laws, treaties, legal documents), historical texts (historiographic and historical), rituals, incantations, and descriptions of festivals, and didactic and wisdom literature (fables/didactic tales, proverbs and precepts, oracles and prophecies).

⁷² Stephen Langdon, “A Chapter From the Babylonian Books of Private Devotion,” *Babyloniaca* 3, no. 1 (1908): 3.

⁷³ Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 144.

⁷⁴ William W. Hallo, “Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Their Relevance for Biblical Exegesis,” in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 1; New York: Brill, 1997), xxvi. For justification of his definition of “canonical,” see William W. Hallo, “The Concept of Canonicity in Cuneiform and Biblical Literature: A Comparative Appraisal,” in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective; Scripture in Context IV* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, William W. Hallo, and Bernard F. Batto; Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 11; Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 1–19.

seal, stamp, and weight inscriptions, as well as “functional” inscriptions such as treaties, laws, edicts, boundary stones, and royal grants. “Archival” documents would be comprised of letters, contracts, courtcases, accounts, wills, archive shelf lists, and other miscellaneous texts.

Within each category (canonical, monumental, and archival), genres will appear in a pattern similar to the COS with the exception of additional genres not in COS but represented here; they will be inserted where fitting. So, within the “Divine Focus” of canonical texts, the order of genres treated is as follows: myths, hymns and prayers (treated together because of fuzzy boundaries), divination (omens), prophetic oracles (not in COS but inserted after omens because they involve divine communication to humans), incantations/rituals (combined), cultic calendar (not in COS), medical texts, religious commentary (not in COS), and love poems. After evaluating these texts with a “divine” focus, epics/legends (combined) will follow, because of their “royal” focus. A form of wisdom literature (popular sayings) with its “individual” focus completes the genres within the “canonical” category.

Royal inscriptions and “functional” inscriptions (treaties) represent the COS category of “monumental” texts, and will be addressed next. Letters are the single genre representing “archival” texts, though a large one with approximately sixty uses of the terms under investigation. Also, and very importantly, this Akkadian survey of olfactory terms includes an additional category of texts not treated in COS—“Lexical” texts. The exploration of lexical texts before these above-referenced genres from canonical, monumental, and archival categories is critical and intentional. More than providing dictionary-like information, these texts provide important cultural clues about olfaction in the ancient Mesopotamian world. It is worth noting, even at the beginning of this investigation, that the most prominent olfactory references being studied here are

demonstrably present in fourteen or more distinct genres, which is a very significant representation of broad-sweeping Akkadian writings.⁷⁵

Before the individual textual analysis of each olfactory reference (grammatical first then contextual), a summary introduction to the genre will be given, assuming not all readers are fluent in the breadth and diversity of ANE textual genres. Text history and sources, editions, and translations are provided for those who wish to study further. The goal is to make this material accessible to non-Assyriologists (biblical scholars not trained in Akkadian as well as sociologists and other scholars interested in the human senses) without compromising technical precision (thus the grammatical and lexical analysis and cuneiform transliterations).

LEXICAL

Summary Introduction

A massive body of Akkadian philological texts display collections of words and corresponding cuneiform signs for the bilingual Sumero-Akkadian culture (some with explanations, grammatical information, explanatory glosses, and full translations).

These compilations are known today as lexical texts or lexical lists.⁷⁶ At first, these lists were monolingual with Sumerian words, but over time they were expanded to include Akkadian translations, information on the pronunciation of the Sumerian words, and the

⁷⁵ Genres that do not have attestation of these terms, at least not yet, include lamentations and elegies, historiography, royal hymns, building and display inscriptions, votive seal inscriptions, weight inscriptions, courtcases, accounts, and wills.

⁷⁶ For an overview of the Mesopotamian lexicographical tradition, see A. Cavigneaux, "Lexikalische Listen" (vol. 7–8; *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 6; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1983), 609–41. Miguel Civil, "Lexicography," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on His Seventieth Birthday, June 7, 1974* (ed. S. J. Lieberman; Assyriological Studies 20; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976), 123–57. Lambert provides a concise summary amidst the larger context of the Babylonians' understanding of language. Wilfred G. Lambert, "Babylonian Linguistics," in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm* (ed. Karel van Lerberghe; *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 96; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 217–31.

names of the signs used to write them.⁷⁷ There are also a few polyglot lists (mostly Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite, with rare occurrences of Hurrian and Ugaritic).⁷⁸ Mesopotamian lexical lists, as a whole, were the result of a long, slow process which lasted for centuries and was influenced by the differing needs of scribes with respect to training, interpretation of traditional texts, composition of new texts, and the desire to salvage words of an extinct language.

Lexical lists are among the oldest tablets that have been discovered at Mesopotamian sites. The evolution and adaptation of these lists is evident from the beginning of cuneiform to approximately the end of the second millennium, though some periods have a scarcity of sources attested.⁷⁹ The main canonical series known today are based on “forerunners” or “proto-series,” though the relationship is complex. It is generally accepted that the main canonical lists are the product of Babylonian schools prior to the 12th century.⁸⁰

In describing the significant contribution of lexical texts, Frahm points out *both* horizontal and vertical dimensions. The equations between words in a given line reflects the horizontal dimension. This itself provides an impressive lexicographical legacy in both quantity and quality. The vertical dimension is also important, though, as these lexical lists are organized according to thematic, acrographic, etymological/pseudo-

⁷⁷ Eckart Frahm, *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries: Origins of Interpretation* (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 5; Münster, Germany: Ugarit, 2011), 13.

⁷⁸ Civil, “Lexicography,” 124.

⁷⁹ For example, the prevalence of syllabaries and introduction of Akkadian translations occurs in the Isin, Larsa, and early Old Babylonian period. *Ibid.*, 127.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

etymological, and semantic sequencing.⁸¹ When considering ancient Mesopotamian understandings and perceptions about olfaction, the connections and associations of smell-related terms in groups or series can provide cultural background about positive and negative smells and help reveal the semantic range of specific lemma.

Because of the technical difficulty in understanding these ancient and complicated scholarly texts, a more detailed overview is provided below for each group containing the olfactory terms of this study. The following analysis of references to *ba'āšu*, *bīšu*, *bu'sū*, *erīšu* / *erēšu* / *irīšu*, *eṣēnu*, and *nipšu* in lexical texts and their commentaries follows the sequence of these main canonical series in the order summarized below, largely because of the unique challenges inherent in dating the various recensions. When an individual entry with an olfactory word has apparent or potential philological connections to its surrounding context, there will be exploration, but if not, I simply move on to the next reference.

Ea and Aa

The “Ea” group, published in MSL 14, is a family of texts giving simple signs, their pronunciation, and Akkadian meanings.⁸² There are two main series, *ea A = nâqu* (hereafter identified as Ea) and *á A = nâqu* (abbreviated Aa), which are derived from the first line of the text. Olfactory terms appear in several textual antecedents to these cuneiform syllabaries.⁸³ Rawlinson’s second volume of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of*

⁸¹ Sometimes a combination of organizational principles is employed, as these lists expanded over the years as more and more lexical material and explanatory content was added. Frahm, *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries*, 13–14.

⁸² Miguel Civil, ed., *Ea A = Nâqu, Aa A = Nâqu, with Their Forerunners and Related Texts* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 14; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1979).

⁸³ A syllabary is a set of written symbols alongside the syllables they represent and the words they indicate.

Western Asia contains some miscellaneous Proto-Babylonian and Assyrian bilingual lists, the dating of which is not certain.⁸⁴ The series Ur - e - a = *nâqu* (hereafter, Ur-*ea*), published in MSL 2, is also a precursor to the series Ea and Aa. Proto Ea and Aa, included in MSL 14, are also elementary didactic compilations, written down and memorized by students, which taught how to associate the appropriate sound patterns with the signs of the cuneiform writing system.⁸⁵ Over time, there were several canonical recensions, resulting in a significant expansion to include Akkadian subcolumns and an increased number of Akkadian translations and explanatory elements.⁸⁶ Sometimes the commentary texts add further Akkadian equivalents to the Sumerian-Akkadian lists, sometimes they explain them in terms of a real or fancied etymology, and sometimes they provide terms that furnish a correct or fictitious link between two equivalent terms in the original list.⁸⁷ The result was a shift away away from beginners into the exclusive realm of scholars.

In Ur-*ea*, Ea and Aa, the first column provides the syllabic pronunciation of the Sumerian sign form given in the second column (in most cases imitations of OB forms, sometimes clumsily written), and the third column gives the Akkadian translation of the logogram. Usually a single Akkadian word is given for each Sumerian sign, though there are exceptions to this, as will be seen below. Some tablets (such as I/6) include four columns, with the conventional sign name inserted between the logogram and Akkadian translation, whereas Proto Ea and Aa usually have only two columns, one with the basic

⁸⁴ Henry C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia: A Selection From the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria* (vol. 2, 5 vols.; London: Harrison, 1866).

⁸⁵ Civil, *MSL 14*, 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁸⁷ Miguel Civil, ed., *The Series DIRI = (w)atru* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 15; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 2004), 318.

Sumerian “syllabogram” or “sign name” and one with the common Akkadian reading of it. The chief distinction between Ea and Aa is that the latter provides significantly more Akkadian renderings for a given Sumerian word. There are only eight Ea tablets (approximately 2,400 entries), whereas Aa has forty-two tablets and 14,000 entries.⁸⁸

Commentaries to Ea and Aa provide further explanations to selected items, whether a list of simple synonyms, multiple semantic equations, explanation by phonological variant, morphological variant, or morphological deviation, or perhaps even the quotation of a literary text.⁸⁹ Syllabaries A and B (published in MSL 3) can be taken as direct derivations from intermediate stages of Ea, and they were used for didactic purposes until the end of cuneiform writing.⁹⁰

Diri

The lexical series diri DIR *siāku* = (*w*)*atru* (MSL 15) has a similar function to Ea, but it is focused on compound logograms whose pronunciation cannot be inferred from the readings of their individual components.⁹¹ This supplemental syllabary of seven tablets and approximately 2,100 entries is “the most significant source, after the syllabaries of the Ea-family, for the reconstruction of the writing, phonology, and basic lexicon of the Sumerian language.”⁹²

⁸⁸ Frahm, *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries*, 243.

⁸⁹ Civil, *MSL 14*, 158–9. For a comprehensive overview to Babylonian and Assyrian commentaries on the whole range of literary, religious, and scholarly works, including epics, rituals, and legal, medical, and omen texts, see Frahm, *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries*.

⁹⁰ Civil, “Lexicography,” 125; “Ancient Mesopotamian Lexicography,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 1995, 4:2309; R. T. Hallock, *Das Syllabar A* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 3; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955), 51–87.

⁹¹ Civil, *MSL 15*. It also includes marginal cases such as reduplications, presence or absence of determinatives, and the like. Civil, “Lexicography,” 125.

⁹² Civil, *MSL 15*, vi.

ḪAR-ra, ḪAR-gud, and Lú = ša

The lexical series ḪAR-ra = *ḫubullu* (MSL 5-8, 10-11) is a massive thematic collection of 24 tablets and inventory of more than 9,700 entries.⁹³ This major Babylonian glossary or "encyclopedia" consists of Sumerian and Akkadian lexical lists ordered by topic (based on the key word not related meanings/synonyms).⁹⁴ It played an important role in late Babylonian elementary education, along with ḪAR-gud tablets. The ḪAR-gud lexical series can be considered a revised version and commentary of ḪAR-ra, as the first two columns repeat selected entries from ḪAR-ra while a third column provides additional Akkadian equations, as some Akkadian terms were no longer widely used in colloquial speech and required an explanation themselves.⁹⁵ A continuation of the ḪAR-ra lexical list, Lú = ša provides a thematic list of professions, kinship terms, and various human activities. MSL 12 publishes at least four tablets, with 1,300 entries.

Izi and Kagal

Mesopotamian scribes organized materials by simple signs, by compound logograms with unpredictable readings, and by major thematic groups, but there was still

⁹³ Benno Landsberger and Erica Reiner, eds., *The Series ḪAR - ra = ḫubullu; Tablets XVI, XVII, XIX and Related Texts* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 10; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1970); Erica Reiner, ed., *The Series ḪAR - ra = ḫubullu; Tablets XX-XXIV* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 11; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1974).

⁹⁴ The first two tablets contain Sumero-Akkadian legal/administrative phrases and the rest cover varied topics such as trees and wooden artifacts (tablets 3-7), reeds and related products (8-9), pottery (10), hides and copper (11), other metals (12), domestic and wild animals (13-14), parts of the body (15), stones (16), plants (17), birds and fish (18), textiles (19), geographic terms/toponyms (20-22), and food and drinks (23-24). Lubor Matouš and Wolfram von Soden, *Die lexikalischer Tafelserien der Babylonier und Assyrer in den Berlin Museen* (Berlin: Zu beziehen durch die Vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen, 1933), 1.

⁹⁵ Frahm, *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries*, 250.

a large residual portion of the lexicon which for graphic reasons could not be included in Ea or Diri and which was more difficult to organize thematically than the large, tangible classes of 𒄩AR-ra or LÚ. In an attempt to be comprehensive, these simple and compound words were grouped together in the series Izi = *išātu*, which employs the acrographic principle—the initial sign, not the phonological shape of the word, is the central organizing criteria. MSL 13 publishes thirty or more of these tablets dealing with miscellaneous subjects (“fire,” “bricks and walls,” etc) ordered by increasing complexity.⁹⁶ The lexical series Ká-gal = *abullu*, also published in MSL 13, is similar to Izi, though it is poorly preserved.

Nabnitū

The lexical series SIG₇.ALAM = *nabnītu* (MSL 16), is a bilingual vocabulary considered to be one of several late group vocabularies (with Erimḫuš and Antagal) that were designed to serve as general Akkado-Sumero indexes to the lexical lists, thus making the tradition more accessible to Akkadian scholars.⁹⁷ *Nabnitū* stands apart from other group vocabularies by virtue of the fundamental principles underlying its construction, which orders elements thematically and structures sequences according to etymology. The first 30 tablets broadly follow the parts and activities of the human body working downward from the head, to the hand to the feet, with individual entries arranged according to phonological shape.⁹⁸ As a certain verb related to a part of the

⁹⁶ Miguel Civil, ed., *Izi = Išātu, Ká-Gal = Abullu and Níg-Ga = Makkūru* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 13; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971), 3–4.

⁹⁷ Civil, “Lexicography,” 126. For this reason, these series are considered Akkado-Sumerian versus the older Sumero-Akkadian lexical compositions. Irving L. Finkel, ed., *The Series SIG₇.ALAM = Nabnītu* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 16; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1982), 38.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

body is used, a range of secondary material is included because it is attracted to the main theme (pseudo-etymologically, at times).⁹⁹ This proves especially valuable to scholars interested in ancient Mesopotamian understandings and perceptions of the human senses. Unfortunately, of 32 or more tablets (more than 10,500 entries), only 22 are preserved.

Erimḥuš and Antagal

The Erim-ḥuš = *anantu* and An-ta-gál = *šaqû* lexical series (MSL 17) are thematic collections of words usually clustered into groups of two to six Sumerian-Akkadian entries.¹⁰⁰ While it is rare to identify a perceptible pattern to a sequence of groups, entries within each delineated group demonstrates distinct organizational principles, which will prove useful for the olfactory references to follow. The main ordering principles are:

- Thematic/semantic associations, either as hyponyms (belonging to the larger class of something), associated pairs, synonyms, or synonyms and antonyms.
- Phonological associations, where the initial entry (usually basic stem infinitive) is amplified by a derived substantive, where entries share a common root or two or more common radicals, where phonetic variants are displayed, or where initial and final entries are infinitives of two stems of the same root.
- Homeonyms (different lexical items with a similar form) and polysemes (same lexical item with several senses)—a large number are formulated as [lexical item], MIN

⁹⁹ Ibid., 23–4.

¹⁰⁰ Erimḥuš has seven tablets with about 2,000 entries, and Antagal has ten tablets in a poor state of preservation. Antoine Cavigneaux, Hans G. Güterbock, and Martha T. Roth, eds., *The Series Erim-ḥuš = Anantu and An-Ta-Gál = Šaqû* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 17; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1985).

[=ditto] *ša* X, MIN *ša* Y, MIN *ša* Z, where MIN is usually a polyseme but could be a homeonym.¹⁰¹

Other Synonym Lists

Late post-OB synonym lists follow a thematic organization with familiar Akkadian words appearing in the right subcolumn and unusual, poetic, obsolete, or foreign synonyms in the left. The eighth tablet “Malku = *šarru*” list, with about 2,000 entries in total, is one such example, continued by two or three tablets with the title “An = *Anum*,” which happens to be the title of the main god-list series.¹⁰² Some Akkadian synonym lists dating to later periods have been found in Assyria, but they did not form a canonical series, take a fixed order, nor do the familiar titles above.¹⁰³ This is the case for one Assyrian synonym list containing a reference to *erešu*.

Grammatical Lists

Less interesting, perhaps, than the above categories of lexical texts, are grammatical lists which include various Akkadian verbal forms. These have all appearances of being school exercise tablets for aspiring scribes. One of these lists includes a form of *ba’āšu* / *be’ēšu* / *be’āšu*.

¹⁰¹ Civil, “Lexicography,” 135–41.

¹⁰² Civil, “Ancient Mesopotamian Lexicography,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Sasson et al.), 4:2312.

¹⁰³ Wolfram von Soden, *Die lexikalischer Tafelserien der Babylonier und Assyrer in den Berlin Museen. II. Die akkadischen Synonymenlisten*. (vol. 2, 2 vols.; Berlin: Zu beziehen durch die vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen, 1933), 1.

Individual Analysis

2R 44 No. 2:12¹⁰⁴ *bi-'šú*

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “1. Malodorous, 2. of bad quality, 3. (morally) evil.”¹⁰⁵

This simple SB group vocabulary has two columns: the Sumerian on the left and the Akkadian on the right. Line 11 begins with the first citation in this text of the Sumerian *ḥab*, though the Akkadian is damaged and unreadable. The following lines read:

12 <i>ḥab</i>	<i>bi-'šú</i>
13 <i>gig.ḥab</i>	<i>ga-ra-bu</i>
14 <i>gig.ḥab</i>	<i>bu-ša-a-nu</i>
15 <i>gig.ḥab</i>	<i>ḥap-pu</i>

The use of *ḥab* in the compound logogram *gig.ḥab*, for three apparently related terms, *garābu*, *būšānu*, and *ḥappu*, is intriguing. The CAD defines *garābu* as “leprosy” or “scab” (“leper” when used with *ša*),¹⁰⁶ *būšānu* as “a severe disease affecting mouth, nose, and skin” (deemed to be a type or stage of leprosy),¹⁰⁷ and *ḥappu* as the adjective “bitter, stinking.” A repugnant olfactory dimension links these terms.¹⁰⁸

MSL 2 128 ii 13¹⁰⁹ *bi-i-šum*

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “1. Malodorous, 2. of bad quality, 3. (morally) evil.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* 2, 44.

¹⁰⁵ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

¹⁰⁶ CAD G *garābu*, 46.

¹⁰⁷ CAD B *būšānu* 1, 350.

¹⁰⁸ Wilson, in writing on leprosy in ancient Mesopotamia, presents an alternate understanding of these terms. He argues that *garābu* is in fact a reference to leprosy in this context, but *būšānu* was the disease of scurvy (not leprosy), a deficiency disease that rots the gums, producing an abhorrent breath. J. V. Kinnier Wilson, “Leprosy in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie Orientale* 60, no. 1 (1966): 51-8.

¹⁰⁹ MSL 3 contains additions to MSL 2, of which MSL 3 217 G₅ r. 2 is a duplicate to MSL 2 128 ii 13 (Proto-Ea). Benno Landsberger, ed., *Die Serie Ur - E - a = Nāqu* (vol. 2; Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1951), 128.

¹¹⁰ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

In this proto-Ea text, line 13, the first in a list of LAGAB x U words, reads: 𒀭-ab
LAGAB x U *bi-i-šum*.¹¹¹ This indicates the logogram LAGAB x U (the x indicates
the U sign is located inside the LAGAB sign) in column two is how the Sumerian word
𒀭ab is written in column 1. The Akkadian translation or meaning is given in column 3—
bīšum (“malodorous” or “bad”). As seen in Ea I 54 below, the Sumerian 𒀭ab (LAGAB x
U) is also used for the word *bu’šu* (see also Aa I/2:178-9 below).

Ea I 54¹¹² *bu’-šū*

Bu’šu is a ms noun translated as “stench.”¹¹³

Line 54 of the first tablet of the lexical series Ea A = *nâqu*, Aa A = *nâqu* reads:

𒀭-ab LAGAB x U MIN MIN MIN *bu’-šū*¹¹⁴

As in MSL 2 128 ii 13 above, the Sumerian word 𒀭ab (column 1), written with the
logogram given in column two, is translated with the Akkadian word in the final column
(4), this time as *bu’šu* not *bīšū*. Column three provides an explanation or interpretation
for column 2 (as the geš-pa sign inside the LAGAB sign).¹¹⁵

Ea I 275¹¹⁶ *i-re-šū*

Irišu / *erešu* is a ms noun often translated “smell, scent, fragrance.”¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Landsberger, *MSL 2*, 128.

¹¹² Civil, *MSL 14*, 179.

¹¹³ CAD B *bu’šu* A, 352.

¹¹⁴ Civil, *MSL 14*, 179.

¹¹⁵ MIN represents “ditto” for the word above, so MIN MIN MIN indicates *ša lagabbaku gešpu igub*.

¹¹⁶ Civil, *MSL 14*, 190.

¹¹⁷ CAD E *erešu*, 280.

Line 275 of Ea 1 reads: ir KASKAL MIN *i-ri-šu*.¹¹⁸ The Sumerian word ir (column 1), written with the Sumerian logogram in column 2, pronounced *kaskala* (column 3, MIN the ditto of the Akkadian word above, *ka-as-ka-la*), is equivalent to the Akkadian word *irišu*.

Ea II 48 and 49¹¹⁹ e-re-šu

Irišu / erešu is a ms noun, “smell, scent, fragrance.”¹²⁰

The Akkadian reading of the Sumerian words ir and ereš as *erešu* (“smell”) is given in lines 48-49 of Ea II, with the presence of another Akkadian word in line 47 also derived from the same Sumerian sign:

47 ir	IR	[kak] gu-nu-ú	zu-tu
48			e-re-šu
49 e-re-eš	IR	+ [MIN gi-d] i-ri-gu-u	e-re-šu

The fs noun *zu'tu / zūtu*, which means “sweat” or “exudation,” is used in reference to what comes from the armpit, in battle, or is rubbed off horses, and it is used in medical texts as a symptom of disease or sign of recovery.¹²¹ Though there is no explicit relationship between the words *zu'tu / zūtu* and *erešu* here (however, see Aa II/2 Comm. B 1 below), the scribes could have thought to group these words together because of their associated meanings, both having an olfactory nuance. This strategy of association by virtue of similar semantic field becomes more apparent below.

Aa II/2 Comm. A 6 and 9¹²² ni-ip-šú

¹¹⁸ Civil, *MSL* 14, 190.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹²⁰ CAD E *erešu*, 280.

¹²¹ CAD Z *zu'tu*, 168-9.

¹²² Civil, *MSL* 14, 273-4.

Nipšu I is a ms noun variously translated “snort/breathing” or “smell.”¹²³

As stated in the introduction to lexical texts above, the commentary texts provide additional explanations to selected items. Sometimes they provide 1) simple synonyms, 2) multiple semantic equations (where $a = b = c$, or $a = b$ and $c = b$), 3) a phonological variant (two letters sounding alike), 4) a morphological variant (different form of a word), or 5) a morphological derivation (the infinitive of the conjugated verb).

The commentary tablet II/2 of the series á A = *nâqu* springboards off the word IR in Ea II. More specifically, lines 1ff expand on Ea II 47-9 with the Akkadian terms *zu'tu* / *zûtu* and *erešu* above. In one continuous text with no columns, lines 6 and 9 provide a known olfactory term, *nipšu*. Unfortunately, line 9 is damaged, so we are not able to determine all the additional explanations for *erešu* there, but line 6 reads: MIN (= IR) : *za'-a* : *ni-ip-šú* :: *ar-man-nu* : [. . .].¹²⁴ This indicates the words *za'a*, *nipšu*, and *armannu* have some relationship to one another, though the break after *armannu* limits our ability to accurately discern what it is.¹²⁵ *Za'u* is an aromatic resin, cedar it would seem, as it is often coupled with cedar incense or cedar shavings.¹²⁶ *Armannu* is the word for a tree and, more specifically, for the aromatic resin derived from it, which is used in fumigations and as a medicinal ingredient.¹²⁷ Von Soden identifies it as the apricot tree, whose

¹²³ CAD N Part 2 *nipšu* A, 248.

¹²⁴ Civil, *MSL* 14, 274.

¹²⁵ The preceding and following lines contain additional occurrences of these words, along with other words that may have olfactory resonance (*zu'û*, “excrement” or “refuse,” CAD Z *zu'û*, 169) and those that do not (*da'tu*, part of a plough, CAD D *da'tu*, 122). If the text were not as broken, it would be easier to make sense of these additional word associations.

¹²⁶ CAD *za'u*, 74. *AHw.* *za'û*, 1517, also “(aromatic) resin.”

¹²⁷ CAD A Part 2 *armannu*, 291.

branch is used as a drug and oil as perfume.¹²⁸ Both terms would be deemed positive aromas.

Aa II/2 Comm. B 1¹²⁹ *ni-ip-šu*

Nipšu I is a ms noun variously translated “snort/breathing” or “smell.”¹³⁰

Aa II/2 Comm. B is a second version of the commentary on Ea II 47-9. Line 1 reads IR : *ar-man-nu* : *ni-ip-šu* : *zu-Γ¹-[tú . . .]*.¹³¹ In commentary A above, the word “smell” (*nipšu*) was connected to two aromatic resins (*za’a* and *armannu*), but in this version, the term *zu’tu* / *zūtu* stands in place of *za’a*. It could be that a multiple semantic equation is at play here, with *zu’tu* / *zūtu* (“sweat,” from Ea II 47 above) and the word *armannu* (a tree with aromatic properties) both having relationship to the word *nipšu* (“smell”). This would demonstrate a truly neutral valuation for this word, as it seems to be related to what would be considered both positive *and* negative smells. Another possibility is that *zu’tu* / *zūtu* (“sweat”) is not representative of perspiration from the skin, but of the resin which exudes from an odiferous tree, though CAD provides no examples of this usage¹³²

Aa I/2:78-80 (= Ea I 40-40b)¹³³ *bi-[-šu]*

¹²⁸ *AHw. armannu*, 69.

¹²⁹ Civil, *MSL* 14, 275.

¹³⁰ CAD N Part 2 *nipšu* A, 248.

¹³¹ Civil, *MSL* 14, 275.

¹³² CAD Z *zu’tu*, 168-9.

¹³³ Civil, *MSL* 14, 210. Note: “Additional entries from the MA recension.” *Ibid.*, 196. According to one branch of the textual tradition, I/2 contained all entries with LAGAB and its compounds, with I/3 beginning with *ku-u* KU = *na-du-u* (=Ea I 132), though other sources divided I/2 and I/3 at a different point, perhaps I/3 beginning with *za-ar* LAGABXSUM = *za-ar-rum* (=Ea I 81; =Aa I/2:259). Since the former tradition is practically complete, it is taken as the basis of the present edition, though it has an unusually high number of entries. *Ibid.*, 207–8.

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “1. Malodorous, 2. of bad quality, 3. (morally) evil.”¹³⁴

Aa I/2:178¹³⁵ *bu-'-šú*

Bu'šu is a ms noun often translated “stench.”¹³⁶

Aa I/2:179¹³⁷ **𒀭** *bī-i-šú*¹³⁸

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “1. Malodorous, 2. of bad quality, 3. (morally) evil.”¹³⁹

Lines 78-80 of Tablet I/2 of the lexical series á A = *nāqu* appear as follows:

78	[ḫ]a-ab	LAGAB	<i>bi-['-šú]</i>
79			𒀭 <i>šá</i> 𒀭.LAGAB <i>i-ku-ku</i>
80			<i>šá</i> Š[M].LAGAB 𒀭 <i>tu</i> ¹ - <i>ru-u</i> ¹⁴⁰

In this case, line 78 indicates the Sumerian word ḫab (with the logogram LAGAB in column two) means “stinking” or “bad” (Akk. *bīšu*). Lines 79 and 80 then provide two additional applications, showing how the sign occurs in a compound logogram, followed by the corresponding Akkadian lexeme. In line 79, then, the *šá* 𒀭.LAGAB identifies a composite logogram which includes the LAGAB sign, and the *ikūku* following provides the term that it represents, an ill-smelling oil.¹⁴¹ The same occurs in line 80 with *tūru*, an herb (perhaps opopanax or galbanum). This herb was used in medicinal treatments as a rub for the teeth, as a salve and suppository ingredient, in decoction, and for

¹³⁴ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

¹³⁵ Civil, *MSL* 14, 213.

¹³⁶ CAD B *bu'šu* A, 352.

¹³⁷ Civil, *MSL* 14, 213.

¹³⁸ Var. [bī]-'-šú.

¹³⁹ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

¹⁴⁰ Civil, *MSL* 14, 210.

¹⁴¹ CAD I-J *ikūku*, 69-70, citing two examples: 2R 60 I 46 (TuL p. 18 r. iii 5), *i-ku-ku ina karāši u biqna ša kurki ina pappasi tapattan*, “you eat ill-smelling oil on leeks and plucked chicken feathers in porridge”; AMT 5,5:10, *qaqqassu tugallab 𒀭.ḪAB tapaššaš*, “you shave his head, (and) rub it with ill-smelling oil.”

fumigation. Whether inherently odiferous or not, this herb could apparently be characterized by a foul odor.¹⁴²

In line 179, as in line 78 above, the Sumerian word *ḥab* is translated *bīšū* (“stinking” or “bad”), though this time it is written with the logogram LAGAB x U. In the preceding line (l. 178), this same composite logogram is also translated *bu’šū* (as in Ea I 54 above). This entry includes sixteen words or phrases that reflect additional meanings of *ḥab*. Some of these words are obviously related by virtue of their olfactory resonance (objects/items that emit foul odors),¹⁴³ and yet others do not appear to have any apparent relationship to smells or odors, at least not from a modern vantage point.¹⁴⁴ Because the lexical lists were often ordered and arranged with some measure of intentionality, it is possible these words were purposely clustered by semantic field.

The first nine words are all linked by their literal or figurative associations related to a negative smell. In particular, there are a number of words that are used to explicate various types of “bad” or “evil” people, which supports the figurative connotation of the word *bīšū*: *šēnu* (l. 181, “wicked, evil, malevolent, angry, or hateful”),¹⁴⁵ *egrum* (l. 182, literally “twisted or crossed” and figuratively “difficult, crooked, perverse”),¹⁴⁶ *ḥāṭū* / *ḥādū* (l. 183, *ḥāṭū*, “wrong, portending evil, faulty; sinner”¹⁴⁷ or *ḥādū*, which indicates an ill-

¹⁴² CAD Ṭ *ṭūru*, 169.

¹⁴³ *Būšānu* (l. 180) is a severe disease affecting the mouth, nose, and skin, often associated with a bad stench. CAD B *būšānu*, 350. *Turū* (l. 186) is a type of garlic (CAD T *turū*, 492) and *ṭūru* / *ṭurū* is a bitter herb, perhaps opopanax or galbanum. CAD Ṭ *ṭūru*, 169.

¹⁴⁴ The verb *balāšu* (l. 188) means “to stare with wide-opened eyes” or “to thrust, jerk.” CAD B *balāšu*, 44. *Ukkulu* (l. 189) is translated “very dark,” and it derives from the verb *ekēlu* (“to be dark” or “to become dark”), coming the line after (l. 190). CAD E *ekēlu*, 64.

¹⁴⁵ CAD *šēnu* A, 127; *Ahw.* *šēnu* I, 1090; *böse*, *gehässig*.

¹⁴⁶ CAD E *egrū*, 47.

¹⁴⁷ CAD H *ḥāṭū*, 158-9.

wisher or someone who gloats over someone else's misfortune),¹⁴⁸ and *ishappu* (l. 184, "rogue, rude man").¹⁴⁹

Lines 191-5 give the Akkadian translation of the two connected Sumerian signs, all of which bear explicit olfactory ties:

- šá Ì. +LAGAB [l̄]-ku-ku (l. 191)—*ikūku*, as explained above, is an ill-smelling (rancid?) oil.
- šá ŠIM. +LAGAB *tu-ur-ru* (l. 192)—whether garlic or a bitter herb (see above), this is another strong-scented vegetable product.¹⁵⁰
- šá ŠIM. +LAGAB *šá-ha-tum* (l. 193)—a common meaning of *šahātu* is "side, inside corner, or hiding place," with the derived meaning, "armpit,"¹⁵¹ but it is also thought to be some sort of malodorous plant.¹⁵²
- šá GIŠ. +LAGAB *is-ḥap-pu* : [ku]-ku-bu (l. 194)—as stated above, *ishappu* references a rogue or villain. The word *kukkubu*, given after it, refers to a small container of metal, glass or clay serving as alabastron, libation jar, drinking flask, or ointment bottle.¹⁵³ The association is unclear.
- šá IM.TA. +LAGAB *ru-šum-ti* (l. 195)—*rušumtu* is the word for "swamp, morass, mud" and "suppuration (formation or discharge of pus), purulence (containing, discharging,

¹⁴⁸ CAD H *ḥādū*, 27.

¹⁴⁹ CAD I-J *ishappu*, 189.

¹⁵⁰ Jenner demonstrates how the strong smell of garlic was used derogatively for the poor in early modern England. Jenner, "Civilization and Deodorization?," 139.

¹⁵¹ CAD Š Part 1 *šahātu* A 3, 81-3.

¹⁵² CAD Š Part 1 *šahātu* B, 84.

¹⁵³ CAD K *kukkubu*, 499.

or causing the production of pus).¹⁵⁴ As will be demonstrated in the medical texts (p. 119ff), the negative valuation of fluids such as pus was used diagnostically.

Aa I/6:50¹⁵⁵ [i-ri]i-šú

Irišu / erešu is a ms noun translated “smell, scent, fragrance.”¹⁵⁶

Line 50 of Aa I/6 reads: [ir] KASKAL MIN *i-ri-šú*¹⁵⁷

This indicates the Sumerian logogram in column 2, pronounced *kaskala* (column 3),¹⁵⁸ for the Sumerian word *ir* (column 1), has the meaning “smell” (*irišu / erešu*).

Aa II/6 C 28¹⁵⁹ *ba-'a-[(a)-šú]*

Ba'āšu (*be'ēšu, be'āšu*) is a verb translated “1. to smell bad, to be of bad quality, 2. with *panū* to look bad, to be angry, 3. *bu'ušu* to cause to smell bad, to besmirch, cast aspersions.”¹⁶⁰

Aa II/6 C 29¹⁶¹ *bi-'-[šú]*

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “malodorous,” “of bad quality,” or “(morally) evil.”¹⁶²

The number of textual problems in this tablet suggests both sources were copied from poorly preserved models. This is clear in line 28, which appears in MSL as: [ú] [U₅] *šu ba-'-[šú (?)]*^{he-pí}.¹⁶³ The sign *šu* appears on the left side of the word *ba-'-[šú (?)]*,

¹⁵⁴ CAD R *rušumtu*, 432.

¹⁵⁵ Civil, *MSL 14*, 226.

¹⁵⁶ CAD E *erešu* A, 280.

¹⁵⁷ Civil, *MSL 14*, 226.

¹⁵⁸ MIN indicating “ditto” to the word in the line above it, *ka-as-ka-la*.

¹⁵⁹ Aa II/6 C in CAD but updated to Aa II/6 iii A in Civil, *MSL 14*, 292.

¹⁶⁰ CAD B *ba'āšu* A, 4.

¹⁶¹ Civil, *MSL 14*, 292.

¹⁶² CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

¹⁶³ Civil, *MSL 14*, 292. CAD B *ba'āšu* A, 4 cites as [ú] [U₅] = *ba-'a-[(a)-šú]*.

which begins the third column, to indicate “it is (the same).” This harkens above to the logogram U₅ (ĤU+SI), which is named *mušen sisû*. Lines 12ff provides diverse entries for this logogram, with a clustering two olfactory terms in lines 28-9: *ba'āšu* and *bīšu*.¹⁶⁴

Aa V/2:197¹⁶⁵ e-še-[nu]

Eṣēnu is the G infinitive verb meaning “to smell (an odor).”¹⁶⁶

Line 197 of tablet V/2 of the lexical series á A = *nāqu* reads: [ú-ru ĤI x ÁŠ] e-še-[nu].¹⁶⁷ In this case, the logograms of column two, when used for the Sumerian word *uru*, can be translated *eṣēnu* in Akkadian. There are no contextual ties apparent.

S^a Voc. AA 32¹⁶⁸ bi-'-šū

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “malodorous,” “of bad quality,” or “(morally) evil.”¹⁶⁹

Line 32' in the fragment AA of the lexical series Syllabary A Vocabulary indicates the Sumerian word *ĥul*, can be translated *bīšu*: [ĥu-ul] ĤUL *bi-'-šū*.¹⁷⁰ The other words also derived from the same Sumerian word as given in lines 28'-37' are *limnu* (“bad, wicked, evil, hard”),¹⁷¹ *šulputu* (“desecrated, defiled, ruined”),¹⁷² *muršu* (“illness, worry,

¹⁶⁴ This is the only instance I have located in lexical texts where these two predominant olfactory words are grouped together.

¹⁶⁵ Civil, *MSL 14*, 419.

¹⁶⁶ CAD E *eṣēnu*, 344.

¹⁶⁷ Civil, *MSL 14*, 419.

¹⁶⁸ Landsberger and Hallock, “MSL 3,” 82.

¹⁶⁹ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

¹⁷⁰ Landsberger and Hallock, “MSL 3,” 82.

¹⁷¹ CAD L *lemnu*, 120.

¹⁷² CAD Š Part 3 *šulputu*, 258.

sorrow, distress”),¹⁷³ *zāmānu* (“hostile, enemy”),¹⁷⁴ *zēru* (“seed,” phonetically similar to the different root, *zēru*, “hated, loathsome”),¹⁷⁵ *qalû / qallu* (“light, of low standing” or “roasted, burnt”),¹⁷⁶ *gallû* (an evil demon),¹⁷⁷ *pašqu* (“narrow, severe, difficult”),¹⁷⁸ and *sāru / sarru* (“mock, false; criminal, fraudulent; criminal, thief, liar”)¹⁷⁹. The common thread through all of these words is the distinctly negative quality that would be used to describe a person, situation, or thing.

Diri II 139¹⁸⁰ *bi-'-š[u]*

Bīšu is a ms adjective translated “malodorous,” “of bad quality,” or “(morally) evil.”¹⁸¹

As with S^a Voc. AA 28’-37’ above, the Sumerian word *ḫul*, written with the compound logogram IGI.UR, has a string of related Akkadian terms it signifies, as follows:

132	ḫu-ul	IGI.UR	<i>lemnu</i>
133			<i>masku</i>
134			<i>zēru</i>
135			<i>šabru</i>
136			<i>qallu</i>
137			<i>gallû</i>
138			<i>paši...</i>
139			<i>bi-'-š[u]</i>
140			<i>pašqu</i>
141			<i>sarru</i>

¹⁷³ CAD M Part 2 *muršu*, 224.

¹⁷⁴ CAD Z *zāmānu*, 34.

¹⁷⁵ CAD Z *zēru* 89 and *zīru* A, 136. *MSL* 3, 82 provides *zi-i-ru* and translates “hated.”

¹⁷⁶ CAD Q *qallu* 62 and *qalû*, 68.

¹⁷⁷ CAD G *gallû*, 18.

¹⁷⁸ CAD P *pašqu*, 257.

¹⁷⁹ CAD S *sarru* A, 181.

¹⁸⁰ Civil, *MSL* 15, 126.

¹⁸¹ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

142
143

šulputu
*lapātu ša īni*¹⁸²

Both lexical lists include with the words *li/emnu* (“bad, evil, hard”), *zēru* (“hated, loathsome”), *qalû / qallu* (“light, of low standing” or “roasted, burnt”), *gallû* (“an evil demon”), *pašqu* (“narrow, severe, difficult”), *sarru / sāru* (“mock, false; criminal, fraudulent; criminal, thief, liar”), *šulputu* (“desecrated, defiled, ruined”), and, of course, *bīšu* (“malodorous” or “bad”). Words found here but not in S^a Voc. AA 28’-37’ include:

- *masku* (l. 133)—adjective “bad, rotten, ugly,” often included with *lemnu*, *ḥabrum*, and *zēru*.¹⁸³
- *šabru* (l. 135)—adjective “false, malicious,” also included with *lemnu*, *masku*, and *zēru*.¹⁸⁴
- *paši...* (l. 138)—incomplete line.¹⁸⁵
- *lapātu ša īni* (l. 143)—the verb *lapātu* (“to touch”), can be used figuratively with parts of the body to express a symbolic act.¹⁸⁶ A more literal rendering could indicate a physical blow to the eye, perhaps resulting in a black eye.¹⁸⁷ The usage of the stative form as “bad, evil-portending, abnormal, anomalous” with respect to ominous features in divination or dreams may suggest the phrase indicates something visually anomalous (= “bad”), which would fit the context of this lexical list as well.¹⁸⁸ There

¹⁸² Civil, *MSL 15*, 126.

¹⁸³ See figurative usage below with *pû* (KA) in Izi F 322-5 and Kagal D Section 4:11ff.

¹⁸⁴ CAD Ş *šabru* A, 44.

¹⁸⁵ Perhaps an adjective like *pašīratti* (“secretly”) or noun *pašīru* (“secret”) derived from *pašāru*, “to loosen, release, undo.” CAD P *pašāru*, 236. Another restoration could be *pašīqtu*, the feminine form of *pašqu*, “narrow, difficult, complicated.” CAD P *pašqu*, 257.

¹⁸⁶ CAD L *lapātu* 1b, 84.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1e, 85.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1m, 88.

are no examples of this verb used with respect to the “eye” (*īnu*) cited in the CAD, so one is left to speculate which sense was intended.

If there is any conclusion that can be drawn from the inclusion of *bīšū* in this extended list of words, it is that a figurative and very negative sense characterizes them all (as clearly seen in these adjectives: evil, hated, of low standing, difficult, criminal, desecrated, rotten, and malicious).

Hh. III 302¹⁸⁹ *bi-i-šū*

Bīšū is the ms adjective translated “malodorous” or “bad,”¹⁹⁰ here descriptive of a palm tree.

With just two columns, the Sumerian on the left and Akkadian on the right, line 302 reads: *giš.gišimmar.al.hab.ba bi-i-šū*.¹⁹¹ The Akkadian word *bīšū* (Sumerian *ḪAB.BA*) is attached to the Sumerian *giš.gišimmar.al.ḫab.ba* to reference a “bad” or “malodorous” palm tree (Akk. *gišimmaru*, “date palm”). The lines before and after also add negative adjectives to *gišimmaru*: “dead” (*mītum*) and “trampled/crushed” (*dīšū*), respectively.

Hh. X 400¹⁹² *bi-i-ši*

Bīšū is the ms adjective translated “malodorous” or “bad,”¹⁹³ here descriptive of clay.

¹⁸⁹ Benno Landsberger, *The Series ḪAR - Ra = Ḫubullu Tablets I - IV*, *Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon* 5 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1957), 118.

¹⁹⁰ CAD B *bīšū*, 270.

¹⁹¹ Landsberger, *MSL* 5, 118.

¹⁹² Benno Landsberger, *The Series ḪAR - Ra = Ḫubullu Tablets VIII - XII*, *Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon* 7 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1959), 99.

¹⁹³ CAD B *bīšū*, 270.

Tablet X of the lexical series 𒀠AR-ra = *hubullu* deals primarily with many Sumerian words constructed around DUG (Akk. *karpatum*, “(clay) pot” and IM (Akk. *ṭīdu*, “clay, mud”), though there are other words related to ovens, kilns, etc. Line 400 reads: im.ḥab *bi-i-ši*.¹⁹⁴ The translation is “malodorous” or “bad” in reference to clay (Sum. im, Akk. *ṭīdu*). The next line shows the same Sumerian composite logogram can be translated *ṭīdu dāmu*, “dark-colored” or “red” clay. It is unknown to me whether there is a correlation between darkened clay and that which is foul-smelling clay or in some other way “bad.”

Hh. XI 260¹⁹⁵ *bi-i’-[šū]*

Bīšū is the ms adjective translated “malodorous” or “bad,”¹⁹⁶ here descriptive of leather.

Tablet XI of the lexical series 𒀠AR.ra = *hubullu* contains another reference to *bīšū*. More than half of this tablet deals with various Sumerian words related to KUŠ (Akk. *mašku*, “skin, hide, leather” etc). Line 260 is linked by the scribe to 261 as follows:

260 kuš.al.ḥab.ba *bi-i’-[šū]*
261 kuš.nu.al.ḥab.ba *la* [MIN]¹⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that while 𒀠AB.BA (*bīšū*, “smelly/bad”) is used here to describe leather, NU.𒀠AB.BA (Akk. *lā bīšū*, “not smelly/not bad”), instead of a comparable antonym (such as the adjective *ṭābu*, “good”), is used for leather that does not stink. Perhaps this “non-offensive leather” is in a state before or after the process of tanning, which involved odiferous processes involving urine, animal dung, and decaying flesh.

¹⁹⁴ Landsberger, *MSL* 7, 99.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁹⁶ CAD B *bīšū*, 270.

¹⁹⁷ Landsberger, *MSL* 7, 135.

Hh. XIX 281¹⁹⁸ *bi-šú*

Bīšu is the ms adjective translated “malodorous” or “bad,”¹⁹⁹ here descriptive of a type of garment or fabric.

Tablet 19 of the lexical series 𒀠AR-ra = *hubullu* is knit together by the Sumerian word SÍG (Akk. *šīpātum*, “wool, fleece”), with related products such as *kusītum* (“robe, ceremonial garments”), and BAR.DUL₅ (Akk. *šubātum*, “textile, garment, cloth”). Lines 280-3 read:

280 túg.TÙN	<i>su-ú-nu</i>
281 túg.TÙN.im.ma	<i>bi-šú</i>
282 túg.TÙN.nu.tuk	MIN
283 túg.TÙN.kéš.da	<i>šik-ka-tum</i> ²⁰⁰

The Sumerian túg.tùn is the Akkadian *sūnu*, a type of garment and/or fabric, perhaps a cloth trimming of some sort.²⁰¹ The respective logograms in lines 281-2 (túg.TÙN.im.ma and túg.TÙN.nu.tuk) describe this garment or fabric as “bad” or “bad-smelling” (*bīšu*), though the actual significance of this is unclear.

Hg. C II 1²⁰² *bi-i’-[ša-ti]*

Bīšati is the fs adjective of *bīšu*, “malodorous” or “bad.”²⁰³

As a revised version and commentary of 𒀠AR-ra, the lexical series 𒀠AR.gud = *imrû* = *ballu* repeats selected entries from 𒀠AR-ra with a third column providing additional Akkadian equations. Recension tablet C, tablet II, line 1 has the following:

¹⁹⁸ Landsberger and Reiner, *MSL 10*, 136.

¹⁹⁹ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

²⁰⁰ Landsberger and Reiner, *MSL 10*, 136.

²⁰¹ CAD S *sūnu* B, 388.

²⁰² Landsberger and Reiner, *MSL 10*, 139.

²⁰³ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

[síg.gir₅] = *gur-nu* = *bi-i'*-[š_a-tī].²⁰⁴ The adjective *gurnu* means “of average quality,” and is used to refer to copper, wool, dates, oil, and beer.²⁰⁵ When describing wool, it is in between fine and course textures. The addition of term *bīšati* to *gurnu* could suggest the term was no longer widely used in colloquial speech and thus the figurative sense of “bad” (in contrast to excellent or premium quality). The use of the fs adjectival form here is curious and unique.

Izi F 320-1²⁰⁶ *bi-šu*

Bīšu is the ms adjective used with the Sumerian word KA (Akk. *pû*, “mouth”), translated “bad/evil mouth” or “stinky/bad word.”

This tablet includes 152 plus lines of GÚ entries, followed by long lacuna (ll. 153-299) in which another sign, perhaps KI or even IM or GÍR, was treated, the rest being devoted to KA and some compounds.²⁰⁷ Two columns appear here—the Sumerian on the left, and the Akkadian equivalent on the right. *Bīšu* appears in line 320, which is separated out by dividing lines as a four line cluster of words as follows:

318	ka-ŠEŠ	KA	<i>mar-rum</i>
319	ka-ŠEŠ	MIN	<i>ḥab-bu</i>
320	ka-ŠEŠ	MIN	<i>bi-šu</i>
321	ka-ḥab	MIN	MIN ²⁰⁸

The Sumerian word *ka.šeš* is given three different meanings in Akkadian. The first is KA (Akk. *pû*, “mouth”) with the adjective *marrum* (line 318), which means “bitter” or “brackish” in reference to water, “bitter” as a descriptive of food or drink, and “biting”

²⁰⁴ Landsberger and Reiner, *MSL 10*, 139.

²⁰⁵ CAD G *gurnu*, 139.

²⁰⁶ Civil, *MSL 13*, 199.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 195–6.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

as said of weapons or wind.²⁰⁹ By itself, the phrase could indicate a literal “biting mouth” or take on the gustatory connotation of a “bitter-tasting mouth.” The next line replaces *marrum* with the adjective *ḥabbu* / *ḥappu*, which has both taste and smell nuance (“bitter, stinking”).²¹⁰ *Bīšū* is the third adjective used with KA for the Sumerian *ka.šeš* (with an alternate Sumerian word *ka.ḥab* given in line 321).

Because the next four line grouping (ll. 322-5) provide a series of Akkadian expressions for the Sumerian word *ka.ḥul* that clearly move away from the physiological mouth to implicate a bad/evil word,²¹¹ it stands to reason that this cluster of words could reference either the literal connotation of a bitter taste or a foul-smelling mouth or the figurative sense of “bad/smelly/bitter word. In a very tangible sense, they are interchangeable. A bad word spoken can be as repulsive as noxious breath or a bitter taste.

Izi H 196²¹² e-še-nu

Ešeṅnu is the G infinitive verb meaning “to smell (an odor).”²¹³

Line 196 of the lexical series *izi* = *išātu* reads: [ur₅] ur₅ e-še-nu.²¹⁴ The logogram in column two, when read as the Sumerian word *ur*, can be translated *ešeṅnu*. The context offers no additional insights.

²⁰⁹ CAD M Part 1 *marru*, 286.

²¹⁰ CAD Ḥ *ḥappu*, 85.

²¹¹ First comes the figurative expression KA *lemnu* (“bad/evil word”), then *masku* (“bad, rotten”), followed by *ḥabrum* (“false, malicious”) and *zirum* (“hated”). A similar clustering occurs in *Kagal D* Section 4:11ff. CAD P *pû A*, 453.

²¹² Civil, *MSL* 13, 207.

²¹³ CAD E *ešeṅnu*, 344.

²¹⁴ Civil, *MSL* 13, 207.

Izi R v 2''ff.²¹⁵ i-[ri-šu]

Irišu / erešu is a ms noun often translated "smell, scent, fragrance."²¹⁶

Lines 2''-5'' of column v, Tablet R of the *izi = išātu* series provide:

2'' ir	zu-['-tu]
3'' ir	i-[re-šu]
4'' ir	a[r-man-nu]
5'' ir-si-im	a[r-man-nu] ²¹⁷

The Sumerian word *ir* is translated into three different Akkadian words: *zu'tu* ("sweat"), *irešu* ("smell"), and *armannu* (a tree and its aromatic resin), with l. 5'' indicating *armannu* is also rendered with the Sumerian word *irsim*. The close correspondence between *erešu* and *nipšu* is now obvious, as other lexical texts provide the following:

ir = *zu'tu* and *erešu* (Ea II 48 and 49)

ir = *nipšu* and *armannu* (Aa II/2 Comm. A 6 and 9)

ir = *armannu*, *nipšu*, and *zu'tu* (Aa II/2 Comm. B 1)

Kagal D Fragm. 4:15²¹⁸ bi-š[u]

Bīšu, the ms adjective, used with the Sumerian *ka.ḫab* ("mouth," *pû*), is translated "bad/evil mouth."

Tablet D of *Ká-gal = abullu* groups together several sources which share the same initial KA and SAG entries.²¹⁹ Section 4 contains four columns: first, the Sumerian; second, the Akkadian pronunciation of the Sumerian; third, the Akkadian

²¹⁵ Ibid., 226. A manuscript with several sources of Proto-Izi II was initially prepared by Landsberger to make the material quotable. After more unilingual lists were restored, it became clear that this was a conflation of different series. The CAD, which quoted the A-tablet as in this reference (listed as A-tablet 953ff), discontinued that practice after this discovery. A concordance of "A-Tablet" entries and their proper series is found in 2.162 of *MSL* 13, 10-12.

²¹⁶ CAD E *erešu* A, 280.

²¹⁷ Civil, *MSL* 13, 226.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 245.

²¹⁹ Civil, *Izi = išātu*, *Ká-gal = abullu* and *Níg-ga = makkūru*, 243.

word(s); and the fourth column is Hittite (though it is almost completely broken here, and thus not included). The phrase *pû bīšū* (“bad/evil mouth”) comes amidst an acrographic grouping (that is, ordered by sign shape or orientation) in lines 14’-18’:

14’ [ka-ḥu]l-gál	qa-a-ḥu-ul-gal	<i>pu-u le-e[m-nu]</i> (“bad/evil word”)
15’ [ka. ḥab]	qa-a- ḥa-ab	<i>pu-u bi-š[u]</i>
16’ [ka-ŠEŠ]	qa-a-za-aḥ	<i>[pu-u mar-[ru]</i>

17’ [ka-dùg-g]a	qa-a-du-ka	<i>pu-u ṭa-[a-bu]</i> (“good/sweet mouth/word”)
18’ [ka-nu-dùg]-ga	qa-a-[nu-d]u-ka	<i>pu-u NU ṭa-a-bu</i> (“not good mouth/word”) ²²⁰

The use of *marru* with *pû* (“bitter mouth/word”) in line 16’ was highlighted above in Izi F 320-1, but this is a unique clustering of the common adjectives *lemnu* (“bad/evil”) and *ṭābu* (“good/sweet”) alongside *bīšū* with *pû*. A figurative usage is implicit in these contrasts between both extremes of bad and good.

Nabnitu A 83ff²²¹ e-še-nu

Eṣēnu is the G infinitive verb meaning “to smell (an odor).”²²²

Tablet III (=A) of the series SIG₇.ALAM = *nabnītu* provides the following

Sumerian words for the Akkadian word *eṣēnu*:

83 [si]-im	<i>eṣēnu</i>
84 [ir].si.im	<i>[eṣēnu]</i>
85 [ir].si.im.ak-a	<i>[eṣēnu]</i>
86 ur ₅	<i>[eṣēnu]</i>
87 [x]- ur ₅	<i>[eṣēnu]</i> ²²³

The intriguing feature of this lexical reference has more to do with the larger context of the series. The overall organization of the series SIG₇.ALAM = *nabnītu* involves a progression from the head (and related parts) to the hands to the feet. Within this

²²⁰ Ibid., 245.

²²¹ Finkel, *MSL 16*, 64.

²²² CAD E *eṣēnu*, 344.

²²³ Finkel, *MSL 16*, 64.

thematic structure, all of tablet 3 is devoted to words pertaining to the nose (*appu*). In considering the predominant verbs associated with this part of the body and our consideration of the function/role of olfaction among the ancient Babylonians, it is terribly disappointing that there are 46 missing lines at the beginning, 61 missing soon after *eṣēnu* (“to smell”) occurs, and the end of the tablet is destroyed. It hardly feels justified to draw any conclusions based on the limitations of the text at our disposal, but a couple provisional observations can be made from what is preserved until more sources are discovered.

First, as expected, the nose is associated with physical activities such as breathing (*napāšu*, ll. 47-78), sniffing (*našāšu*, ll. 79-82), smelling (*eṣēnu*, ll. 83-87), and snoring (*naḥāru*, ll. ?-159). The next key word, *šanāṣu*, “to sneer, scoff” (ll. 160-162), is related to the nose via the idiomatic usage “to turn up one’s nose.”²²⁴ It sparks a sequence of associations, with the semantically related word *mēsu/mēšu* (“to despise, have contempt for, disregard,” ll. 163-167), followed by a word of similar meaning, *qālu* (“to become/stay silent, be unmindful of, pay attention,” ll. 168-173), followed by the related noun *ṭēmu* (“report, news, information, situation, matter,” ll. 174-185), etc.²²⁵

Second, there is *not* a wide variety of words used for the sense of olfaction. In fact, here we are only given one verb—*eṣēnu* (“to smell”). The gustatory sense is even less represented, though, as the single Akkadian word given that could pertain to taste provided under the entry for “tongue” (*lišānu*) in tablet IV 19ff (*lāšu*, “to lick”) is not even

²²⁴ CAD Š *šanāṣu*. It is possible that the other verbs used idiomatically with *appu* could be attested in the missing lines, such as *labānu* (“to pray contritely”) and *aṣû* (“to go out”). For examples, see A. Leo Oppenheim, “Idiomatic Accadian (Lexicographical Researches),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 61 (1941): 251–71.

²²⁵ This concatenation leads to the inclusion of words that have no direct resonance with the nose or smelling, such as *mašû* (“to forget,” ll. 186-194), *sakāku* (to be deaf, ignorant,” ll. 195-204), *aḥāzu* (“to learn,” ll. 205-?), *lamādu* (“to learn,” ll. ?-278), *edû* (“to know,” ll. 279-300), *emēqu* (“to be clever,” ll. 301-?).

attested outside the lexical texts.²²⁶ A significant number of key verbs related to the visual sense occur in Tablet I.²²⁷ Much of eight tablets deals with various words related to the auditory system, though *uznu* (“ear”) is not attested, at least not in the material found to date.²²⁸ Tactile sensation is represented by ten tablets (VII, XII-XX) dealing with the hand (*qātu*) and the many verbs associated with it²²⁹ and five more (XXIV-XXIX) concerning the feet.²³⁰ From here the series loses its associations based on parts of the body. If there is any legitimacy to a hierarchy of the value of sensory perception based on the rough groupings of words related to the eyes (sense of sight), the nose (sense of smell), the mouth/tongue (sense of hearing not taste), and the hands/feet (sense of touch), it would seem the order, from most important to least important, would be 1) touch, 2) hearing, 3) sight, 4) smell, and 5) taste. This is *very* inconclusive, though, for not only are there missing tablets and a significant number of gaps and breaks in the extant text, but the basic premise (that the more important the sense the greater number of vocabulary words associated with) is also questionable without more justification.²³¹

²²⁶ CAD L *lāšu*. We might have expected words like *dašāpu* (“to be sweet”), *marāru* (“to be bitter”), *ṭābu* (“sweet”), *murru* (“bitter”), and *emšu* (“sour”).

²²⁷ For example, *adāru* (“to grow dark”), *īnu* (“eye”), *naplāsu* (“to look”), *amāru* (“to see”), *ittu* (“sign”), *kullumu* (“to show”), *naṭālu* (“to look at”), *barū* (“to inspect”).

²²⁸ Tablet IV concentrates on the “mouth” (*pū*) and “tongue” (*lišānu*) to itemize words like *amātu* (“word”), *qabū* (“to speak”), *apālu* (“to answer”), *dabābu* (“to speak”), *atmū* (“to speak”), *nabū* (“to call”), *zakāru* (“to call/name”), *tamū* (“to swear”), and *shāmu* (“to decree”). Additional tablets in some way related to the mouth are Tablet V (*tēlu*, “to recount”), Tablet VI (*arāru*, “to curse”), Tablet VIII (*manū*, “to count”), Tablet IX (*zamāru*, “to sing”), Tablet X (*annu*, “consent”), and Tablet XI (*akālu*, “to eat”).

²²⁹ The theme verbs are as follows: Tablet XII, *šaṭāru* (“to write”); Tablet XIII, *edēlu* (“to bolt”); Tablet XIV, *šēqu* (“to make smooth”); Tablet XV, *rašū* (“to acquire”); Tablet XVI, *maḥāru* (“to receive”); Tablet XVII, *nadānu* (“to hand over”); Tablet XVIII, *nasāḥu* (“to remove”); Tablet XIX, *gullubu* (“to shave”); Tablet XX, *maḥāṣu* (“to strike”).

²³⁰ Tablet XXIV, *šaḥātu* (“to jump”); Tablet XXV *arāḥu* (“to hasten”); Tablet XXVI, *rē’ūm* (“shepherd”); Tablet XXVII, *arādu* (“to go down”); Tablet XXVIII, *erēbu* (“to enter”).

²³¹ The next step might include a study of the medical texts which also show some arrangement that works from head to feet. See Dietlinde Goltz, *Studien Zur Altorientalischen Und Griechischen Heilkunde: Therapie-Arzneibereitung-Rezeptstruktur* (Sudhoffs Archiv 16; Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974), 4, fn. 16. Also, other lexical series such as Ugumu (MSL 9, 51ff, Sumerian only) seem to show a parallel arrangement.

Antagal (Tablet A) E i 18'²³² *bi-'-šu*

Bīšu is another instance of the ms adjective for “malodorous” or “bad.”²³³

Almost all known tablets of Antagal are Neo-Assyrian exemplars from Kouyunjik, though the series may be earlier than the known exemplars suggest.²³⁴ Lines 18'-20' of

Antagal (Tablet A) E have the following grouping:

18 [(x)] ^{ha-ab} LAGAB	<i>bi-'-šu</i>
19 [z]é-gig	<i>bu-'-šá-a-nu</i>
20 [k]a-hab	MIN <i>šá</i> KA ²³⁵

As seen previously in Aa I/2:180, *bīšu* is contextually treated with *būšānu* (l. 19), a severe disease here noted to specifically strike the mouth (l. 20).

LTBA 2 2:333^{f236} *e-re-šu*

Erešu is a ms noun often translated “smell, scent, fragrance,”²³⁷ here used as a synonym with *šī'anu* / *šēnu* (“laden,” as in the case with incense upon a brazier) and *za'u* (“aromatic resin”).

In VAT 10143+12966Rs., column V lines 332-3 read:

332 <i>za-a'-u</i>	<i>šī-ia-a-nu</i>
333 <i>e-re-šu</i>	MIN

As stated in the introduction to synonym lists, their purpose is to correspond a normal Akkadian word of the period with a synonym that is in some way unusual or needing explanation. The word *za'u*, as seen above in Aa II/2 Comm. A 6, indicates an aromatic

²³² Cavigneaux, Gütterbock, and Roth, *MSL* 17, 210.

²³³ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

²³⁴ Cavigneaux, Gütterbock, and Roth, *MSL* 17, 131.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

²³⁶ Matouš and Soden, *Die lexikalischer Tafelserien der Babylonier und Assyrer in den Berlin Museen*, 13.

²³⁷ CAD E *erešu*, 280.

resin.²³⁸ The word *erešu*, “smell, scent, fragrance,” is also a synonym for the same Akkadian word spelled *ši-ia-a-nu*. The frequently used Akkadian word, *ṣēnu* / *ṣānu* / *ṣi’anu*, a flock or collection of goats and/or sheep only, does not bear any obvious connection or suggest how these words would be synonyms. However, this may be the adjective *ṣēnu*, “laden,” derived from the verb *ṣēnu*, often used in the sense of “to load” cargo, a boat, the table, or, in this case, “to fuel on a brazier.”²³⁹

5R 45 iii 7²⁴⁰ *tu-ba’-’-áš*

Tuba’áš is a D 2ms from *ba’āšu* / *be’ēšu* / *be’āšu*, “to smell bad.”²⁴¹

Included in a grammatical list of verbal forms in the 2nd person singular of Piel, Shaphel, etc. is this example of this middle weak D stem verb in the 2ms. To my knowledge, this is the only instance of this verb in a grammatical list.

MYTH

Summary Introduction

Though there are divergent theories as to the origins of “myth” and even different definitions of it as a genre, as already discussed, three Akkadian texts dealing with gods and supernatural beings are treated here: The Descent of Ishtar, Enuma Elish, and the Erra poem (or “Išum and Erra”).

The Descent of Ishtar is a truncated Akkadian version (c. 140 lines) of an originally Sumerian narrative poem called The Descent of Inanna, a myth which narrates

²³⁸ CAD Z *za’u*, 74. *AHw. za’û*, 1517, also “(aromatic) resin.”

²³⁹ CAD Ṣ *ṣēnu*, 131.

²⁴⁰ Henry C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia: A Selection From the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia*, vol. 5, 5 vols., Repr. 1909. (London: Harrison, 1880), 45.

²⁴¹ CAD B *ba’āšu* A, 4.

the death of Inanna (Akk. Ishtar) in the netherworld and her rising from it, with Dumuzi (Akk. Tammuz) taking her place.²⁴² The Sumerian version is attested earlier and is significantly longer, while the Babylonian and Assyrian versions are known from two manuscripts, one out of Assurbanipal's library and an earlier, variant version from Ashur.²⁴³ King published the Ninevah text in CT 15, pl. 45-8, and Ebeling the Ashur recension in KAR 1, pl. 1-4.²⁴⁴ A bibliography of translations can be found in Borger's full edition and elsewhere, with Pritchard's English composite text often being cited.²⁴⁵ The myth ends with ritual instructions for an annual rite (*taklimtu*) featuring the bathing, anointing, and lying-in-state of a statue of Dumuzi in the month of Dumuzi.²⁴⁶ The final line of this composition indicates the dead who reside in the underworld have occasion to enjoy smelling incense when they come up with Dumuzi.

Enuma Elish is the Akkadian title ("When on high," after its opening words) for the seven tablet poetic work commonly known today as the Babylonian Creation Epic (or

²⁴² See Samuel Noah Kramer, "Inanna's Descent to the Nether World: Continued and Revised," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 5, no. 1 (1951): 1–17, and Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns From Sumer* (1st ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 52–73.

²⁴³ Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993), 403.

²⁴⁴ Leonard W. King, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XV (50 Plates)*, vol. 15, 50 vols. (London: The Trustees, 1902); Erich Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 28 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919). "Ein Heldenlied auf Tiglatpileser I und der Anfang einer neuen Version von 'Ištars Höllenfahrt' nach einer Schülertafel aus Assur," *Orientalia* 18 (1949): 32, 37.

²⁴⁵ Rykle Borger, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke* (vol. 1, 2 vols.; Analecta orientalia 54; Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1979), 95–104. P. Jensen, *Texte zur Assyrisch-Babylonischen Religion*, Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek Bd. 6, pt. 1 (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1915), 80ff. Samuel Geller, "Die Rezension von 'Ištars Höllenfahrt' aus Assur," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 20, no. 2 (1917): 41–48. Hugo Gressmann, ed., *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*, vol. 2, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum alten Testament (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1926), 206ff. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 106ff.

²⁴⁶ Though lacking in the Akkadian version, the Sumerian shows Dumuzi periodically died and rose, stimulating seasonal fertility, though there is no ritual or incantation present. Benjamin R. Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, vol. 2, Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), 58.

Myth). Widely popular because of its significance for the study of theogonic and cosmological views of the Mesopotamians and its analogies to the first two chapters of the Hebrew Bible, this late Babylonian composition could also be dubbed “The Exaltation of Marduk” because of the god’s prominent role in reorganizing the universe with Babylon at its center, his inspiration in creating humanity to sustain the gods, and his elevation to supremacy in the Mesopotamian pantheon.²⁴⁷ While extant versions date no earlier than the first millennium, the time period of the original composition has been much discussed. Earlier scholarship dated it to time of Hammurabi (early 18th century BCE) when Babylonia was on the rise. The language and style of the text known to date is generally considered later nowadays, either to the Kassite period (16th-13th centuries BCE) or that of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125-1104 BCE), when it is understood as the product of a Babylonian nationalistic revival.²⁴⁸ Regardless of its date of origin, the Creation Epic received special veneration in the late period.²⁴⁹

As with most Akkadian literature, the text of Enuma Elish has been increasingly discovered over time (in this case, since portions were first published by Smith in 1878).²⁵⁰ Excavations at Ninevah, Ashur, and Kish were the primary source sites of

²⁴⁷ Ibid., “Epic of Creation (1.111) (Enūma Elish),” in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 1, 3 vols., The Context of Scripture (New York: Brill, 1997), 1.111:391.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, 2:24–5; Wilfred G. Lambert, “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion,” in *The Seed of Wisdom, Essays in Honour of T. J. Meek*, ed. W. McCollough (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1964), 3–13.

²⁴⁹ Evidence for its popularity includes its recitation in the Babylonian New Year’s festival, the composition of rival Assyrian version substituting the god Assur for Marduk, the frequent quotation of allusions to the Creation Epic in various Late-period hymns, and the fifty names of Marduk receive prolific commentary at this time. Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, 2:52.

²⁵⁰ George Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis: Containing the Description of the Creation, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the Destruction of Sodom, the Times of the Patriarchs, and Nimrod, Babylonian Fables, and Legends of the Gods, From the Cuneiform Inscriptions* (New ed., rev. and corr.; New York: Scribners, 1880).

publications in the early part of the 20th century.²⁵¹ Deimel produced a helpful compilation, though gaps continued to be filled in by new discoveries.²⁵² Lambert and Parker's composite text edition (1966) became the standard base for reconstruction, though it also continued to be updated with new available material.²⁵³ Other studies and translations are too numerous to cite. Labat, Heidel, Speiser, Dalley, and Talon have produced some of the more notable, familiar, or recent.²⁵⁴ Two uses of the verb *eṣēnu* occur in Enuma Elish, once for the gods who enjoy the fragrant aroma of incense and once for humans who are enlivened by the smell of Marduk's "fresh wind" or "good breath."

The Erra poem is a SB composition thought to date no earlier than 8th century, though it certainly incorporates older elements.²⁵⁵ The stated author, a Babylonian priest

²⁵¹ Leonard W. King, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum* (vol. 13, 50 vols.; London: The Trustees, 1901); *The Seven Tablets of Creation: Or, The Babylonian and Assyrian Legends Concerning the Creation of the World and of Mankind* (vol. 1, 2 vols.; Luzac's Semitic Text and Translation Series 12; London: Luzac and Co, 1902); Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*; Stephen Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation Restored From the Recently Recovered Tablets of Aššur*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923); *Babylonian Penitential Psalms to Which Are Added Fragments of the Epic of Creation from Kish in the Weld Collection of the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts 6 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927).

²⁵² Anton Deimel, "*Enuma Eliš*," sive, *Epos Babylonicum de Creatione Mundi* (2nd ed.; Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici; Romae: Sumptibus Pont. Instituti Biblici, 1936). Erich Ebeling, *Die Siebente Tafel des akkadischen Welterschöpfungsliedes Enuma Eliš* (vol. 4; Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft 12; Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1972) and Wolfram von Soden, "Neue Bruchstücke zur sechsten und siebenten Tafel des Welschöpfungsepos Enūma Eliš," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie: Neue Folge* 13 (1926): 1–26, have filled large gaps in Tablet VII.

²⁵³ Philippe Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš*, State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 4 (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2005), ix. The standard for textual reconstruction is Wilfred G. Lambert and Simon B. Parker, *Enuma Eliš: The Babylonian Epic of Creation: The Cuneiform Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966).

²⁵⁴ René Labat, *Le Poème Babylonien de la création* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935); Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of the Creation* (2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, Phoenix Books, 1963); E. A. Speiser, "Akkadian Myths and Epics," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. James B. Pritchard; 3d, with supplement.; Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1974), 60–72, 501–3; Foster, "Canonical Compositions"; Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, Repr. of rev. ed., Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008), 228–77; Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth*.

²⁵⁵ Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia*, 283.

by the name of Kati-ilani-Marduk son of Dabibi, claims it was revealed in a dream and then written down word for word. Despite the imperfect state of preservation, the nature and scope of the text is clear enough.²⁵⁶ In a series of extended discourses, social upheaval and military disintegration is said to threaten Babylonia because of the aged Marduk's impotence and senility and because of the sudden, uncertain mood swings and aggression of Erra (i.e. Nergal, the much feared god of plague and lord of the underworld). Thanks to the cunning flattery of Erra by Ishum, the god of fire, the disaster is averted.

On three occasions the gods' olfactory enjoyment of incense offerings is mentioned: tablet II contains an uncertain reference to the gods not smelling incense; then, in the fifth tablet, Erra acknowledges Ishum's great importance in soothing his wrath, thus preserving humanity to be able to continue incense offerings for the gods; and finally, Erra gives concluding directives to the gods to praise this "song" (the poem) so that incense would be offered in their shrines.

After the more familiar Atrahasis Epic, Gilgamesh Epic, *Enuma Elish*, and the Descent of Ishtar, the poem of Erra is considered the most noteworthy work of Mesopotamian literature, having widespread attestation and indications of its popularity.²⁵⁷ A sequence of critical editions have been published, the first by Ebeling in 1925, the second by Gössman in 1955, and the third by Cagni in 1969, with Italian translation.²⁵⁸ Popular English translations have been provided by Dalley and Foster.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ The 750 lines (some of which are still broken) on five tablets represent only about 2/3 of the original work. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 66.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵⁸ Erich Ebeling, *Der akkadische Mythos vom pestgotte Era* (vol. 1; Berliner Beiträge zur Keilschriftforschung 2; Berlin: Im Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1925); F. Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1956); Luigi Cagni, *L'epopea Di Erra* (Studi semitici 34; Roma: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente

Individual Analysis

NA (SB) Myth

CT 15 47 r. 58²⁶⁰ *li-iṣ-ṣi-nu*

Līṣinū is the G 3mpl injunctive form of the verb *eṣēnu*, “to smell,” translated “in order to smell,” with the dead coming up from the underworld as the subject and the aromatic incense offerings (*qutrinna*) as the object.

In the Descent of Ishtar, after having demanded access to the underworld, Ishtar is killed by her furious sister, Ereshkigal. Because this resulted in the disappearance of sexual reproduction from the world, the gods engineer a successful plan to bring Ishtar back to life, though it results in Dumuzi being sent to the netherworld as her substitute. The Akkadian version lacks the narrative explaining how this came about, but it picks up the story with Tammuz’s sister, Belili, who hears the wailing for her dead brother and laments.²⁶¹ These final lines are difficult to interpret, but, according to some readings, there is a day when Tammuz/Dumuzi returns from the Netherworld, and that day is a celebration with music and incense.²⁶² Dalley translates, “On the day when Dumuzi comes back up, (and) the lapis lazuli pipe and the carnelian ring come up with him, (When) male and female mourners come up with him, The dead shall come up and smell the smoke offering.”²⁶³

dell’Università, 1969). The text of tablet II subsequently surfaced from excavations at modern Tell Ḥaddad. Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi and J. A. Black, “The Second Tablet of ‘Išum and Erra,”” *Iraq* 51 (1989): 111–22.

²⁵⁹ Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia*, 282–315. Foster, “Canonical Compositions,” 1:1.113:404–6; *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993), 771–805; *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Bethesda, Md: CDL, 1995), 132–63.

²⁶⁰ King, *Cuneiform Texts XV*, 15:49.

²⁶¹ In the Sumerian story, Dumuzi’s sister pleads for his periodic release, the result of which is her sharing alternating six month stays in the underworld with him.

²⁶² Foster translates, “On the day Tammuz (says) “Hurrah!” Foster, *Before the Muses*, 1:409.

²⁶³ Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (repr. of rev. ed.; Oxford World’s Classics; Oxford: Oxford University), 160.

This final line indicates that in addition to music,²⁶⁴ incense was associated with some ceremony for the dead: *mītūti līlūnimma qutrin li-⟨⟨iṣ⟩⟩-ṣi-nu*, “may the dead come up, and smell the incense.”²⁶⁵ Here it is apparent that the dead who reside in the netherworld do not enjoy the sweet aroma of incense, at least not until they come up from their abode on this special occasion.

NA (SB) Myth

En. el. VI 111²⁶⁶ *li-še-eṣ-ṣi-in*²⁶⁷

Lišêṣṣin or *lišêṣin* is a Š 3cs injunctive from the verb *eṣēnu*, translated “so that he causes to smell,” with Marduk as the subject, causing lesser gods under his care to smell incense (*qutrinnu*).

En. el. VII 23²⁶⁸ *ni-ṣi-nu*

Niṣinu is a G 1cpl durative form of the verb *eṣēnu* with the subjunctive *-u*, translated “which we smell” in reference to the human inhalation of the *šāršu ṭābu* (literally “good wind”).

Tablet VI of Enuma Elish transitions from Marduk’s triumph in “creating” or restructuring the universe to the construction of Esagila (Marduk’s temple in Babylon) and the gods’ institution of Marduk as *the* supreme god. Prior to their proclamation of Marduk’s fifty names, in a series of statements derived from an additional name (Asalluhi) given by Anshar, Marduk’s prerogatives are said to include shepherding the Mesopotamians, establishing great food offerings for his fathers, providing for them (the gods), taking care of their sanctuaries, and establishing on earth the counterpart of what

²⁶⁴ The lapis lazuli pipe was last mentioned when Tammuz was discovered by the missing Ishtar. Rather than being in mourning, he was found in revelry with music and harlots.

²⁶⁵ CAD E *eṣēnu* 1b, 345.

²⁶⁶ Lambert and Parker, *Enuma Eliš*, 38.

²⁶⁷ Var. *li-še-ṣi-in*.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

he did in heaven. The beginning of line 111 (*lišêšîn qutrinnî*) is variously translated “he shall cause incense burners to be savored,”²⁶⁹ “he shall let them smell the *qutrinnu*-offering,”²⁷⁰ and “may he (Marduk) provide incense (for the gods) to smell.”²⁷¹ The association of savoring incense with rejoicing is explicit here, as the second half of this parallelism reads “he shall make their chambers rejoice” (l. 111).²⁷² Subject people are commanded to continue to bring food offerings to the gods, sustaining them, and building up their shrines, though always revering Marduk as the unifying supreme god who will see to it that the other gods are properly cared for (including their olfactory enjoyment of the much desired incense offerings).

Tablet VII continues the litany of praise expressed in conjunction with Marduk’s fifty names. In response to his third Tutu name (Ziku), line 23 is translated “whose breath of fresh air we smell in times of serious trouble”²⁷³ or “we smelled his sweet breath in sore distress”²⁷⁴ (*ina pušqi danni nīšinu šāršu ṭābu*). This represents a unique use of an olfactory term, different from what will be shown to be the more common references to gods “smelling” the good “scent” of incense or some other aromatic. Here, it is the human agents who experience the sensory pleasure of olfaction, as they inhale the *šāršu ṭābu*, a phrase variously translated “breath of fresh air,”²⁷⁵ “sweet breath,”²⁷⁶ “fair

²⁶⁹ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 2:388.

²⁷⁰ Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia*, 264.

²⁷¹ CAD E *ešēnu* 3a, 345.

²⁷² Foster, *Before the Muses*, 1:388. Talon translates “Qu’eux se réjouissent de leur entretien” (*ta-a-ši-na liš-riš-šā*). Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth*, 101.

²⁷³ CAD E *ešēnu* 1a, 345.

²⁷⁴ CAD P *pušqu* 1a, 543.

²⁷⁵ CAD E *ešēnu* 1a, 345.

²⁷⁶ Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia*, 268. In French, “son souffle doux.” Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth*, 104.

breeze,”²⁷⁷ and “favoring breeze.”²⁷⁸ Marduk, who previously harnessed the four winds and created new, destructive winds (the whirlwind, tornado) to destroy Tiamat in battle, is now associated with wind in a positive sense. While it is not explicit whether this is in any sense a reference to the breath of Marduk as being favorable, it is clear that he is the source (l. 20 “God of the fresh breeze,” *ilū šāri tābi*). The times of severe difficulty, trouble, or straits (*pušqi danni*), which serve as the backdrop in line 23, could be personal, physical calamity or national political crisis. It is more likely, though, that they are related to financial distress, as the previous lines explicitly characterize Marduk (dubbed Ziku) as one who hears and answers prayers, producing riches and wealth, and turning scant into plenty (ll. 20-22). The words *šāru* (“wind, breath”) and the adjective/verb *šāru* (“rich, luxuriant” and “to become rich, to prosper”) are homonyms, which could reinforce the associations of Marduk’s breath with tangible prosperity.²⁷⁹

NA (SB) Myth

Al-Rawi and Black, 118, iii 20²⁸⁰ *te-ši-na*

Tēšinā is a G preterite 2cpl verb (*ešēnu*) with the *lā* negator, translated “you did not smell” in referring to the gods and their inhalation of the incense (*qutrinnu*).

Gössmann Era V 15²⁸¹ *e ta-ši-na*²⁸²

Ē tāšinā / ē tēšinā is the G vetitive 2cp form of the verb *ešēnu*, translated as a negative wish (“You should not smell”) with respect to the gods and the *nindabû*—offerings.

²⁷⁷ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 2:393.

²⁷⁸ King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, 97.

²⁷⁹ It would be more compelling if I was aware of other known instances where Marduk’s breath is associated with good smell or, more specifically, with wealth.

²⁸⁰ Al-Rawi and Black, “The Second Tablet of ‘Išum and Erra,’” 118. The translation offered for Tablet II uses the line numbers of Cagni’s edition, so this reference may be assigned as Era II iii 20’.

²⁸¹ Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos*, 35.

²⁸² Var. *te-ši-nu* and *te-eš-ši-na*.

Gössmann Era V 50²⁸³ *iš-ši-na*²⁸⁴

A *iššinā* is a G vetitive 3fpl of the verb *ešēnu* (with the *ayy*- allomorph), translated as a negative wish (“may __ not smell”) with respect to the gods and their sensory enjoyment of incense (*qutrinnu*).

In the second tablet of the Erra poem, which describes the gods increasing anxiety about Erra’s decision to go on the war-path, there is a incense reference in direct speech by Innina/Ištar to the council of the gods. Line 20’ of rev. iii reads *šaptikunu kuttemama la tēšinā quṭ[rinna...]*, translated “Shut your lips. Did you not smell the incense . . . ?”²⁸⁵ Unfortunately the text is damaged at a critical juncture, limiting our understanding of Innina’s appeal.

In a concluding speech by Erra to the other gods, after his rampage resulting in massive devastation and bloodshed, he acknowledges his impulsive, indiscriminating, and destructive tendencies. He asks the rhetorical question, “What would happen if Ishum, who goes before me, were not there? Where would your provider be, wherever would your *en*-priest be? Where would your *nindabû*-offerings be? You would not (even) smell the incense-offering!”²⁸⁶ This last phrase, *ali nindabīkunu e teššinā qutrinna*, is variously translated “Ihr sollt keinen Weihrauch riechen!”²⁸⁷ and “You would no longer smell incense!”²⁸⁸ Erra is making the point that he is truly a force to be reckoned with, and were it not for Ishum’s placation, the gods would be without any offerings (*nindabu*) or incense (*qutrinnu*), assumedly because there would be no living

²⁸³ Ibid., 37.

²⁸⁴ Var. *i-ši-in-na*.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 35.

²⁸⁶ Ll. 13-15, Stephanie Dalley, “Erra and Ishum (1.113),” in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 1, 3 vols., The Context of Scripture (New York: Brill, 1997), 415.

²⁸⁷ Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos*, 34.

²⁸⁸ Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 58 and Foster, *From Distant Days*, 161.

mortal left to offer them. The emphasis on the act of smelling the incense is highlighted over against any description of how the other offerings affected the gods.

This same emphasis on the gods enjoying the fragrance of the incense is repeated at the very end of Tablet 5, as Erra issues his approval of Kabti-ilani-Marduk's word-for-word recitation of the dream. Lines 49 says the god who praises this song will have wealth piled up in his shrine, whereas line 50 contrasts, "But whoever discards it shall never smell the incense-offering!"²⁸⁹ (*u ša ušamsakū a iṣṣinā qutrinna*).²⁹⁰ Lambert translates "But may the one who rejects it sniff no incense."²⁹¹ Cagni hypothesizes the rapid attention and veneration accorded this work throughout Mesopotamia in so short a time is due to its cultic application.²⁹² Blessings and curses like this would certainly support that—what god wouldn't want piles of wealth and an abundance of incense in his/her shrine!

HYMNS AND PRAYERS

Summary Introduction

For the most part, the texts here designated "hymns" or "prayers" have features in common with modern genres of the same names. While both are species of "Mesopotamian ritual speech," a distinction is often made between hymns and prayers. According to Lenzi, a prayer can be understood as a religious, ritual form of speech that communicates one's concerns or petitions via words to a benevolent supra-human being

²⁸⁹ Dalley, "Canonical Compositions," 1:49–50.

²⁹⁰ Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, excerpts of some of these lines have been found paraphrased in the subscripts of plague amulets. Erica Reiner, "Plague Amulets and House Blessings," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19, no. 2 (1960): 148.

²⁹¹ W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24, no. 2 (1962): 125.

²⁹² Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 14.

(or more than one being), whereas a hymn is a similar communication with a narrower thematic focus—petition is either lacking or restricted while praise and adoration dominate. Hymns are therefore deemed a subset of prayer.²⁹³ Foster distinguishes the two on the basis of emphasis. He describes hymns as lyrical expression of praise alongside pleas for wellbeing, whereas prayers, though containing a hymnic element or language of praise, focus on petitions for personal well-being and reflect a greater variety of forms and uses than hymns.²⁹⁴

While Akkadian hymnic material exists in a variety of genres in Akkadian (myths, literary texts, prayers, royal inscriptions or hymnic invocations in annalistic texts), independent hymnic compositions that praise a benevolent supra-human being comprise a relatively small group in the preserved Akkadian textual corpus. Sometimes Assyriologists distinguish between a divine and royal focus for these hymns. The idea is that the temple hymns flatter deities with long lists of epithets and heap lavish praise upon cities or temples, whereas royal hymns honor the king or express the kings' voice in praise and petition.²⁹⁵ The same distinction can be applied with prayers, a category of which are labeled royal prayers. Letters to deities (Gottesbriefe) are a unique expression of Mesopotamian prayer. Some of these texts are considered "literary letters," which are distinguished from so-called "everyday letters" of royal or private correspondence on the basis of style, content, and function.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Lenzi, *Reading Akkadian Hymns and Prayers. An Introduction*, 9.

²⁹⁴ Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (vol. 1, 2 vols.; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993), 39.

²⁹⁵ Most of the Akkadian royal prayers, usually involving kings beseeching divine favor, come from building inscriptions of the NA and NB periods. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 86.

²⁹⁶ Three primary features characterize literary letters: 1) an elaborate style, 2) content which often concerns state importance, and 3) the fact that they were kept in libraries/schools to be read by scholars and used as style manuals by teachers. A. Kirk Grayson, "Literary Letters from Deities and Diviners: More Fragments," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103, no. 1 (1983): 143.

While modern conventions, the product of certain thematic and/or structural similarities in the texts, have produced these and other distinct subsets of hymns and prayers, it is instructive to compare modern genres and categories with labels provided by ancient scholars. For example:

- A *šuilla* is what modern scholars refer to as an “incantation prayer.” On the one hand, these texts have the form and thematic makeup of laments or prayers directed to the gods of Babylonian pantheon by an individual, but, on the other hand, they contain the rubrics of incantations, the verbal formula recited in midst of a ritual procedure (Akkadian *šiptu*, Sumerian *ÉN*).²⁹⁷ Not all incantations are prayers, though, for many do not rely on a divine response or attempt to leverage divine will.
- An *ikribu* is a prayer organically connected with each particular step in the ritual activities of the diviner, recited by him in the course of performing an extispicy.
- A *tamītu* is understood by Lambert to mean “oracle question, or “query,” where the text invokes and expresses concerns to the god (albeit in the form of a question) in order to gain divine assistance (in the form of a yes-no response via an extispicy result).²⁹⁸ Inquiries, or queries, to deity are sometimes considered a distinct genre from prayers.²⁹⁹

Olfactory references occur in eleven texts, including hymns, letter prayers,

²⁹⁷ Abusch, “Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Mesopotamia,” 353.

²⁹⁸ Lenzi, *Reading Akkadian Hymns and Prayers. An Introduction*, 176.

²⁹⁹ They are formed according to a fixed scheme which divides them into different sections with formulaic expressions: 1) an introductory petition (“I ask you, Shamash”), 2) the request itself, 3) defensive formulas with respect to cult sacrifice (beginning with *ezib*, “disregard”), 4) the result of entrails, placed where space allows on the tablet, and 5) an invitation for a favorable response to the request. The first published editions of the corpus and studies of its distinct, formal characteristics came from Klauber and Knudtzon. See Ernst Klauber, *Politisch-Religiöse Texte aus der Sargonidenzeit* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1913), xi, for justification of his departure from Jörgen A. Knudtzon, *Assyrische Gebete an den Sonnengott für Staat und königliches Haus aus der Zeit Asarhaddons und Asurbanipal* (2 vols.; Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1893).

incantation prayers, and queries. One MB olfactory reference (the smell of incense) comes from 4R 20:28f., a bilingual historical text which Rawlinson identifies as “probably referring to an expedition in Elam.”³⁰⁰ Hehn identifies this as a hymn of celebration upon the return of statues of Marduk and his consort from the land of Hani during the reign of the Cassite king, Agukakrime (c. 1480 BCE),³⁰¹ whereas Martin attributes this account to some predecessor of Nebuchadnezzar I (ca. 1126–1103 BCE), thus as a second repatriation of cult statues, this time from Elam.³⁰² In referencing Nebuchadnezzar I’s victory over Elam, Winckler references a few hymns that speak of the recovery of the cultic idol of Marduk, of which the transliteration and German translation of this passage is given.³⁰³ Jestin provides transliteration, French translation, and analysis of the Sumerian only.³⁰⁴

A NA bilingual psalm to Shamash, first published by Macmillan in BA 5 662 but copied, transliterated, and translated into English from collections in the British museum by Meek in BA 10/1, contains a different kind of olfactory reference.³⁰⁵ Though largely broken, the obverse is a duplicate of Reis. 73 Rev. 2-19 and can be restored

³⁰⁰ Henry C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia: A Selection From the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria*, vol. 4, 5 vols., 2nd ed. (London: Harrison, 1891), 20.

³⁰¹ Johannes Hehn, “Hymnen und Gebete an Marduk,” *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 5 (1906): 342.

³⁰² François Martin, “Mélanges Assyriologiques,” *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l’archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes* 34 (1902): 96–108. They differ with respect to whether the Sumerian is artificially retranslated from the Assyrian (Hehn) or the Sumerian and Akkadian are two versions written by different scribes (Martin).

³⁰³ Hugo Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen* (vol. 1, 3 vols.; Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1893), 538.

³⁰⁴ Raymond-Riec Jestin, “Textes religieux sumériens,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’Archéologie orientale* 52, no. 4 (1958): 193–202.

³⁰⁵ Kerr Duncan Macmillan, “Some Cuneiform Tablets Bearing on the Religion of Babylonia and Assyria,” *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 5 (1906): 531–712. Theophile James Meek, “Cuneiform Bilingual Hymns, Prayers and Penitential Psalms. Autographed, Transliterated and Translated With Notes From the Original Tablets in the British Museum,” *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 10, no. 1 (1968): iii–127.

accordingly, and the reverse, which begins to break up at the sixth line, seems to depict the fate of the wicked man, not unlike Psalm 1:1-4.³⁰⁶ In doing so, it describes in sensory fashion the horrifying absence of any sustenance.

A reference to gods smelling incense comes in KAR 105 11, a hymn of praise to Shamash with an intercession for the well-being of Assurbanipal (668-633 BCE) appended to the end. Ebeling published the text and authored its standard edition, providing transliteration and German translation.³⁰⁷ Multiple French and English translations exist.³⁰⁸

Three instances of olfactory language come from a single “literary” letter written in the NA dialect (TCL 3). This letter-prayer from Sargon II to the god Ashur (found in Assur, now in the Louvre) may be the most famous of the literary letters, recounting the eighth campaign of Sargon II against Urartu in 714 BCE.³⁰⁹ Written at the close of the campaign by the scribe Nabu-shallim-shumu, this tablet contains a wealth of detail couched in dense war-time propaganda, and though its historical accuracy has been called into question, it does not diminish our interest in ancient Assyrian cultural perceptions of olfaction.³¹⁰ The text is published and translated into French by Thureau-

³⁰⁶ Meek, “Cuneiform Bilingual Hymns,” 7.

³⁰⁷ Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts; Quellen zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion*, vol. 1, *Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* 23 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1918); Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*, 2:247–8, no. 5.

³⁰⁸ Adam Falkenstein and Wolfram von Soden, *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Die Bibliothek der alten Welt der alte Orient; Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953), 249–53; Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 386–7; M. J. Seux, *Hymnes et Prières aux Dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, vol. 8, *Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 63–6; Foster, *Before the Muses*, 2:725–6; William W. and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (vol. 1, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 474.

³⁰⁹ Grayson, “Literary Letters from Deities and Diviners: More Fragments,” 143.

³¹⁰ Rigg challenges the general historical understanding about the campaign, arguing it was more a zigzagging, punitive expedition mostly in the regions south and east of Lakes Van and Urmia. Horace Abram Rigg, “Sargon’s ‘Eighth Military Campaign,’” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 62, no. 2 (1942): 130–38.

dangin, with missing portions later published by Schroeder and translated into German by Meissner and English by Luckenbill.³¹¹

Another reference to sweet-smelling incense occurs in a group of edited tablets containing prayers and incantations to various deities (BMS 2:28).³¹² The Assyrians titled these texts “Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand,” and used them in private worship, often by the king himself. King’s *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery* contains a transliteration, English translation, and analysis of twenty-some texts from this large class (not series) of tablets, most of which were not published previously.³¹³

AMT 71,1 was published by Thompson in *Assyrian Medical Texts*, a collection of 660 medical tablets (presumed to be copies of older texts) from the royal library of Ashurbanipal.³¹⁴ However, it is more accurately understood as an incantation ritual against death and destruction due to spells and plague.³¹⁵ Within this ritual, thought to be from the *teppuš išallim* series (anti-witchcraft), is a hymnic prayer to Shamash, who is said to make it possible for the gods of the world to smell incense.

³¹¹ François Thureau-Dangin, *Une Relation de la Huitième Campagne de Sargon (714 Av. J.C.)* (Textes cunéiformes, Musée du Louvre, Département des antiquités orientales 3; Paris: P. Geuthner, 1912); Otto Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts* (vol. 2; Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur 1; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1922); Bruno Meissner, “Die Eroberung der Stadt Ulū auf Sargons 8. Feldzug,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 34 (1922): 113–22; Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (vol. 2, 2 vols.; Ancient Records; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1926), 139–78.

³¹² Though copies were found in Assurbanipal’s library, there is evidence of Babylonian origin. Leonard William King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery Being “The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand.” The Cuneiform Texts of a Group of Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations and Magical Formulae Edited With Transliterations, Translations and Full Vocabulary From Tablets of the Kuyunjik Collections Preserved in the British Museum* (London: Luzac & Co., 1896), xx.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

³¹⁴ R. Campbell Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts From the Originals in the British Museum* (London: H. Milford, Oxford University, 1923).

³¹⁵ Despite damage and gaps, Ebeling provides a transliteration and German translation. Erich Ebeling, “Ein Neuassyrisches Beschwörungsritual gegen Bann und Tod,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 51, no. 1 (1955): 167-79.

LKA 139-140, another NA ritual text with hymnic sections to the gods Shamash and Gibil, also included as part of *teppuš išalim*, indicates the gods cannot smell the aroma (of incense) without the fire god.³¹⁶ Similarly, as part of a Maqlû (“burning”) incantation ritual, there is another mention in hymnic fashion of the burning of incense for the olfactory benefit of the gods, this time compliments of Nusku, the fire god.³¹⁷

Two bilingual texts, each dubbed as a “Hymn to the sun god, Shamash,” contain olfactory references: 4R 19 No. 2 (references gods smelling incense) and 5R 50-51 (the scent of cedar).³¹⁸ Both passages do, in fact, contain hymnic lines, but the texts themselves are incantations, reminding us yet again of the overlap in genres. Fossey’s *La magie assyrienne*, an exhaustive treatment on Babylonian magic (including demons, sorcerers/sorceresses, spells, rituals, magical pharmacopeia, incantations and imprecations, and amulets and talismans), includes both of these texts among the 46 magical texts transliterated and translated into French.³¹⁹ Schollmeyer’s monograph focuses on collecting and editing all previously published hymns and prayers to Shamash, but it also includes *Beschwörungstexten* (“incantation texts”) because they include prayers to Shamash, as is the case here.³²⁰ 11/5/15 5:11 PM

³¹⁶ Erich Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953).

³¹⁷ Meier’s transliteration and English translation serves as an update to Tallqvist’s first edition. Gerhard Meier, *Die Assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû* (vol. 2; Archiv für Orientforschung. Beiheft; Berlin: Im Selbstverlage des Herausgebers, 1937); Knut L. Tallqvist, *Die Assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlû: nach den Originalen im British Museum* (vol. 20, no. 6; Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae; Leipzig: A. Pries, 1895). See also I. Tzvi Abusch and Ann K. Guinan, eds., *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature* (Ancient Magic and Divination 5; Boston: Brill, 2002).

³¹⁸ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia 4*; Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia 5*. In a subsequent publication, it was tagged as a prayer to Shamash as a protection against demons. Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*.

³¹⁹ Charles Fossey, *La Magie Assyrienne: étude suivie de textes magiques* (vol. 15; Bibliothèque de l’école des hautes études. Sciences religieuses; Paris: E. Leroux, 1902).

³²⁰ Anastasius Schollmeyer, *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1912).

Finally, PRT 47, an appointment query to Shamash from Esarhaddon, contains a reference to *bišūti* that parallels its use in royal letters for “evil words” or “evil rumors,” as will be shown below. Starr provides a new edition of the oracular queries to the early editions of Knudtzon and Klauber (cited above).³²¹

Individual Analysis

MB Hymn (SB)

4R 20:29³²² *i-ri-še*

Iriše is a genitive form of the 3ms noun *erešu*, “smell, scent, fragrance” (Sumerian *ir.si.im*, here *ir.sim*),³²³ used literally with Sumerian *bí.in.x* (reconstructed *bí.in.dùg*), which is rendered in Akkadian with the verb *ṭābu*. However, the scribe interpreted this as the adjective *ṭābu* (“good, sweet”), with the subject (*armannu*) causing the object (*iriši / iriš ṭābu*) to go out.

As recounted in this campaign triumph hymn, upon the return of Marduk from Elam to his “home,” there is a great slaughter of animal sacrifices, along with offerings of food and incense. Lines 28-29 read:

28 *ir.si.im mi.ni.in.è ir.sim bí.in.x*
29 *armannu ušteṣṣ[ī] i-ri-še ṭābu*

The CAD translates “the pomegranate gave forth a sweet fragrance.”³²⁴ However, the CAD entry for *armannu* refrains from specifying the exact type of tree (pomegranate or apricot) to render the word more generically as “a tree and the aromatic substance

³²¹ Ivan Starr, *Queries to the Sun-god: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, State Archives of Assyria 4 (Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University, 1990), xiv.

³²² Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* 4, 4:20.

³²³ Jestin comments the double spelling in this line is a scribe game, with phonics first and ideography second. Jestin, “Textes religieux Sumériens,” 200.

³²⁴ CAD E *erešu* A d, 280.

obtained from it.”³²⁵ Hehn’s prior translation expresses this sense: “Wohlgerüche gehen aus, Düfte duften.”³²⁶

In this case, it is clear that the source of the “sweet fragrance” (*iriši t̄ābu*) is not that of animal sacrifices (sheep and bulls, *aslu* and *gumāḥi*), which are referenced in line 27. The fragrant perfume of the plant-based materials, whether food offerings (*zību*) or incense (*qutrinna*), is described with as emanating out. The use of a the verb of motion—*ušteṣṣi*, Št of (*w*)*aṣû*, “to go out”—highlights the permeating, infiltrating nature of olfaction. In this case, it is for good.

NA Hymn (to Shamash)

BA 10/1 73:2³²⁷ (=BA 5 662) *e-ri-šû*

Erešu is a ms noun used literally for “smell” (assumedly for positive aromas) in describing the absence of olfactory functionality and enjoyment with respect to the dishes of a great feast.

BA 10/1 73:2³²⁸ *in-ni-ši-in*

Innišin is an N preterite 3ms of the verb *eṣēnu*, used with the *ul* negator and translated literally “was smelled,” with reference to the “aroma” (*erešu*) of the banquet food.

In this psalm to Shamash, before indicating the absence of divine presence in a wicked man (“Shamash the judge does not abide with him”), there is a disconcerting description of this person’s predicament. Lines 1 (Sumerian) and 2 (Akkadian) read:

1 bur.gal unú.gal.bi ir.si.im nu.ur₅.ri
2 *ina būr mākališu rabbûti erišu ul innišin*

Meek translates, “In the vessel of his bountiful repast no sweet odor is inhaled,”³²⁹ and the CAD provides “No (pleasant) smell (of food) is to be smelled from the great dish(es)

³²⁵ CAD A Part 2 *armannu*, 291.

³²⁶ Hehn, “Hymnen und Gebete an Marduk,” 342.

³²⁷ Meek, “Cuneiform Bilingual Hymns,” 6. Note: CAD error, listing 10/2 instead of 10/1 under *eṣēnu*.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

at his banquet,³³⁰ and “In the dishes of his chief meal no smell (of food) can be smelled.”³³¹ The differences relate to how *rabbûti* (“great”) is understood, whether modifying *būr* (“the bowl of”) or *mākališu* (“his meal/food”). In both cases, the fundamental emphasis is the same—there will be no enjoyment of the pleasing aroma from this meal. This may be more than just a case of anosmia (inability to perceive odors); the failure to smell the meal may be synonymous with *the absence of the meal*. The language is literal with reference to smelling a particular scent (the appetizing meal), and whether the whole expression functions figuratively to portray the terrible scenario of having no food or of the inability to enjoy the smell of food, olfaction functions more prominently than gustation here.

NA Hymn

KAR 105 11³³² [*i-š*]i-en-nu

Iššinū is a G durative 3mp from the verb *ešēnu*, translated “(they) smell,” referring to the aroma of incense (*qutrinnu*) inhaled. Most translations understand the subject of this partially broken verb to be “all the gods” (*ilāni*^{meš} *kiššassun*) of the previous line.³³³

In a classic hymn glorifying Shamash, prior to a prayer for the king and his successor, the many positive attributes and actions of the god are recounted.³³⁴

Alongside Shamash’s power to illuminate and judge the world, elevating him above all

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ CAD E *ešēnu*, 344.

³³¹ CAD E *erešu* A, 280.

³³² Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, 184. Duplicate of KAR 361.

³³³ Seux, *Hymnes et Prières aux Dieux de Babylonie et d’Assyrie*, 64, n. 16.

³³⁴ This text is self-identified as a *zamāru*, “song” at the end (rev. 10), and was probably used in conjunction with temple renovations. Ibid., 8:63.

other gods, the text references all the gods paying close attention to his rising, which leads to the all-important daily sacrifices.³³⁵ In describing the cult, line 10 reads:

[...i-ṣ]i-en-nu qut-rín-nu i-maḥ-ḥa-ru nindabê^{meš} ellūtī^{meš}, [durch dich rie]chen (?) sie Weihrauch, empfangen sie glänzende Opfergaben.³³⁶

Most translations understand this in the sense of “(All the gods) smell incense; they receive pure bread-offerings.” In this pairing of incense and food offerings (*nindabû*), incense is characterized by its sensory impact on the gods while food offerings are said to simply be “received” (*maḥāru*) and not consumed. Thanks to Shamash, the gods are served well (l. 11), exorcists can avert evil portents (l. 12), diviners can interpret omens, and (most importantly for the author of this hymn) the king’s life and reign is extended.

NA Letter-prayer

TCL 3 28³³⁷ i-ri-šū

Irišu is the ms noun (“scent/fragrance”) used literally with the adjective *ṭābu* (“good”) to describe the vegetation at the top of a northern mountain range.

TCL 3 211³³⁸ i-ri-ša

Iriša is here employed literally in the accusative case with the verb *ṭiābu* in the D stem (“to make pleasing/sweet”) to describe the wooden beams (*gušūrē burāši*) of the palace in Ulhu.

TCL 3 246³³⁹ e-ri-šú

Erišu is again utilized as in line 211 to describe the wooden beams (*gušūrī burāši*) of the palaces in the Sangibutu region.

³³⁵ This bears similarities to the hymnic portions of the SB incantation AMT 71,1, which also reference Shamash’s direct association to the incense offerings for the gods.

³³⁶ Ebeling, *Quellen zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion*, 25.

³³⁷ Thureau-Dangin, *Une Relation de la Huitième Campagne*, 9.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

TCL 3 246³⁴⁰ e-ri-ī[š]-ši-na

Eriššina, if the missing sign is correct, is the ms noun with the 3fplsuffix pronoun (“their”), used literally to describe fragrant *ḥašurru* (a kind of cedar or cypress known for its pleasing aroma).³⁴¹

Though described as a letter from Sargon II to the god Ashur, the opening five line formulary invocation of this letter addresses not only Ashur but *all* the gods and goddesses residing in his temple (Eharsaggalkukurra) and in the city, as well as all the individuals associated with the palace complex and the populace of Assur at large. From here, the letter launches into more than 400 lines depicting in grandiose form some 1,500 miles of country traversed, laced with varied military skirmishes whereby slaughter was inflicted, spoils were taken, and tribute was received, as remaining foes melt before the advancing army. Four references to *erīšu / erēšu / irīšu* (“scent/fragrance”) appear in the text.

First, in describing the army’s ascent and crossing of the northern mountains at the start of the campaign, there is a passing reference to the pleasing aroma of the vegetation there in line 28: *ša urqīssunu karšu ṣumlalû i-ri-šu ṭābu*, “Le Sinaḥulzi, le Biruatti, *puissants* monts don’t l’herbe (se compose) de Karšu et de ṣumlalû, bons arômes.”³⁴² *Karšu / karašu* is identified as “leeks,” which is a little curious, as it is not known to be an aromatic.³⁴³ *Ṣumlalû*, which occurs in pair with *karšu / karašu*, is a scented herb used as a medicinal ingredient and perfume element.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ CAD H *ḥašurru*, 147. The term refers not only the tree itself but the ingredient commonly used in oils/perfume. It is often mentioned for its fragrant scent in building inscriptions (see references below).

³⁴² Thureau-Dangin, *Une Relation de la Huitième Campagne*, 9.

³⁴³ CAD K *karašu* B, 212.

³⁴⁴ CAD Ṣ *ṣumlalû*, 245.

Later, in characterizing the conquered city of Ulhu, Sargon describes the carefully irrigated and bountiful fields and orchards that were established by its king, Ursha, who lived in a lavish palace by the side of the river. A dominant descriptor for the palace is its aromatic cypress/juniper beams: *gušūrē burāši uṣal-lil-ši-ma i-ri-ša uṭīb* (l. 211). Thureau-Dangin translates: “Un palais, sa royale demeure il le couvrit avec des pouters de cypress, il en rendit l’odeur agréable.”³⁴⁵ According to Sargon, its inhabitants fled in fear upon his arrival, to which he marched in victoriously only to level its walls, to raid the granaries and wine cellars, to dam the canal, and to chop down the orchards, burning the fruit trees and setting fire to the houses. The fragrant cypress beams of the palace, though, he preserved. These precious and valuable items were removed and transported back to Assur (l. 218).

From there he went on to the remaining 21 strongholds of the Sangibutu region. Though mighty in fortification, these strongholds were no match for his power. Their warriors were overcome with terror and fled without a battle, leaving the door open for Sargon’s armies to plunder their goods and ravage what was left of the land. Again in describing the glory of its palaces, the predominant feature is the wood beams with their pleasing smell: *gušūrī burāši e-ri-šú ṭābu* (l. 246). Because of the damage to the text, there is some discrepancy in how to interpret the latter part of this line. Thureau-Dangin read *e-ri-š[?]-b[?]-š[i-n]a kīma ḥašurri izâqa libbuš* and translated “De ceux qui entraînent, (leur odeur) comme celle du ḥašurru pénètre le cœur,”³⁴⁶ while the CAD renders *e-ri-*

³⁴⁵ Thureau-Dangin, *Une Relation de la Huitième Campagne*, 35.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

ī[š]-š*i*-*na* and translates “the fragrance of which, like that of the *ḥašurru*-cedar, wafts through it.”³⁴⁷

NA Prayer

BMS 2:28³⁴⁸ *i-ri-šá* (var. -šú)

Iriša is a ms noun (“scent/fragrance”) used literally with the adjective *ṭābu* / *ṭāba* (“good”) to describe three incense offerings (*qutrinnu*) presented to Ninib by the worshipper.

The first eight lines of BMS No. 2, which is part of a large tablet containing prayers to Tašmītu, Ninurta, etc., contain the end of a prayer to the goddess Tashmitu to give favor and destroy iniquity, ending with the petitioner’s desire to give praise and bow in humility. Lines 9 and 10 form a colophon containing ceremonial directives.³⁴⁹ After that is a complete 31 lines of prayer to the god Ninurta, beginning with description and praise of the god, then statements of the offerings made, and concluding with the request to be cleansed from sin, comforted in sorrow, and restored to favor. To recount the offerings which the suppliant provided Ninurta, line 26 contains the generic formula “I so and so, son of so and so, whose god is so and so, whose goddess is so and so...”³⁵⁰ Then, in describing the offerings given, l. 28 reads *áš-ruk-ka tar-[rin]-nu i-ri-šu ṭābu*, “I have offered three *tarrinnu*, a pleasant odour.”³⁵¹ The CAD translates *asrukka qutrinnu i-ri-šá* (var. -šú) *ṭāba*, “I scattered sweet-smelling incense for you.” Sweet-smelling

³⁴⁷ CAD E *erešu* b, 280.

³⁴⁸ King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*, 19.

³⁴⁹ Instructions for the performance of ceremonies and rites are separated by lines in the clay and usually begin with “Do the following.” The most common instruction is burning incense. Ibid.

³⁵⁰ K. 223 (prayer to Ninurta alone) is extracted from this larger tablet for private use by Ashurbanipal, and it specifies these lines as “I, thy servant, son of Ashurbanipal, the son of his god, whose god is Assur, whose goddess is Ashuritu.” Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

incense (*qutrinnu*) and the drink offering of mead (KU.A.TIR), a sweet alcohol, mentioned in line 29, are both very common offerings in these types of ceremonies.³⁵²

NA Incantation (SB)

AMT 71,1:37³⁵³ *iṣ-ṣi-nu*

iṣṣinū is a G durative 3mp from the verb *eṣēnu* with the *ul* negator, translated “do not smell,” referring to incense (*qutrinnu*) by “the gods of the world” (*ilâni*^{meš} *šá kiš-šá-tum*).

In this text, after the first set of ritual actions (involving holy water, plant substances as cleansing agents, and an apotropaic collar), an incantation prayer to Shamash with hymnic predications of his deity follows (ll. 27-Rs. 4). Without Shamash’s divine undertakings, judgement would not be rendered, the Annunaki would not receive funerary offerings, dream interpreters (*šā’ilu*) would not perform their service for the king, the “physician” (*âšipu*) is not at hand to tend to the sick man, and Anu does not give the king his rule. Including among this litany of endowments is this olfactory reference (l. 37): [*ina ba-li-ka*] *ilâni*^{meš} *šá kiš-šá-tum ul iṣ-ṣi-nu qut-rin-n[a]*, [ohne dich] riechen die Götter der Welt keinen Weihrauch.³⁵⁴ It does not state how exactly Shamash makes incense offerings for the gods of the world possible, as would be the case for Gibil and Nusku the fire gods (below), but this passage makes clear the extent of his doings in all aspects of Mesopotamian life (healing from sickness, the funerary cult, divine rule and justice itself).

NA Ritual

LKA 139:49³⁵⁵ *e-ri-ša-am*

³⁵² Ibid., 23.

³⁵³ Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts*, 71.

³⁵⁴ Ebeling, “Ein Neuassyrisches Beschwörungsritual gegen Bann und Tod,” 172–3.

³⁵⁵ Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*, 190.

Erišam is a ms noun (“scent/fragrance”) used literally to describe the aroma of incense to the gods.

LKA 139:49³⁵⁶ *iš-ši-nu*

Iššinū is a G durative 3mp from the verb *ešēnu*, translated “smell,” with the subject being the gods and the object being the aroma (*erišam*) of incense.

Based on the immediate context, LKA 139:49 indicates the fire god, Gibil, bears the responsibility of burning the incense for the gods so that they are able to smell the aroma. As per the CAD, the line reads: *e-ri-ša-am ul iššinu balukka*, (the gods) cannot smell the fragrance (of any incense) without you (the fire god).³⁵⁷ It appears this text, which is related to KAR 262 and Macmillan BA V/5 27, has not been given transliteration, translation, and analysis in publication, or at least not to my discovery.

NA Incantation (SB)

Maqlu II 10³⁵⁸ *iš-ši-nu*

Iššinū is a G durative 3mp from the verb *ešēnu*, translated “(they) smell,” with the subject being “the great gods” (*ilāni rabûti*) and the object being incense (*qutrinnu*).

At the very beginning of tablet II of the Maqlû series is an incantation beseeching Nusku, the Sumerian fire god, to burn away the sorcerer and sorceress so that the petitioner’s life may be spared. Nusku counsels gods, founds cities, is powerful in battle, and—perhaps most importantly—makes possible the sacrifices for the gods. Without Nusku, there are three direct consequences to the gods of the great assembly: 1) no “meal” (*naptanu*) is served in Ekur (temple of Enlil in Nippur) (l. 9), 2) the gods are deprived of incense offerings (l. 10), and 3) Shamash cannot hold court (l. 11). The use of *ešēnu* is made in referencing the lack of incense offerings: *ina balīka ilāni rabûti ul iš-*

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ CAD E *erešu* A c, 280.

³⁵⁸ Meier, *Die Assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû*, 2:13.

ši-nu qutrinnu, “without you (Nusku, the Sumerian fire god, Enlil’s son) the great gods smell no incense” (l. 10).³⁵⁹ Specific mention is here made of the gods smelling the incense (its purpose) and not the act of offering it (the means). The necessity of Nusku for Shamash to hold court suggests incense was an indispensable part of the proceedings.

NA Incantation

4R 19 No. 2:58³⁶⁰ *iš-ši-nu*

Iššinū is a G durative 3mp from the verb *ešēnu*, translated “smell,” with the subject being “the great gods” (*ilāni rabūti*) and the object being incense (*qutrinnu*).

In this bilingual text, Shamash and other deities are summoned with a *šiptu* against various physical ailments such as sneezing, coughing, choking, and phlegm/mucus. After hymnic descriptions of Shamash’s merciful protection of the weak and generous provision of light, the following statement occurs: *dingir.gal.gal.e.ne na.izi ir.si.im i.gub.bé, ilāni rabūti iššinū qutrinnu* (l. 57-8). Fossey translates “les dieux grands flairent la fumée (du sacrifice)”³⁶¹ and the CAD as “the great gods smell the incense.”³⁶² The burning of incense for the gods is the fitting response of a people rejoicing at the deities’ care for them. According to this text, to smell that incense is to dine on a pure, “heavenly” food and drink that is untouched by human hands (*akal šamē ellu kuru[nnā] ša la ilputū qāti*, ll. 23-6).

NA Incantation (*bīt rimki*)

³⁵⁹ CAD E *ešēnu* 1b, 345.

³⁶⁰ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* 4, 4:19.

³⁶¹ Fossey, *La Magie Assyrienne*, 15:307.

³⁶² CAD E *ešēnu* 1b, 345.

5R 51 iii 15³⁶³ *i-ri-iš*

Iriš is the 3ms noun *erešu* (“smell, fragrance”) in construct with *erīni* (“cedar”) translated “the scent of the cedar,” a literal reference to the aromatic trees from the mountains most commonly used as building materials and incense.

Within the large *bīt rimki* series are seven groups of prayers known as the Shamash cycle.³⁶⁴ Each group contains incantations, prayers, and rituals associated with a “house” of (or “station in”) the temporary structure known as the *bīt rimki* (“house of the ritual bath”).³⁶⁵ 5R 50-51 contains the full text of the specific incantations known to be recited in the third “house,” the beginning of which says:

14 ir giš.erin.na šà ḥar.sag.ta im-[ta-è] im.bi
15 *i-ri-iš erīni ša ki-rib šadī a-šu-ú(?) ina ra-[ma-ni-šu]*³⁶⁶

Schollmeyer translates: “Duft der Zeder, die in der Mitte der Berge hervorgeht.” The pleasing aroma of cedar trees in their mountainous place of origin is often referenced in royal inscriptions. The next line speaks of an adornment of the king’s rule: *inbu* (“fruit” or a “fruit tree”). Fruit trees are often mentioned in conjunction with aromatic/incense trees as exotic species in royal orchards. As this incantation was to be uttered by or for the king in a royal ritual of purification in the third chamber of the *bīt rimki*, it takes little effort to imagine the use of cedar and fruit aromatics in corresponding rituals.

NB Query (SB)**PRT 47:3**³⁶⁷ *bi-'-šu-ti*

³⁶³ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* 5, 5:51.

³⁶⁴ Charles Fossey, “Textes magiques Assyriens,” *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l’archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes* 26, no. 1-2 (1904): 116f.

³⁶⁵ The three elements of each group are: 1) the bilingual prayers (ki - utu - kam) recited by the *mašmāšu*-priest, 2) the Akkadian *šu - illa* prayers addressed to Shamash and recited by the king, and 3) the accompanying ritual actions. The location is thought to be a temporary hut erected in a field. Langdon, “A Chapter From the Babylonian Books of Private Devotion,” 8.

³⁶⁶ Schollmeyer, *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš*, 34.

³⁶⁷ Klauber, *Politisch-Religiöse Texte aus der Sargonidenzeit*, 73.

Bišūti is the mpl form of the adjective *bīšu* (“bad”), used in the reconstructed phrase: [dibbī] *bi-’-šu-ti idabbu[bu]*, will they spread evil rumors?³⁶⁸

In this letter, Esarhaddon makes a request to Shamash on his behalf to determine whether the man whose name was set before the god should be appointed to the applicable position. Though a large portion of the text is broken,³⁶⁹ the general sense of political consternation is apparent in line 3, which Starr translates as “Will he speak [evil things and] malicious [wor]ds [against] Esarhaddon, k[ing of Assyria, and make an insurrection and rebellion against him]?”³⁷⁰ The extensive reconstruction of the text is made possible because PRT 47 is one of a number of fragments that bear close resemblance to one another.³⁷¹ In each, the name of an individual is written upon papyrus and placed before the divinity to determine whether or not he will in any way instigate or participate in an insurrection or rebellion against the king.

DIVINATION (OMENS)

Summary Introduction

All ancient cultures were concerned with the will of supernatural agents and the course of future events, and to that end, they studied signs/portents observed in their physical and social worlds. Cuneiform texts provide the first written evidence of this, and they do so in abundance. Diviners and divination are mentioned as early as the third

³⁶⁸ CAD B *bīšu* 3a, 270.

³⁶⁹ A significant portion can be reconstructed as broken remains are deciphered in conjunction with standard formulas used for this literary genre. So, for example, the main body of the text (ll. 4-8) contains a series of fixed-formula *ezib* lines, in which defensive formulas are invoked. See Klauber for discussion of the translation challenges of *ezib* lines. Ernst Klauber, *Politisch-Religiöse Texte aus der Sargonidenzeit* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1913), 73.

³⁷⁰ Starr, *Queries to the Sungod*, 179.

³⁷¹ Nos. 156-77 in Starr, *Queries to the Sungod*.

millennium BCE, and the consultation of the gods is a well-attested practice throughout Mesopotamian history.³⁷²

Blending a disciplined use of observational sciences, some basic, common-sense attitudes, and ingrained religious beliefs, Mesopotamian divination was truly “an all-embracing semantic system designed to interpret the whole universe.”³⁷³ This rendered everything subject to interpretation, from the natural features of the universe to contrived phenomena, even to theoretically projected or imagined happenings.³⁷⁴

Examples of the most prominent means of divination among the ancient Mesopotamians include:³⁷⁵

- Astrolomancy (linking stellar phenomena with prognostics)—attested as early as OB.
- Lecanomancy (pouring water on oil, or the reverse, in a divining bowl and observing the reaction)—became esteemed in popular use and dropped out of official tradition by NA period (perhaps *because* it was popularized).
- Libanomancy (interpreting behavior of smoke arising from an incense brazier)—attested in OB alone.
- Birth omens (interpreting anomalous human or animal births)—popular in OB and beyond.

³⁷² For a helpful summary of the four phases of the Assyriological study of Mesopotamian divination, see Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 142 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 127–38.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷⁴ Examples of the theoretical: “If bundles of reeds walk about in the countryside,” “If a wildcat opens its mouth and talks like a man,” or “If a great beast that has two legs like a bird...” (II. 11-12, 20). A. Leo Oppenheim, “A Babylonian Diviner’s Manual,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33, no. 2 (1974): 203.

³⁷⁵ Summarized and adapted from chapter 3, “Between the Rivers,” in Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel*, 142–187.

- Oneiromancy (interpretation of dreams)—ongoing popularity beginning as early as Neo-Sumerian times.
- Speech omens (chance-heard remarks or sounds perceived as portentous by its hearer)—scattered geographical and chronological distribution.
- *Šumma ālu*—an expansive and diverse series with more than 120 tablets, mostly NA from the 1st millennium, consisting largely of “surprise encounters.” In whole, the series is thought to be largely “private,” perhaps written down by non-diviners (scribes or *ašipū*).
- Physiognomic and diagnostic omens (interpreting the observed physical characteristics or peculiar behavior of the subject, whether human or animal)—broad attestation historically and culturally.
- Extispicy (interpreting the remains of a sacrificed animal, usually the liver, intestines, and lungs)—prominent in OB down through NA and beyond.

Communication with the divine was not only initiated by an individual person through varied divinatory means, it was facilitated by the deities via naturally occurring phenomena that were rife with special significance. While this omen lore was initially oral, it took on a written form as early as the OB period. Ever-expanding lists of omens became a means of recording knowledge, and through long processes of editing and expansion, these collections became compendia that were archived in first millennium BCE libraries (along with related commentaries, manuals, reports, rituals, and prayers) and referenced for practical and theoretical purposes.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁶ Amar Annus, ed., *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World* (Oriental Institute Seminars 6; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010).

Omens employ conditional sentences of two parts: first, the protases prompted by sensory stimuli, then the apodoses implicating future conditions.³⁷⁷ A visual bias tends to dominate the varied means of divination, but not to the exclusion of hearing and smell, as will be seen in the following olfactory comparisons that occur in the terrestrial omen series *Šumma ālu*.³⁷⁸

Because the *Šumma ālu* series deals with such an extensive range of subjects, there is an encyclopedic sense it brings with respect to the physical surroundings and common occurrences of daily life in ancient Mesopotamia. As such, it offers unique insight into many aspects of Mesopotamian civilization, including the sensory world. One omen text provides in list fashion approximately 19 different and distinct smells ranging from myrrh and first quality oil to sulphur and bitumen. Another compares the smell of a well to river water or beer mash, while another clusters forms of *eṣēnu*, *erešu* / *irišu*, and *bu'šu* in a couple omens dealing with the smell of a river.

³⁷⁷ Oppenheim points out the style and subject matter of the apodoses in omen literature are “closely linked to literary texts of the late periods that describe the blessings of peace and prosperity or the horrors of war, famine, and rebellion as well as elaborate blessings and curses similar to those found in certain Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and public legal documents.” A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), 211.

³⁷⁸ Part 38 of *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets* systematically collects about 120 tablets or fragments from the earlier part of the *Šumma ālu* series in its ancient order. The primary focus of these divinations pertain to terrestrial phenomena and ominous occurrences of everyday life. C. J. Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XXXVIII (50 Plates)* (38; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University, 1925). Part 39 completes the series with copies of about 100 more tablets and fragments, also dealing with terrestrial occurrences, though more focused on 1) the behavior of birds and animals, 2) fields, crops, springs, and rivers, 3) visits to temples, and 4) family relations. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XXXIX (50 Plates)* (39; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University, 1926). Part 40 serves as a supplement to parts 38 and 39, with duplicate and unplaced fragments. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XL (50 Plates)* (40; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University, 1927). For transliteration and German translation, see Friedrich Nötscher, *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) I*, 1928; *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) II*, 1929; *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) III*, 1930. For a recent two-volume text edition of the *Šumma ālu* corpus, see Sally M. Freedman, *If a City Is Set on a Height: The Akkadian Omen Series Šumma Alu Ina Mēlê Šakin* (2 vols.; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 17; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1998).

Individual Analysis

NA Omen (SB *Šumma ālu*)

CT 38 17:98³⁷⁹ (=CT 40 7:27) (SB *Šumma ālu*) *e-ri-iš*

Eriš is the ms construct form of *erešu* (“smell, scent, fragrance”), used literally for the smell of a house, which is here compared to sulfur, and in the following lines to myrrh, ghee, oil, a spice plant/aromatic substance, wine, vinegar, *billatu*, fish, meat, an apple/fig tree, pomegranate, cucumber, bitumen, *kuzublatû*, beer-mash, a *ninu*-plant, a grave, and first-quality oil.

CT 38 18:123³⁸⁰ (SB *Šumma ālu*) *in-ni-ši-in*

Innišin is an N preterite 3ms of the verb *ešēnu* (“to smell”), translated literally with the subject *eperû* as “dust can be smelled”³⁸¹ or “dirt is smelled.”

Set within a series of tablets dealing with observation of happenings in cities, houses and fields, with behaviors of animals/insects, and with the appearance of ghosts/friends, this almost-complete tablet (Plates 14-18) of no clear arrangement deals with miscellaneous omens derived from houses after construction.³⁸² Line 98 of Plate 17 reads DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM U₂ GIBIL E₂ BI *ul-tab-bar*, “If the smell of a man’s house is like a new plant, that house will become poor.”³⁸³

In the following twenty-some lines, the sign used to show repetition of a phrase, KI.MIN (“ditto”), is used for *e-ri-iš bīti* (“the smell of a house”), thus introducing a

³⁷⁹ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXVIII*, 17.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁸¹ CAD E *ešēnu* 1a, 345.

³⁸² Tablet 6, copied on plates 14-18 of CT 38, is assembled out of no fewer than nine fragments. A continuous text runs throughout, though there are some imperfections and damaged sections. Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXVIII*, 6. The first few plates of CT 40 also deal with ominous incidents in houses (the structure, furniture, sounds and smells, and inhabitants), containing similarities to Tablets V and VI (CT 38, 14ff). Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XL*, 3. The beginning of lines 27-29 of CT 40 7 (K.6715+) are identical to lines 98-100 of CT 38.

³⁸³ Sally M. Freedman, *If a City Is Set on a Height: The Akkadian Omen Series Šumma Alu Ina Mēlê Šakin*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 17 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1998), 119. Nötscher renders *šumma e-ri-iš bīti kīma* [] *bītu šuātu ul-tab-bar*, “Wenn der Geruch eines Hauses gleich [], wird jenes Haus alt werden.” “Babylonische Haus-Omina,” in *Altorientalische Studien: Bruno Meissner zum Sechzigsten Geburtstag am 25. April 1928* (2 vols.; Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft 4; Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1928), 143.

sequence of at least 24 omens which compare the smell of a house to various items or substances. Freedman transliterates and translates as follows:

- 99 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM KI.A.^dID E₂ BI *ina-aḥ-ḥiṣ*
 100 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM ŠIM.ŠEŠ NIG₂.TUK.BI ZAḤ₂
 101 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM I₃.NUN.NA NIG₂.ŠU-šu KUR-ad₂
 102 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM] I₃.GIŠ *mim-mu-šu₂ ana IGI-šu₂ DU-ak* E₂ BI DINGIR NU TUK
 103 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ [GIM] ŠIM *uš-ta-maṭ-ṭa*
 104 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM] GEŠTIN DUMU.NITA-šu BA.UG₇
 105 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂] GIM GEŠTIN.NA *ul-ta₅ : te-man*
 106 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM] KAŠ.U₂.SA NIG₂.ŠU-šu₂ ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šu₂ *i-tab-ba-lu*
 107 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM KU₆ *šu-šu₂-u₂ u ka-ša-ru* GAR-šu₂
 108 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM] UZU *šu-šu₂-u₂ u la ka-ša-ru* GAR-šu₂
 109 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM ḤAŠḤUR : GIŠ.MA DAM-su ŠA₃-šu₂ ḤUL₂.LA DINGIR TUK-ši
 110 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM x x-ur-ma MU TUK-ši
 111 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM UKUŠ₂.SAR DUMU.MEŠ *ma-a'-du-ti* TUK-ši
 112 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ G[IM ...] x-sa NIG₂.TUK ZAḤ₂
 113 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM ESIR ŠE.IM u KU₃.BABBAR *ša-ri-iq-šu₂*
 114 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM ...] *ana IGI-šu₂ DU-ak*
 115 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM *ku-zu-ub-la-te-e ḥe-pi₂* UG₇
 116 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM ...] NAM.BAD *ki-ṣir-ti* UG₇
 117 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM AMA.ŠIM *ina tam-ṭa-a-tu₄* DU.DU-ak
 118 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM U₂.K]UR.RA.SAR E₂ BI UKU₂-in
 119 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM x] x UG₅.GA : GAZ *ina* E₂ BI KI.MAḤ BAD-te
 120 [DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM] KI.MAḤ ŠU.BI.DIL.AM₃
 121 DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E₂ LU₂ GIM I₃.SAG E₂ BI ^dLAMMA TUK-ši
 122 [DIŠ ... B]I E₂ BI ŠA₃.BI DUG₃.GA
 123 [DIŠ...] x x SAḤAR.ḤI.A *in-ni-ṣi-in* SAG.GEME₂.ARAD UG₇

- 99 If the smell of a man's house is like sulphur, that house will flourish
 100 If the smell of a man's house is like myrrh, it's wealth will be lost
 101 If the smell of a man's house is like ghee, it's property will be taken over.
 102 [If the smell of a man's house is like] oil, it's holdings will prosper (but) that house will be unlucky
 103 If the smell of a man's house is [like] a spice plant, it will be diminished.
 104 [If the smell of a man's house is like] wine, his son will die.
 105 [If the smell of a man's house is] like vinegar, he will be treated badly.
 106 [If the smell of a man's house is like] *billatu*, his brothers will take away his goods.
 107 If the smell of a man's house is like fish, "expelling and attaching" will be in store for him.
 108 [If the smell of a man's house is like] meat, "expelling and not attaching" will be in store for him.
 109 If the smell of a man's house is like an apple / fig tree, his spouse will delight him; he will be lucky.
 110 If the smell of a man's house is like [...], he will have fame.
 111 If the smell of a man's house is like cucumber, he will have many children.
 112 If the smell of a man's house is like [...]; wealth will be lost.
 113 If the smell of a man's house is like bitumen, grain and silver will be stolen from him.

- 114 [If the smell of a man's house is like ...], he will prosper.
 115 If the smell of a man's house is like *kuzublate*, (break) will die.
 116 [If the smell of a man's house is like ...], he will die of constriction.
 117 If the smell of a man's house is like beer-mash, he will go about in straits.
 118 [If the smell of a man's house is like *n]inu*-plant, that house will become poor.
 119 [If the smell of a man's house is like ...] ... a grave will open in that house.
 120 [If the smell of a man's house is like] a grave—likewise.
 121 If the smell of a man's house is like first-quality oil, that house will have a protective spirit.
 122 [If the smell of a man's house is like ...], that house will be happy.
 123 [If ...] dirt is smelled, a domestic will die.³⁸⁴

Because the beginning of lines 122-124 are not available, it is not certain whether the protasis continues to be “if the smell of a house...” after line 121. The omens of line 124 and following shift from the smell of a house to something related to fire, as line 125 begins with *šumma išātu*(?) ditto, but it is uncertain whether this applies to lines 122 and 123. Line 123 references dust or dirt that can be smelled (*epirê^{há} in-ni-ši-in*), which could fit either as a comparison to the smell of a house (what precedes) or to something related to a fire (what follows), though the former seems more likely. If that is the case, then the use of *innišin* to further specify the type of dirt/dust is interesting, as this was not necessary in any of the previous lines. The actual manifestation is uncertain, but one wonders if there is any connection to the dust storms known to rip through ancient Mesopotamia.

While a number of the lines are damaged, it is usually to the first part of the protases which is repetitious, so a significant amount of olfactory information can be derived from these lines. To begin, the smell of a house is compared to the following odiferous substances:

³⁸⁴ Freedman, *If a City Is Set on a Height*, Vol. 1, 1:118–21.

- *kibrītu* (l. 99, KI.A.^dID)—sulphur, a very odiferous (assumedly foul-smelling) substance often used in magical and medical applications as balms and charms. Functional as a fire-starter, it's fumes were an oft-used fumigant.
- *murru* (l. 100, ŠIM.ŠEŠ)—myrrh, often used as an ingredient in perfumes and burned as a fumigant, expressly perceived as a positive or “good” smell in ancient Mesopotamia.
- *himētu* (l. 101, I₃.NUN.NA)—ghee, a clarified butter with a distinct smell and greater resistance to spoiling than other milk products. It is not only a food product but also factors into medical treatments and magical rites.
- *šamnu* (l. 102, I₃.GIŠ)—oil, a basic food staple used for rations/provisions and offerings/libations. Often odiferous in the positive sense, *šamnu* is a base ingredient in perfumes, salves, lotions, lubricants, and potions of medical and magical import, as well as a raw material used in legal and ritual ceremonies, crafts, manufacturing, and lighting applications.
- *riqqu* (l. 103, ŠIM)—a spice plant or aromatic substance prominent in rituals, perfumes, and medical applications. This prized commodity was used in foundation deposits.
- *karānu* (l. 104, GEŠTIN, l. 105, GEŠTIN.NA)—grapevines, grapes, or the wine derived from the fermentation of grapes having dietary, sacrificial, ritual, and medical uses.
- *billatu* (l. 106, KAŠ.U₂.SA=DIDA)—a solid or dry substance that, in addition to ritual and medical purposes, was utilized in beer brewing. It appears to be a dry mixture of malted and roasted grain ready for liquid infusion to begin the fermentation process.

- *nūnu* (l. 107, KU₆)—fish, an important food resource in ancient Mesopotamian cultures, known for its distinct smell, which is often, but not universally, considered negative.³⁸⁵
- *šīru* (l. 108, UZU)—a general word used for human flesh, kin (metaphorical), and meat. Here, the reference is probably to animal meat, a valued and expensive part of the ancient Mesopotamian diet and sacrificial system.³⁸⁶
- *ḥašḥūru* (l. 109, ḤAŠḤUR : GIŠ.MA)—an apple/fig or apple/fig tree, known for its sweetness, and sometimes paired with pomegranate, apricots, or dates.
- *nurmû* (l. 110)³⁸⁷—the pomegranate, a common fruit that was part of Mesopotamian diet, sometimes coupled or interchanged with apples in medical and ritual texts.
- *qiššû* (l. 111, UKUŠ₂.SAR)—melon, gourd, or cucumber, the fruit of creeping vines.³⁸⁸
- *iṭṭû* (l. 113, ESIR)—bitumen, a semi-solid black petroleum-based substance used as an adhesive and waterproof caulking and coating, especially in shipbuilding. Its strong smell derives from the hydrogen sulfide gasses being emitted from the

³⁸⁵ The unique smell of fish, and its use as a distinct odor adjective (“fishy”), derives from its tissue having a high percentage of the organic compound Trimethylamine, a chemical mainly responsible for the smell associated with some infections, bad breath, and plant and animal decomposition.

³⁸⁶ Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (The Greenwood Press “Daily Life Through History” Series; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1998), 159.

³⁸⁷ Left untransliterated by Freedman, the reading reconstructed by Nötscher, [^{is}*nu-û*]r-ma, has affinity in context.

³⁸⁸ Interestingly enough, there is a variable human sensory response to some of these fruits, with a majority reporting a mild odor and a small but vocal minority reporting a highly repugnant taste, some say almost perfume like. The strong “earthy” and “musky” odors of muskmelon relate to the thioesters, and other plant metabolites, which are mainly sulfur-containing and are responsible for the taste and odor. John C. Beaulieu and Elizabeth A. Baldwin, “Flavor and Aroma of Fresh-Cut Fruits and Vegetables,” in *Fresh-Cut Fruits and Vegetables: Science, Technology, and Market* (ed. Olusola Lamikanra; New York: CRC, 2002), 400. See also R. J. Horvat and S. D. Senter, “Identification of Additional Volatile Compounds From Cantaloupe,” *Journal of Food Science* 52, no. 4 (1987): 1097–98.

asphalt.³⁸⁹ In ancient Mesopotamia, high sulfur-content seepages often occurred in rivers, especially on the south side of the Euphrates, thus the Sumerian word A.GAR.GAR.DINGIR.(AN)ID, “dung of the river,” no doubt an allusion to both appearance and strong smell.³⁹⁰

- *kuzublate* (l. 115)—CAD K 616 suggests *kuzublatû* is an unknown ill-smelling substance, possibly a compound or etymologized as such. AHW 519 reads *kuzub-la-ṭehê*, “Stinkmorchel(?)”
- *agarinnu* (l. 117, AMA.ŠIM)—(first) beer mash, the liquid substance created in the brewing process when water is added to dried barley malt (*bappiru*) for fermentation.
- *nīnû* (l. 118, [U₂.K]UR.RA.SAR)-- a medicinal plant at times taken by itself or mixed with a liquid such as beer. It is recorded in commodities lists and as a staple in royal gardens.
- *k/gimaḥu* (l. 120, KI.MAḤ)—a grave or tomb, often befitted with provisions and furnishings including sweet smelling oils. Though not explicitly identified as ill-smelling in known texts, that would assumedly be the case during certain stages of the body’s decomposition.
- *rūštu* or *šamnu rêštû* (l. 121, I₃.SAG)—first- or top-quality oil known to be used for rations, offerings, for consecration of buildings/statues, and in medical and ritual preparations. It’s smell was considered pleasing.

³⁸⁹ Robert J. Forbes, *Bitumen and Petroleum in Antiquity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1936), 17.

³⁹⁰ Forbes quotes Diodor (XIX, 98.2), who, in describing the Dead Sea, references the smell of floating pieces of asphalt: “The advent of the asphalt is heralded 20 days before its arrival, for all around the lake the stench is wafted by the wind over many stadia and all the silver, gold, and copper in the neighborhood becomes tarnished; but the tarnish disappears again when the asphalt rises to the surface. The district in the vicinity which is readily inflammable and which is pervaded by an unpleasant odor, makes the people’s bodies ill and they die young.” *Ibid.*, 16. See also descriptions of its foul smell in Herodotus. *Ibid.*, 31.

Since odor valuations are subject to cultural and individual influences, it is not always clear whether each of these substances was considered as having a positive or negative olfactory aesthetic. That said, the implications are more clearly divided along this same dichotomy. Positive indications of the varying smells include prosperity (l. 99, 114), fame (l. 110), progeny (l. 111), and divine protection/blessing (l. 109, 121), whereas the negative include loss of wealth/property (l. 100, 106, 112-113, 118), loss of ownership (l. 101), loss of divine protection (l. 102), loss of progeny (l. 104), ill treatment (l. 105), and destruction (l. 103) or death (l. 115-117, 119-120).

Of the lines in this series where a complete protasis and apodosis are preserved, there does appear to be some connection between a “positive” or “negative” smell valuation and the omen’s purport. A most obvious example is line 121, which states a patron deity will protect that house if it smells like first quality oil (*rūštu* or *šamnu rêštū*). Additionally, line 109 connects a lucky man whose spouse delights him to the positive smell of apple or fig. The unfortunate portents for lines 113 (stolen grain/money), 115 (death), and 117 (destruction) are associated with what would be considered “negative” smells: bitumen/black pitch (l. 113), *kuzublate* (l. 115), and probably fermenting beer-mash (l. 117).

That said, there are also examples that do *not* fit the formula of “positive smell = positive omen” and “negative smell = negative omen.” For example, line 99 connects a flourishing house to sulphur (assumedly negative). Line 100 associates a myrrh-smelling house (a positive smell) to losing wealth. Other distinct smells are not so easily pegged as positive or negative (l. 101, ghee; l. 111, cucumber), or the result is unclear in import (l. 107-8, “expelling and attaching/not attaching”). Based on these examples, it is safe to say there is no absolute connection in these given omens between the positive or negative odor perceived and the future consequences.

NA Omen (SB Šumma ālu)**CT 38 23:31³⁹¹ IR-in**

Ēšin, written syllabically IR-in, is a G stative 3ms of the verb *ešēnu*. It is used literally in reference to the smell of well water as compared to that of river water.

CT 38 23:32³⁹² bi-i'-š[ū]

Bīšu, as restored, is the ms adjective (“smell, stench”) used nominally for the literal and negative smell of a well’s water and, by implication, of beer (*šikāru*).

Tablet 17 (Plates 22-24) of CT 38 contains omens derived from the incidents related to digging a new well, ending with a ritual to be observed when completed.³⁹³

Lines 22-32 of Plate 23 contain omens derived from the color or smell of the well water.

Though the apodases are missing, Freedman transliterates and translates the protases lines 31-32 (identified as ll. 32-33 because of an omitted l. 28 in CT 38 24) as:

32 DIŠ A-ša GIM A ID₂ IR-in [...]

33 DIŠ A-ša GIM KAŠ : bi-i'-šu₂ KU₃

32 If its water smells like river water [...]

33 If its water is like beer : malodorous [...]³⁹⁴

While the comparison of the well water is clearly to river water, what is not apparent from this context is how this would be construed by ancient Mesopotamians. They did consider the river a source of livelihood and agricultural fertility, so it could be argued this has a positive nuance.

The next line compares the well water to KAŠ (*šikaru*), beer made from grain or fermented alcoholic beverage. To clarify the point of comparison, *bīšu* (“stinking”) is added as a variant to establish the olfactory sense is intended. While beer was definitely

³⁹¹ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXVIII*, 23.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid., 6. Plate 22 is the Babylonian copy, whereas Plate 23 is the Assyrian copy.

³⁹⁴ Freedman, *If a City Is Set on a Height*, Vol. 1, 1:256–7.

a valued and much-enjoyed commodity, and spicy, fruity, sweet, and aromatic ingredients were known to be used by brewers to improve the taste *and* smell of their product,³⁹⁵ the aroma of the fermenting beer mash was nonetheless a product of the various strains of bacteria and yeasts that were operative. In this case, there is no guessing as to its fundamental olfactory impact—it is *bīšū* (“stinking”). The choice of this word over *erešu* (“smell, scent, fragrance”), a more neutral designation, makes clear what could be misconstrued—that beer has, at least for some, a negative smell connotation, probably due to its fermented nature.

NA Omen

CT 38 41:32³⁹⁶ *bu-us-s[a]*

The context is destroyed, so it is not certain whether this actually is *bu’ušša* (translated “its stench”), much less what it refers to.

Tablet 31 (Plates 41-43) is still in bad condition, with damage at the beginning which prevents an understanding of the subject of the omens in the first part of the text, and missing portions throughout. Lines 30-34 are missing the beginning and end, with only a few signs legible in the middle. The *bu-us* of line 32 leads the CAD to include this reference (with the provided *-sa*, of which the first part is visible) under *bu’šū* A, perhaps due to the occurrence of the word in CT 39 14:18 (see next entry). Borger has proposed a fragment from the collection of Liagre Böhl is part of 31, and this includes lines 24-43, the context of which he believes deals with various appearances of a *pizalluru* (“gecko”) in a house.³⁹⁷ However, he translates *bu-sú/us-rat* from *bussurtu* (“message/report”) in

³⁹⁵ Louis Francis Hartman and A. Leo Oppenheim, *On Beer and Brewing Techniques in Ancient Mesopotamia: According to the XXIIIrd Tablet of the Series ĤAR.ra = Ĥubullu* (Supplement to the Journal of the American Oriental Society 10; Baltimore: American Oriental Society, 1950), 9-16.

³⁹⁶ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXVIII*, 41.

³⁹⁷ Rykle Borger, “Ein Omentext aus der Sammlung de Liagre Böhl,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 11 (1954): 88–89.

construct with *ḥadê* (“joy”) as follows: [*šumma ditto...*] *amêli šuâtu libba-šu iṭâb // bu-sú/us-rat ḥa-de-e ana amêli iṭeḥḥâ-šú(?)*, Wenn eine Raupe(?) auf . . . steigt(?), wird jener Mann sich wohl befinden (oder:) werden Freudenbotschaften bei idem Manne einlaufen (l. 32).³⁹⁸ Unfortunately, the broken status of this text and questionable interpretation renders it unhelpful for our purposes.

NA Omen (SB *Šumma ālu*)

CT 39 14:18³⁹⁹ *e-še-ni*

Eṣēni is a G infinitive verb, used as a genitive with *ana* (“to”) in a literal sense to describe the smell (*irissunu*) of the flooding river. The word itself does not necessarily presume a good or bad odor, though the context suggests the negative by virtue of the explanatory phrase which follows.

CT 39 14:18⁴⁰⁰ *i-ri-is-su-nu*

Irissunu is the ms noun, *erešu / irišu*, with the 3mp -*šunu* suffix (“their”), referring to the flooding waters of the river. This noun is often used for smells having a positive connotation, but in this case it is made negative by the following Sumerian words, NU DÛG.GA, which are transliterated *la ṭābu* (“not good”),⁴⁰¹ *la ṭāb* (“is not good,” stative of *ṭābu*),⁴⁰² or *ul iṭṭb* (“is not good,” G durative).⁴⁰³

CT 39 14:18⁴⁰⁴ *bu-us-sa*

Bu’ussa is taken either 1) as the ms noun *bu’šu* (“stench”) with the 3ms suffix pronoun(*šu*), derived from the verb *ba’āšu* and here used with the verb *uṣṣan* (“to stink or to make stink”) to describe the land (*mātu*),⁴⁰⁵ or 2) the ms noun *pūtu* (“front”) with the 3ms suffix pronoun(*šu*), also used with *uṣṣan* to describe the land.⁴⁰⁶ Either rendering (“the land, it’s stench, will stink” or “the land, it’s front, will stink”) is possible, though context suggests the former.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 89.

³⁹⁹ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXIX*, 14.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ CAD B *bu’šu* A, 352; CAD E *erešu* A a, 280.

⁴⁰² CAD E *erešu* A a, 280.

⁴⁰³ Nötscher, *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) III*, 122.

⁴⁰⁴ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXIX*, 14.

⁴⁰⁵ CAD B *bu’šu* A, 352.

⁴⁰⁶ CAD *eṣenu* 2, 345.

CT 39 14:18⁴⁰⁷ uš-ša-an

Uššan is the D 3ms durative of the verb *ešēnu* (“to smell”), presumably used figuratively for the land/country (*mātu*), as no explicit source of the stench is given.

CT 39 14:19⁴⁰⁸ e-ri-is-su-nu

Erissunu is the ms noun, *erešu / irišu*, with the 3mp -šunu suffix (“their”), referring to the smell of a river. There is uncertainty about this olfactory reference (see below).

CT 39 14:20⁴⁰⁹ i-ri-is-su-nu

Irissunu is the ms noun, *erešu / irišu*, with the 3mp -šunu suffix (“their”), referring to the smell of a river. There is uncertainty about this olfactory reference (see below).

A clustering of olfactory words occur within several omens on Tablet 61A (Plates 14-21), a very popular series of omens derived from the observation of rivers (*šumma âlu ina mêlê šakin*).⁴¹⁰ Lines 18-20 of Plate 14 provide three successive omens dealing with the smell of a river. The first omen (ln. 18) employs olfactory words a total of four times in both protasis and apodosis, while in the second two (ll. 19-20), each uses *erissunu* in the protases.

Nötscher transliterates and translates line 18: *šumma ina^{arab} aiari mîlû illikam-ma nâru mû-šá ana e-ši-in-ni i-ri-is-su-nu ul iṭib^d Adad ina mâti ikkal-ma mâtu bu-us-sa uš-šà-an*; “Wenn im Ijar Hochwasser kommt und der Geruch des Wassers des Wasserlaufes nicht gut ist, wird Adad im Lande fressen, das Land wird nach bûsu-Beden(?) riechen.”⁴¹¹ The CAD translates “if a flood comes in MN and the odor of the water of the river is unpleasant to smell, Adad will wreak havoc in the land till the stench

⁴⁰⁷ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXIX*, 14.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Its popularity is attested by the significant number of surviving fragments belonging to four or five separate copies. Ibid., 6.

⁴¹¹ Nötscher, *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) III*, 123.

of the land is smelled everywhere.”⁴¹² In this omen, it is the smell (*irissunu*) of the flooding river in the month of Iyar (April/May) that indicates the storm god Adad will “consume” or devastate the land, causing it to stink (*bu’ussa uššan*). In one CAD entry, the source of the stench is suggested as dead bodies (“Adad will wreak havoc in the country, till the whole surface (lit. front) of the country stinks (with the dead),”⁴¹³ but this is conjecture. If the omen commentary 2R 47 i 19 treated below correlates, then the mystery is solved—the smell of the land is the result of plagues/epidemics wrought by Adad.

The next two omens seem to compare the smell (*erissunu / irissunu*) of a river/watercourse to something, though in the first case (line 19), the protasis does not make complete sense (comparing the smell of a river/canal to a bird/birds), and in the second (line 20), the text is damaged, making the association unclear. Nötscher transliterates and translates as follows:

19 *šumma nâru e-ri-is-su-nu kîma [iṣ?]šur-ri ki.min kîma na-piṣ iṣṣûrâte^{meš} ina mâti*
meš
 20 *šumma nâru i-ri-is-su-nu [. . . mâdû-]tum nûnê^{meš} ina mâti ibašši.*

19 Wenn der Geruch eines Wasserlaufes gleich dem einer Vogels(?), gleich dem Geruch der Vögel ist, im Lande

20 Wenn der Geruch eines Wasslaufes [. . . eine Me]nge Fische wird im Lande sein.⁴¹⁴

If, in l. 19, Nötscher’s *[iṣ?]šur-ri* is read *šur-ri* (“bulls”), the more apparent reading from CT 39, then the line would read “If the river, their smell is like bulls, ditto like the smell of birds, in the land [...],” taking *napīš* (“breath, breathing”) to suggest smell. It remains

⁴¹² CAD B *bu’šu* A, with the same protasis in *eṣenu* 1 and “if the flood comes in MN and the smell of its water *is not sweet to smell*” (italics mine) in CAD E *erešu* A a, 280.

⁴¹³ CAD E *eṣenu* 2, 345.

⁴¹⁴ Nötscher, *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) III*, 123–5.

unclear, though, how or why the smell of the river canal would be compared to birds or bulls, for that matter. Without more information, this is remains a question.

NA Omen

CT 39 16:51⁴¹⁵ *i-riš*

Iris is a ms construct of the noun *erešu* / *irišu* with *qutri* (“smoke” or “fog”), though the context of this reference makes this “smell of smoke/incense” unclear.

Later in this series of river omens, on Plate 16, line 51, another reference to smell occurs, though the broken context makes it obscure. Nötscher transliterates and translates into German as follows:

51 *šumma ina^{arab} šabāṭi mû kayyamānutu ina libbišunu tarru[ku...] i-riš qutri kīma*
 ḏÍD.LÚ.RU.GÚ [ki.min nāru...] DN itti ilāni ša šamê^o ud-du[r....]

51 Wenn im Šebat das Wasser normal ist, (und) darn Satz.... der Geruch von Räucherwerk wie ÍD.LÚ.RU.GÚ [dto der Wasserlauf....] Ea mit den Göttern des Himmels finster(?)...⁴¹⁶

Virolleaud’s earlier transliteration makes more sense, though, as it renders *tar*, *the* sign after *libbišunu*, as *qut*, to be understood as some form of *qutru* (“incense”).⁴¹⁷ Thus, the more coherent translation is, “If in MN water is normal and smoke [rises] from the water and the smell of the smoke is like that of the sacred river...”⁴¹⁸ This may reference the particular smell of the mist/fog rising from the water, or perhaps it is connected to an incense burning practice for the river god, though it is not clear without more to go on.

⁴¹⁵ Gadd, *Cuneiform Texts XXXIX*, 16.

⁴¹⁶ *Orientalia* 51 (1930), 129.

⁴¹⁷ Charles Virolleaud, “De Quelques textes divinatoires” (*Babyloniaca: études de philologie assyro-babylonienne* 3; Paris: Guethner, 1910), 204, l. 81ff.

⁴¹⁸ CAD E *erešu* A a, 280. CAD Q *qutru* A 2, 327 translates “if in the month of Šabātu the water is normal (but) fog [rises] from it and the smell of the fog is like that of the river of the ordeal.”

PROPHETIC ORACLE

Summary Introduction

Of the 30,000 clay tablets housed in the British Museum deriving from the 7th century royal archive of Ninevah, about 6,000 remaining documents are now being published in the series State Archives of Assyria (SAA) by the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project in Helsinki. There contain royal correspondence, administrative records, treaties, religious and literary texts, divination texts like astrological reports and oracle queries, and finally prophetic oracles (words of deities to humans transmitted by a human intermediary).⁴¹⁹ Parpola's edition of Neo-Assyrian prophetic oracles (SAA 9, 1997) is the second largest corpus of ANE prophetic texts outside the Hebrew Bible, following Durand's publication of the Mari correspondence (ARM 26/1, 1988).⁴²⁰

Royal prophetic oracles are entirely focused on the king, his rule, and his relationship with the divine world. Within these texts a clear, distinctive royal theology emerges based on idea of close relationship of the king with the goddess, the king serving as her son and chosen one. Most are characterized as prophecies of well-being (*šulmu*), highlighting the equilibrium of heaven and earth (as demonstrated by stable rule of Assyrian king, his superiority over adversaries, and legitimate succession) which is guaranteed by the reconciliation of the king with gods, thanks to the intercession of Ishtar who protects the king and fights for him.⁴²¹

While some prophetic oracles were recorded individually on their own tablets, at other times, several oracles were collected together on larger tablets. Within one of

⁴¹⁹ Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Peter Machinist, vol. 12, Writings From the Ancient World (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 97.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12:3.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 12:101.

these series of divine messages to Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, the prophet La-dagil-ili of Arbela, speaking for Ishtar, relays an oracle dealing with the stabilization of Esarhaddon's rule and the reestablishment of the cult of the gods of Babylon. It was likely uttered at the onset of his reign, when the war was over but the gods of Babylonia were still in exile.⁴²² Within this prophetic oracle are two identical metaphorical references to sniffing out opposition on behalf of the king.

Individual Analysis

NA Prophetic Oracle

SAA 9 2.3 ii 10⁴²³ *ú-ša-a-na*

Uššana is a D durative 1cs from *ešēnu*, translated “I will smell” or “I will sniff out,” used to reference Ishtar, the lady of Arbela, as the subject (metaphorically as a lion cub or puppy) and the enemies (LÚ.KÚR.MEŠ) of king Esarhaddon as the object.⁴²⁴

SAA 9 2.3 ii 20⁴²⁵ *ú-ša-a-na*

Uššana is also a D durative 1cs from *ešēnu* used again in reference to the lady of Arbela, as above, with the object of the smell being the “noisy daughter” (DUMU.MÍ *huburtu*).

In describing the loyal protection and provision that Ishtar provides the king, rich metaphorical imagery is used for the goddess Ishtar. She calls herself his midwife and wetnurse (SAA 9.1.6 iii 15'-17'), the skilled navigator of a ship (SAA 9 2.2 i 16'-17'), and his father and mother (SAA 9 2.5 iii 26'). In this particular text, after exhorting Esarhaddon not to fear, Ishtar compares herself to a both a winged bird hovering over its

⁴²² Ibid. Martti Nissinen and Simo Parpola, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources* (vol. 7; State Archives of Assyria Studies; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998), 41.

⁴²³ Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, vol. 9, State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), 15.

⁴²⁴ The atypical *-a* ending can be considered a coordinating pitch on the final syllable. Ibid. For support, he references his *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. Part II: Commentary and Appendices* (vol. 2, 2 vols.; *Alter Orient und altes Testament* 5; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983), 26, note on no. 18 r.8.

⁴²⁵ Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, 9:15.

young (ll. 6-8) and to an animal with keen smell running around the palace to sniff out enemies, either a lion cub or a puppy.

Parpola translates SAA 9 2.3 ii 9'-10' *a-ki mu-ra^{ll}-ni dam^{ll}-qí ina É.GAL-ka a-du-al LÚ.KÚR.MEŠ-ka ú-ša-a-na*, "Like a beautiful (*lion*) cub I will run about in your palace and sniff out your enemies."⁴²⁶ He explains *mūrānu* can mean "young dog, puppy," but he highlights the adjectival use of "beautiful" (*damqu*) and emblematic use of the lion for Ishtar, the goddess of beauty, to render the expression "beautiful (*lion*) cub."⁴²⁷

However, citing a line from the annals of Sennacherib where a vassal king is said to be like a puppy brought up in the palace, Weippert demonstrates the legitimacy of a canine interpretation.⁴²⁸ While a lion cub is more mortal a threat to the king's enemies than a puppy, the emphasis here is on the threat of discovery not the threat of being devoured. The discerning olfactory ability of Ishtar, like that of an animal known for its acute sense of smell, is the emphasis. Young dogs, known to be present in Assyrian palaces, can function quite well in this regard.

After reiterating her intent to keep the king safe in his palace, free from anxiety about his reign, the same olfactory imagery of lines 9 and 10 occurs again. Parpola translates 19'-20' as "I will sniff out, catch and give you the 'noisy daughter'" (DUMU.MÍ *hu-bur-tu a-na-ku ú-ša-a-na ú-Γ ba^l-ra ad-da^l-[nak]-ka^l*). Though the animal association is not explicit, sensory discernment is directed towards the discovery and apprehension of the "noisy daughter" or "riotous people." Parpola considers the "daughter" reference as metaphorical for mankind as divinely created progeny, and the association with the

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 15, note on ii 9.

⁴²⁸ Helga Weippert, Klaus Seybold, and Manfred Weippert, *Beiträge zur prophetischen Bildsprache in Israel und Assyrien* (vol. 64; *Orbis biblicus et orientalis*; Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 65.

“noise” (*hubūru*) of mankind corresponds to the same idea in the Babylonian flood story, the Atrahasis Epic.⁴²⁹ Together, the idea is that Ishtar will sniff out, catch, and hand over to the king the riotous, corrupt people who are set against him.

Weippert pushes back on the idea that “noisy daughter” is pejorative, demonstrating the terms can reference everyday noise with neutral and even positive shades of meaning. As an alternate interpretation, he argues lines 18’ and 19’ are chiasmic, both referencing Ishtar, with “I” (*anaku*) as bookends. So, contra Parpola, “the noisy daughter” is not a reference to the rebels that Ishtar is out to catch. Rather, it’s a characterization of Ishtar herself as active and energetic (parallel to l. 18 “I am one who says and does”), engaged in the work of scouting out and arresting opposition parties.⁴³⁰

Whichever reading one takes, both hearken back to the statement preceding this olfactory reference: “Mankind is deceitful; I am the one who says and does” (l. 17’-18’). The contrast between the deceitfulness of people and Ishtar’s reliability highlights the danger which exists for the king and the need for divine safekeeping. The concern to detect imminent threat from treacherous individuals occurs again in this series of oracles, all dealing the stabilization of the king’s rule, but there is a shift from the olfactory sense to the visual and auditory. In the oracle immediately following, the prophetess Urkittu-šarrat of Calah states “I will look, I will listen, I will search out the disloyal ones...”⁴³¹ While the same driving agenda exists for detection of those unfaithful to the king, the means of discovery oscillates between smell to sight and hearing, with olfaction being the only human sense with metaphorical language included.

⁴²⁹ Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, 9:16, note on ii 19.

⁴³⁰ Manfred Weippert, “‘König, fürchte dich nicht!’: Assyrische Prophetie Im 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.,” *Orientalia* 71, no. 1 (2002): 43–44.

⁴³¹ Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, 9:16.

INCANTATIONS AND RITUALS

Summary Introduction

Ancient Mesopotamian religious rituals could be either confirmatory (reinforcing and preserving boundaries that separate the sacred from profane) or transformatory (initiating change vs. maintaining status quo). These instrumental rituals (more commonly described as “magic”) were intended to either produce favorable outcomes, prevent unfavorable ones, or, less often, to cause harmful outcomes for others.⁴³² Incantations (Akkadian *šiptu*, Sumerian ÉN) are the verbal formula recited in the midst of ritual procedures. There are two types of Mesopotamian incantations: 1) spells or magical incantations (*Beschwörungen*)—recited words that have power and do not rely on a divine response,⁴³³ and 2) prayer incantations (*Gebetsbeschwörungen*)—petitions to the deity attempting to leverage divine will. Both were uttered in connection with ritual actions, but the petitionary element is less prominent in spells because they were thought to be echoes of the divine word itself, thus many were written and recited in the ancient Sumerian language.⁴³⁴

Because the origins of illness and misfortune were presumed to be found in divine decrees, witchcraft, demonic influence, and bad luck, these problems were addressed through both “magical” and “medical” treatments. The “medical” would include procedures such as setting bones, bandaging wounds, lancing boils, and pharmacology, while the “magical” would utilize ritual actions and incantations (most

⁴³² The apotropaic/prophylactic purposes seem to be most common.

⁴³³ Though there may be a deity addressed, the god or goddess is not invoked to help achieve the speaker’s expressed desires. Rather, the addressee is usually *told what to do*. Lenzi, *Reading Akkadian Hymns and Prayers. An Introduction*, 19.

⁴³⁴ Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 177.

often to address the problem of demonic oppression). The ritual specialist is titled the *ašipu*, and the *asû* is the pharmacological specialist. The use of “physician” in contradistinction to “exorcist” is not helpful because there is no strict dividing line between their duties—the ancient Mesopotamians did not hold the same conceptual dichotomies we do.⁴³⁵ More will be said about the “medical” aspect in the genre that follows.

The body of incantation and ritual tradition (*āšipūtu*) can be found on single tablets for use on a single occasion (whether in medical texts, on individual tablets, or in other ritual contexts) or in long, elaborate ritual collections like Maqlû, Šurpu, Mīs Pî, and Bīt Rimki. These ritual series probably existed independently or in small collections, but over time they were collected into larger ritual compendiums (a common pattern in Mesopotamian canonical texts).⁴³⁶ While many of these texts come from the scribes of Assurbanipal, there is little doubt that they originate in Sumerian times.⁴³⁷

CT 16 and 17 provide the bulk of material from which Babylonian and Assyrian demonology is derived. In the *utukki limnûti* series (CT 16), which contains a collection of incantations/exorcisms against various demons who scour the city, bent on destruction, just before an incantation which casts them to their desert, depriving them of food and water until that time of banishment, a description of their manner of moving,

⁴³⁵ Availability and socio-economic status also factored into selection of health care consultants. See Hector Avalos, *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East: The Role of the Temple in Greece, Mesopotamia, and Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 54; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 159ff.

⁴³⁶ Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 179.

⁴³⁷ For an example of a Sumerian exorcism text with similar language suggesting Sumerian roots, see Henry Frederick Lutz, *Selected Sumerian and Babylonian Texts* (vol. 1, no. 2; Publications of the Babylonian Section; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1919), 48 (n. 128).

their sound, and *their smell* (like that of unwelcome rodents in living quarters) occurs.⁴³⁸

In the *ašakki marṣūti* series (CT 17), which contains magical texts designed to cure the disease *ašakku* (thought to be “fever sickness”), as part of a ritual to remove the evil causing the precipitating sickness, the affected individual smells burning aromatics.⁴³⁹

ASKT No. 11, a bilingual *zi-pā*⁴⁴⁰ incantation text from the library of Assurbanipal at Kouyunjik, was first published by Norris (2R 17-18).⁴⁴¹ In exorcising various spirits and illnesses, there is a reference to the aroma of food that is not smelled by a starving man.⁴⁴²

Langdon’s *Sumerian Grammatical Texts* incorporates the bulk of the grammatical texts in the Nippur collection of the University Museum, most of which are school texts representing the “books” and student exercises of a Sumerian college.⁴⁴³ One of the

⁴³⁸ Transliterated and translated into English in R. Campbell Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations Against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, Which Attack Mankind. Volume I: “Evil Spirits”* (Luzac’s Semitic Text and Translation Series 14; London: Luzac and Co, 1903).

⁴³⁹ R. Campbell Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations Against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, Which Attack Mankind. Volume II “Fever Sickness” and “Headache,” Etc.*, Luzac’s Semitic Text and Translation Series 15 (London: Luzac and Co, 1904). Fossey, as well as Thompson, has transliterated and translated these texts. *Nouveaux Textes Magiques Assyriens: Transcrits, Traduits et Commentés* (Paris: E. Bouillon, 1904).

⁴⁴⁰ The designation derives from the repeating refrain *zi an.na ḫé.pà zi.ki.a ḫé.pà : niš šamê lū tamât niš erṣeti lū tamât*, “(By) an oath of heaven you are besworn/adjured.”

⁴⁴¹ Paul Haupt, *Akkadische und Sumerische Keilschrifttexte nach den Originalen im Britischen Museum copirt und mit einleitenden Zusammenstellungen sowie erklärenden Anmerkungen* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 1; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1881). Additional collation is found in Paul Haupt, “Einige Verbesserungen und Nachträge zu meinen Akkadischen und Sumerischen Keilschrifttexten,” in *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung und verwandte Gebiete* (vol. 2; Leipzig: O. Schulze, 1885), 275–8.

⁴⁴² It is transliterated and translated in French by Fossey, *La Magie Assyrienne*, 15:144–79 and 463–5. Lexical analysis taking into account duplicates and new parallel texts is provided by Rykle Borger, “Die Erste Teiltafel der ZI-PA-Beschwörungen (ASKT 11),” in *Lišān Mithurti: Festschrift Wolfram Freiherr von Soden zum 19.4. 1968 Gewidmet von Schülern und Mitarbeitern* (ed. Wolfram von Soden, Manfred Dietrich, and Wolfgang Röllig; vol. 1; Alter Orient und altes Testament; Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1969), 1–22.

⁴⁴³ Some texts have a teacher’s copy on the left with the student’s on the right (probably remoistened and remolded for use again). The goal was to instruct students in business formulae, legal terms, and general words employed in everyday life. Stephen Langdon, *Sumerian Grammatical Texts*, vol. v. 12, no. 1, Publications of the Babylonian Section (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1917), 5.

autographed plates not translated therein by Langdon, the lower half of which contains Sumerian rituals for incantations with a partial interlinear Semitic translation, references the ability of a divine statue to smell incense (PBS 12/1 6:2).⁴⁴⁴ Despite damage to the initial lines, it is thought to represent a Mundwaschung (“mouth-washing”) and Mundöffnung (“mouth-opening”) of a divine image so that it can eat, drink, and smell.

Individual Analysis

NA Incantation

CT 16 34:215⁴⁴⁵ *uṣ-ša-nu*

Uṣṣanū is a D 3mp stative of the verb *eṣēnu* (“to smell bad, to make something smell bad”), used literally for the smell produced by rats/mice (assumedly their fecal matter) and for the foul odor of evil spirits.

In the midst of a collection of bilingual incantations against various types of evil entities, whether spirit (*utukku limnu*), demon (*alû limnu*), ghost (*ekimmu limnu*), devil (*gallû limnu*), evil god (*ilu limnu*), or fiend (*rabiṣu limnu*), a series of three animal-based metaphors are used to describe their characteristics and effects. Thompson translates lines 213-216 of as “They drive forth a man from his home. Upon themselves like a snake they glide, like mice they make the chamber stink, like hunting dogs they give

⁴⁴⁴ Ebeling transliterates the text and translates it into German, though he misses an identification of this text as a school text and comments that he is unsure of the connection to the Beschwörungsritual (incantation ritual) for a sick person on the back side of the tablet. Erich Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1931), 120. Thompson identifies the reverse as a ritual text about a physician entering a patient’s house for treatment, but he makes no comment about the connection. R. Campbell Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 209. In his review of Thompson, Meier correctly identifies this text as a student text, the first in a series (separated by hyphens) of exercises citing extracts of “mouthwashing” texts, UDUG.ĪUL.A.MEŠ, and ĪAR-ra = *ḫubullu* (Tablet 16 C). Gerhard Meier, “Review of R. Campbell Thompson, A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 13, no. 1/2 (1939): 73.

⁴⁴⁵ R. Campbell Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XVI (50 Plates)* (vol. 16, 50 vols., Second Imprint.; London: The Trustees, 1911), 34.

tongue.”⁴⁴⁶

Sandwiched between the descriptions of how they move like snakes (visual) and sound like hunting dogs (ocular) is a comparison to their smell, or rather, the smell they produce: “they (the demons) make the cellar stink as rats do,” ^dnin.kilim(PÉŠ).gin_x(GIM) úr.ingar.ra.ke_x(KID) ir.si.im in.na.ag.e.ne : *kima šikkê asurrâ uš-ša-nu šunu*.⁴⁴⁷ A modern Western reading of this text might understand this employment of metaphors to figuratively describe these demons, but it may be more appropriate to take these metaphors as descriptive of their very tangible effect on human beings, causing them to writhe on the ground like snakes, howl like a pack of hunting dogs in chase, and also to wreak like a rat-infested basement.

NA Incantation

CT 17 9:37f⁴⁴⁸ *šū-ši-in-šū-ma*

šūšinšuma is a Š 2ms imperative of the verb *ešēnu* with the 3ms suffix pronoun and enclitic *-ma*, translated “cause him to smell” or “have him smell.” It is not explicit as to who the subject is or exactly what the object smelled refers to, but the context indicates various aromatics are to be burned.

Before reciting an incantation against seven evil spirits that have wracked a man with sickness, a series of ritual instructions are given, including flaying and dismembering a lamb, and concluding with the burning of aromatics. The CAD translates lines 37f as “(you burn various aromatics), you have him smell [the fragrance],”

⁴⁴⁶ Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, Vol. 2, 155. Fossey translates as “L'homme, ils le font sortir de sa maison sur eux-mêmes, comme des serpents, ils se traînent comme des souris (?), les murs, ils les infectant, comme des chiens en chasse, ils aboient.” Charles Fossey, “Textes Magiques Assyriens,” *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes* 26, no. 1-2 (1904): 116f.

⁴⁴⁷ CAD E *ešēnu* 2, 345, and *ešēnu* 2, 345.

⁴⁴⁸ R. Campbell Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XVII (50 Plates)* (vol. 17, 50 vols.; London: The Trustees, 1903), 9.

[...]r.si.im.e.ne : [...] *šu-ši-in-šu-ma*.⁴⁴⁹ Folley translates as “Fais-lui sentir”⁴⁵⁰ and Thompson as “burn cypress and herbs(?)”.⁴⁵¹ The broken text prevents further contextual analysis.

NA Incantation

ASKT No. 11, p. 89 ii 25⁴⁵² (= II R 17-18) *e-ri-šu*

Erešu is the ms noun translated “smell” (normalized *ereša* for the accusative case), here used literally for an aroma (presumably of food) that is not inhaled by a starving man.

ASKT No. 11, p. 89 ii 25⁴⁵³ *i-ši-nu*

Īšinu is the G preterite 3ms of the verb *ešēnu* (“to smell”) with the subjunctive marker *-u*, with the subject being the man starving in prison and the object being the smell of food.

In the midst of this incantation formula, the malevolent demons are said to not only strike people by illness, sickness, and infirmity but also by violent means. Prior to death by drowning, lines 22-25 describe the plight of one who dies of hunger and thirst in prison. Lines 24-25 detail the misfortune as follows: *lú.šá.gar.ra šà.[gar.r]a.a.ni.ta ir nu.un.da.ḥur.ra : birû ša ina birûtišu e-re-šú la Īšinu*, “the hungry man, who, in his hunger, did not smell any good smell (of food).”⁴⁵⁴ Interestingly, the text does not indicate the man starving in prison was without food but that he was without the *smell* of food. Olfactory references like this highlight the significant role of smell as representative of the sustenance that is derived from food.

⁴⁴⁹ CAD E *ešēnu* 3b, 345.

⁴⁵⁰ Fossey, *Nouveaux Textes Magiques Assyriens: transcrits, traduits et commentés*, 48.

⁴⁵¹ Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits, Vol. 2*, 31.

⁴⁵² Haupt, *Akkadische und Sumerische Keilschrifttexte*, 89.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴ CAD E *erešu* A a, 280. CAD *ešēnu* 1a, 345 normalizes and translates *lú.šá.gar.ra šà.[gar.r]a.a.ni.ta ir nu.un.da.urṣ.ra : bērû ša ina birûtišu ereša la i-ši-nu*, “the starving man, who, when he was hungry, smelled no smell (of food).” CAD B *berû*, 207 provides the reading *bi-ru-u* (*berû*).

NB Incantation (School Tablet)**PBS 12/1 6:2⁴⁵⁵ iṣ-ṣi-in**

iṣṣin is a G durative 3ms from the verb *eṣēnu* with the *ul* negator (translated “does not smell”) referencing the ability of the divine statue (*ṣalmu annû*) to smell incense (*qutrinnu*).⁴⁵⁶

This Sumerian grammatical text with partial interlinear Akkadian translation cites an excerpt of a ritual/incantation series involving the “opening of the mouth” ceremony (*pīt pî*), a consecration ritual employed to bring a divine image to life. Line 2 can be read *ṣalmu annû ina la pīt pî qutrinna ul iṣṣin akala ul ikkal mê ul išatti*, “this statue cannot smell incense without the ‘Opening of the Mouth’ ceremony, nor can it eat food or drink water.” Descriptions of the ritual mouthwashing and purification follow. The importance of divine olfaction to receive incense and other offerings is well documented.

CULTIC CALENDAR**Summary Introduction**

Cultic calendars provide a temporal arrangement of the various rites and ceremonies of the cult.⁴⁵⁷ They may list the ritual meals for respective temples, which offerings or libations are to be practiced when, and/or which canonical liturgies and prayers correspond to specific dates on the calendar.⁴⁵⁸ Feasts or festivals that occurred once a year, not monthly, were the subject of several compilations during the Hellenistic

⁴⁵⁵ Langdon, *Sumerian Grammatical Texts*, v. 12, no. 1:6. Restored from parallel 4R 25 iii 64f.

⁴⁵⁶ The corresponding Sumerian is *na.izi* [nu.ur₅].

⁴⁵⁷ See Cohen for a helpful assemblage and assessment of the new material and information since Landsberger and Langdon’s pioneering studies of cultic calendars in ancient Mesopotamia in the first half of this last century. Mark E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, Md: CDL Press, 1993). Benno Landsberger, *Der kultische Kalender der Babylonier und Assyrer* (vol. 1, 2 vols.; Leipziger semitistische Studien 6; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1915). Stephen Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars* (vol. 1933; The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy; London: Pub. for the British Academy by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1935).

⁴⁵⁸ Stephen Langdon, “Calendars of Liturgies and Prayers,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 42, no. 2 (1926): 110–27.

period in Babylonia.⁴⁵⁹ These annual cultic calendars provide a chronology of months with the various rites/festivals to be performed in temples throughout Babylonia being listed in order by month. Based on a synthesis of the cultic data from the later period of Babylon and Uruk, which is fairly limited, McEwan argues there was little change in the ceremonies, rites, and offerings in the cult from the earlier Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.⁴⁶⁰ For this reason, one text from this later period with olfactory references is included here.

SBH VIII, a broken text published by Reisner in 1896, retains portions of material related to the ninth and tenth Babylonian months (Kislimu and Ṭebētum).⁴⁶¹ In 1915, Jensen interpreted SBH VIII as representative of a comprehensive year-round Babylonian hemerology,⁴⁶² but since then, it has become accepted as a fragment of an annual religious/cultic calendar which includes the Sacred Marriage Drama.⁴⁶³ McEwan identifies a series of ritual ceremonies such as day 3 and 16 clothing ceremonies (iv 8,

⁴⁵⁹ Gilbert J. P. McEwan, *Priest and Temple in Hellenistic Babylonia*, Freiburger altorientalische Studien 4 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1981), 174. See also BRM IV 25, a duplicate of SBH VII, Albert Tobias Clay, *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan. Part 4 Epics, Hymns, Omens, and Other Texts* (ed. Albert Tobias Clay; vol. 4, 4 vols.; New Haven: Yale University, 1923); Ernst F. Weidner, *Gestirndarstellungen auf Babylonischen Tontafeln* (Sitzungsberichte / Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 254. Bd., Abh.2; Wien: Böhlau in Kommission, 1967), Tafel 11–12.

⁴⁶⁰ McEwan, *Priest and Temple*, 178–82.

⁴⁶¹ George A. Reisner, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln Griechischer Zeit* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1896). In his transliteration and translation, Unger points out Reisner has mislabeled the text VAT 663 instead of VAT 662. Eckhard Unger, *Babylon: Die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1931), 264.

⁴⁶² Hemerologies are a specialized and widespread group of Akkadian calendrical texts which list favorable and unfavorable days of the year, along with favorable and unfavorable acts for certain days of the year. Jensen, *Texte zur Assyrisch-Babylonischen Religion*, 24ff.

⁴⁶³ In discussing OB marriage contracts, Greengus references the celebration of the ritual marriage of Nabû and Nanâ in this passage. Samuel Greengus, "The Old Babylonian Marriage Contract," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1969): 524, fn. 92. Jacobsen suggests the deities would have been represented by cult statues carried around in the rite. Thorkild Jacobsen, "Religious Drama in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1975), 71.

19f.), a ceremony before Marduk on day 4 (iv 9ff.), and a ceremony before Nabu on day 16/17 (iv 21ff.), which contains a couple broken lines with olfactory references.⁴⁶⁴

Individual Analysis

LB Cultic Calendar

SBH p. 146:36 and 40⁴⁶⁵ *i-ri-šú*

Irišū is the mpl noun “scent, fragrance” used literally with the mpl adjective *ṭābūtu* and translated “sweet fragrances” or “good aromas,” though it is not clear what the source is.

There are two references to aroma in this cultic calendar, but the precise details of the sacred marriage cultic drama to which they refer are not clear because of breaks. It seems like the language of vi 34-42, involving predictions of abundance as well as defeat/capture describe a ritual procession involving lamentation. Line 36 reads “...of fragrant scents” (...*ša irišū ṭābūtum*) and line 40 “...and Ezida, pleasing scents have burned” (...*u Ezida uštaḥmaṭū irišū ṭābūtu*). Unger ventures the translation “...[Weihrauch], dessen Duft wohlriechend ist” and “...[für Esagila und Ezi]da läßt man auflodern, dessen Duft angenehm ist.”⁴⁶⁶ Associating Esagilla (the temple of Marduk in Babylon) and Ezida (the temple of Nabu in Borsippa), he supplies the source of the fragrant scent: incense. This is, of course, a safe guess, though *šuhmuṭu* (“to burn”) is not normally used with incense to describe its pleasing smell.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁴ McEwan, *Priest and Temple*, 180-1.

⁴⁶⁵ *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln Griechischer Zeit*, 146.

⁴⁶⁶ Unger, *Babylon: Die heilige Stadt*, 270.

⁴⁶⁷ See CAD H *ḥamāṭu* B 3, 65.

MEDICAL

Summary Introduction

A series of olfactory references occur in Akkadian medical texts, demonstrating the ancient diagnostic role of this human sense. While many of these medical compositions derive from the seventh century, it is assumed these writings were passed down from remote periods based on the traditional lore of the ancient Sumerian priests, magicians, or healers who practiced their craft in Mesopotamia before the Semitic Babylonians entered somewhere between 5000 and 4000 BCE. These diagnostic, prognostic, and therapeutic handbooks, logically arranged and subdivided into tablets by subject matter, are intended for the training of and use by ancient Mesopotamian healing specialists who functioned in a role similar to the modern physician, making prognoses as well as diagnoses, and administering or recommending treatments.⁴⁶⁸

Edith Ritter proposed a general dichotomy between the *āšīpu* and *asû*, which held sway in cuneiform studies for decades. The *āšīpu* was characterized as a magical expert who derived his healing authority from the gods. While he may have performed a cleansing ritual or anointed the patient, it was the manipulation of incantations, figurines, amulets, and other ritualistic elements that brought healing. The *asû*, on the other hand, was the “physician” who utilized bandages, poultices, and other medical means to heal the sick.⁴⁶⁹ This classic dichotomy between “exorcist” and “physician” or between magic and medicine has since been challenged. Marten Stol called attention to the role of the *bārû* (“diviner”) alongside these two healing professions and stressed the use of popular

⁴⁶⁸ Jo Ann Scurlock and Burton R. Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine: Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2005), 10.

⁴⁶⁹ Edith Ritter, “Magical-Expert (=ĀŠĪPU) and Physician (=ASŪ). Notes on Two Complementary Professions in Babylonian Medicine,” in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965* (ed. Hans-Gustav Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen; Assyriological Studies 16; University of Chicago, 1965), 312.

magic by the *asû*.⁴⁷⁰ Robert Biggs rejected the theoretical distinction between the exorcist practicing magic and the physician being empirical and rational.⁴⁷¹ JoAnn Scurlock challenged the premise behind seeking binary opposites where they do not exist.⁴⁷²

The colophons of the majority of the medical texts reference the art of the *āšīpūtu* and not the *asûtu*, as no private libraries of the latter have been excavated to date. Letters and receipts demonstrate both *āšīpu* and *asû* are active in healing activities, sometimes working independently and sometimes collaborating.⁴⁷³ One distinction between the two professions pertains to socio-political status. The *āšīpu* was part of an extensive temple staff, and, though not involved in the work of the daily cult, he performed associated calendric and cultic purification rites.⁴⁷⁴ Well-versed in scribal arts, Sumerian, classics of literature, and a wide variety of “magical” rituals in addition to the forty tablets of the diagnostic/prognostic handbook and innumerable therapeutic texts, the *āšīpu* was an intellectual.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁰ Marten Stol, “Diagnosis and Therapy in Babylonian Medicine,” *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 32 (1991): 58–62.

⁴⁷¹ Robert D. Biggs, “Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson et al.; vol. 3, 4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1995), 3:1918.

⁴⁷² Jo Ann Scurlock, “Physician, Exorcist, Conjurer, Magician: A Tale of Two Healing Professionals,” in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* (ed. Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn; Ancient Magic and Divination 1; Groningen: Styx, 1999), 76.

⁴⁷³ Nils P. Heessel, “The Babylonian Physician Rabâ-Ša-Marduk. Another Look at Physicians and Exorcists in the Ancient Near East,” in *Advances in Mesopotamian Medicine from Hammurabi to Hippocrates. Proceedings of the International Conference “Oeil malade et mauvais oeil,” Collège de France, Paris, 23rd June 2006* (ed. A. Attia and Gilles Buisson; Cuneiform Monographs 37; Boston: Brill, 2009), 14–15.

⁴⁷⁴ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 8. These medical experts would have served in the palace and lived together with other professionals and scholarly experts perhaps including the astrologer/scribe (*tuššarru*), diviner (*bāru*), chanter (*kalû*), augur (*dāgil iššūrī*), and wise man (*hassu*). Simo Parpola, “Introduction,” in *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (ed. Simo Parpola; State Archives of Assyria 10; Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University, 1993), xxiii–xiv.

⁴⁷⁵ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 429.

The *asû* seems to have been a layman who did not have access to the same prestige and wealth.⁴⁷⁶ Scurlock suggests he functioned more as a pharmacist who acquired medicinal plants, storing them in his shop, and compounded drugs that demonstrated practical value in relieving complaints of patients. The *āšipu*, who made “house calls,”⁴⁷⁷ seems to have depended upon the *asû* to provide these remedies.⁴⁷⁸ The *asû* had a basic medical knowledge that allowed him to set bones, bandage wounds, lance boils, and stop nosebleeds, but he did not diagnose complex illnesses.⁴⁷⁹

The broken and scattered condition of these medical tablets has required an ongoing effort to discover “joins” and identify duplicates.⁴⁸⁰ Thompson rejoined 25 fragments to form nine tablets in Part XXIII of *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*.⁴⁸¹ Portions of the tablets are inscribed with a series of directives

⁴⁷⁶ Markham J. Geller, “Introduction: ‘Oeil malade et mauvais oeil,’” in *Advances in Mesopotamian Medicine from Hammurabi to Hippocrates. Proceedings of the International Conference “Oeil malade et mauvais oeil,” Collège de France, Paris, 23rd June 2006* (ed. A. Attia and Gilles Buisson; Cuneiform Monographs 37; Boston: Brill, 2009), 3.

⁴⁷⁷ Features of omen series and apotropaic rites show the *āšipu* must have had clientele of private individuals, though there are no known reports of them working as private practitioners. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel*, 207.

⁴⁷⁸ Ellis Douek, “Ancient & Contemporary Management in a Disease of Unknown Aetiology,” in *Disease in Babylonia* (ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller; Cuneiform Monographs 36; Boston: Brill, 2007), 216–17.

⁴⁷⁹ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 10.

⁴⁸⁰ The first few medical tablets of the Kouyunjik collection were published by Sir Henry Rawlinson and Dr. Pinches in volume four of *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, but Kuschler was the first to make a systematic and scientific study of the medical texts proper. Friedrich Kuschler, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Assyrisch-Babylonischen Medizin* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 18; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich, 1904). His arrangement into three large texts (KK. 191, 716, and 61) has been seen as invaluable in clearing up unknown meanings of words and phrases. R. Campbell Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XXII (50 Plates)*, vol. 23, 50 vols. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), 1.

⁴⁸¹ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII.*; translated in R. Campbell Thompson, “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Head,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 24, no. 1 (1907): 1–6; “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Head,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 24, no. 4 (1908): 323–53; “Assyrian Prescriptions for the Head,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 53, no. 4 (1937): 217–38; “Assyrian Prescriptions for the Head—Concluded,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 54, no. 1/4 (1937): 12–40.

for rites and ceremonies to be performed for the restoration of the sick to health. There are three different series in volume 23—one is focused on freeing people from the ghosts of the dead, whereas the other two have ceremonial incantations and instructions intended to help people smitten with various forms of sickness.⁴⁸² Plates 23-50 of CT 23 (*enuma amêlu elišu išâtu ukal*, “When the fire (i.e. fever) consumeth upon a man”) give diagnoses of various head-troubles, always followed by medical treatments such as binding carefully prepared poultices, herbs, or other ingredients, anointing and washing the eyes/head, concocting potions to drink, fumigating, shaving, and bedrest. There are also incantations to be repeated, prayers to be uttered, and rituals to be performed. Amidst these diagnostics and prescriptions are a couple olfactory references.

Several more olfactory references characterizing the smell of the mouth, the inside of the ears, and the left lung appear in Thompson’s *Assyrian Medical Texts From the Originals in the British Museum*, which publishes 660 more medical texts from the 7th century library of Ashurbanipal. Ebeling also published a number of these texts in *Keilschrifttexte medicinischen Inhalts* and tablets of a similar class from Assur in *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*.⁴⁸³ Köcher’s *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* publishes medical texts from the Berlin and Istanbul museums, adding a couple more olfactory references to round out the NA examples of smell as a diagnostic tool in ancient medicine.

Another olfactory reference occurs in a NB medical text dating to c. 650-600 BCE, published by Lutz in AJSL 36. It contains a series of prescriptions for sicknesses of the male urinary and genital organs with no magical rites, just the name of the

⁴⁸² Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:3.

⁴⁸³ Erich Ebeling, ed., *Keilschrifttexte medicinischen Inhalts* (2 vols.; Berlin: Im Selbstverlage, 1922-3); *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* (2 vols.; Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 34; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919-20).

symptom and a series of given prescriptions (up to 21 for a single disease). While there is much in common with the Khabaza collection, which contains prayers and hymns bearing the name of Shamash-shum-ukin (son of Assyrian king Esarhaddon who ruled Babylon during time of Ashurbanipal), this text is considered “the sediment of much earlier texts, most probably a compilation of a distinct class of sicknesses, which may have been deposited in the library of the king or else was used as a textbook in schools.”⁴⁸⁴

Individual Analysis

NA Medical

CT 23 36:58⁴⁸⁵ *bi-‘-š[at]*

Bi‘šat is a G stem 3fs stative from the verb *ba‘āšu / be‘ēšu / be‘āšu*,⁴⁸⁶ translated “smells bad” with an obviously literal usage in referring to a negative odor emitting from the affected area of the head of a patient.

CT 23 36:64⁴⁸⁷ *BI-‘-šat*

Bi‘šat, as in l. 58 above, is a G stem 3fs stative from the verb *ba‘āšu / be‘ēšu / be‘āšu*,⁴⁸⁸ with the *la* negator rendering the translation “does not smell bad” in reference to the patient’s ear.

Scurlock, in *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, cites this passage in her chapter on infectious diseases to demonstrate that the *āšipu* had a thorough knowledge of the evolution of wound abscesses, as well as the proper protocol for treatment.⁴⁸⁹ She transliterates and translates ll. 57-59 as follows:

⁴⁸⁴ Henry Frederick Lutz, “A Contribution to the Knowledge of Assyro-Babylonian Medicine,” *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 36 (1919): 67–8.

⁴⁸⁵ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:36.

⁴⁸⁶ CAD B *ba‘āšu* A, 4.

⁴⁸⁷ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:36.

⁴⁸⁸ CAD B *ba‘āšu* A, 4.

⁴⁸⁹ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 65.

57-59 DIŠ NA UGU-šú A [ú]-[ka] ŠU.SI-ka GAL-ti a-šar A.MEŠ ú-kal-lu TAG.TAG-at
 šum-ma UZU.GIŠ-šú bi-'ša[t [A.MEŠ šá gul-gu]l-li-šú it-tar-du BAD-ma gul-gul-la-šú te-
 ser-rim A ša gul-gul-li-šu t[u-bal]^{TUG}GADA A L]UḪ-ši Ì.GIŠ SUD ana UGU GIG

57-59 If a man's scalp [contains] liquid, you continually touch the place where it contains liquid with your thumb. If his ear⁴⁹⁰ stinks, [liquid] has come down [from his] [skull]. You open up and make an incision in his skull. You [dry up] the liquid of his skull. You [wash] [a linen cloth with water]. You sprinkle (it) with oil (and) put it on the wound.⁴⁹¹

There is some disagreement about where exactly on the head the pressure is exerted resulting in the foul smelling seepage. Originally transliterated by Thompson as *šir giš-šú*, "the flesh of his neck," the word *giššú* is taken either as an adjective ("touched"), or perhaps as a verb in a dependent clause without *ša* because of the indefinite subject, thus "the flesh which is touched."⁴⁹² The more straightforward reading by Scurlock and CAD,⁴⁹³ UZU.GIŠ-šú ("his ear"), is certainly possible on the basis of the sign values themselves,⁴⁹⁴ though it is not clear why pushing the location that holds the water, wherever that is on the head, would be related to an olfactory assessment of the ear and result in fluid being expelled there, nor why the subsequent treatment would include shaving (l. 63) if the ear is the locus of the problem.

The most likely medical understanding is that this is a pus-filled lesion of the skin on the head, whether an abscess, boil, or kerion, all of which can be characterized by foul odor.⁴⁹⁵ Whatever this wound is, the symptom of water retention upon the head is

⁴⁹⁰ Read as ^{UZU}*giš-šú* and translated as "boil" by Labat, *RLA* 3.231b and translated as "hip (socket)" by *AHw.* 94a s.v. *ba'āšu* and 288b s.v. *gišú*.

⁴⁹¹ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 65.

⁴⁹² Thompson, "Assyrian Prescriptions for the Head," 234, n. 99.

⁴⁹³ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 1a, 4.

⁴⁹⁴ CAD U *uznu*, 362 does not cite this passage and includes only one lexical instance where GIŠ is used by itself for "ear."

⁴⁹⁵ A kerion is a scalp infection that occurs in severe cases of scalp ringworm, a fungal infection of the scalp and hair, and appears as an inflamed, thickened, pus-filled protrusion, sometimes accompanied by a fever.

given clear procedure for the “doctor”—press the affected area with the forefinger or thumb and assess the nature of the fluid that comes out. Smell is clearly given as one of primary the diagnostic tools. The use of olfaction in medical diagnoses during this period and throughout history is significant and will be discussed later.

Unfortunately, there are some breaks in the text, so it is not absolutely clear what transpires next. According to Thompson, there is a binding of the head/skull to absorb the KIL.A KIL, *buša’nu*, which is translated “foeter of the water” in reference to the foetid fluid exuding from the affected place. That bandage is then washed, sprinkled with oil, and placed back on the sick person’s head. Scurlock’s translation describes the dressing changes, such as washing a clean linen cloth sprinkled with oil after placing ground *kiškanû* and potter’s grog on the wound for two days, daubing the wound with roasted *kašû* and grain flour, crushing *burāšu* and mixing it with *isqūqu*-flour and *kašu* juice to make a dough and bandaging with it.⁴⁹⁶

After the full description of this corrective procedure comes another instruction relative to olfactory assessment of the area in question. Scurlock renders line 64: *šum₄-ma TAG-ma UZU.GIŠ-šú la bi-’-šat ana li-mit SAG.DU-šú IZI NA₄.MEŠ GAR-an*, “If you touch (the place where it contains liquid) and his ear does not stink, you put red-hot coals around his head (to ripen the abscess).”⁴⁹⁷ Thompson initially transliterates line 64, *šum-ma šîr giš-šu-šu bi-’-šat ana li-bit kaḳḳadi-šu išat abn^{pl} tašakan(an)*, as “if the flesh of his neck (?) is fetid, place ‘fire of stones’ at the base of his head,” but he

Klaus Wolff, Richard Allen Johnson, and Dick Suurmond, *Color Atlas and Synopsis of Clinical Dermatology* (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Medical Pub. Division, 1992), 112.

⁴⁹⁶ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 65.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

subsequently emends the translation to “and if the touched flesh does not smell offensively, thou shalt put ‘a fire of stones’ (coal? Or hot stones?) near his head.”⁴⁹⁸

It is not entirely apparent whether this evaluation based on smell comes as a secondary olfactory evaluation of the affliction *after* the lengthy treatment or as the corresponding protocol for an odorless wound. In the former, when the stench of the wound is successfully eliminated as a result of the changing of dressings, the application of special medicinal mixtures, and the shaving of hair on or near the affected area, then this would call for a final step of placing a “fire of stones” near his head. In the latter, after the initial pressing of the place containing liquid and diagnostic survey of the odor, a resulting lack of stench from the fluid results in a significantly simpler response—heat to the area versus an incision,⁴⁹⁹ draining of pus, and a bandaging process.

NA Medical

AMT 23,1:11⁵⁰⁰ (= KMI 36) *e-ri-iš*

Eriš is a ms noun (“smell, scent, fragrance”)⁵⁰¹ used in construct with *šinnīšu* and translated “the smell of his teeth.”

Unfortunately the broken context of this prescription prohibits full contextual analysis. It appears the foul odor of the mouth is the precipitating malady resulting in varied medicinal treatments including drinking beer with special ingredients. Thompson translates, “If a man's mouth [has] foetor, . . . thou shalt take(?): alum(?), *ammi, . . .

⁴⁹⁸ Thompson, “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Head,” 1; “Assyrian Prescriptions for the Head,” 234. His first transliteration and translation failed to account the negator *la* (“not”).

⁴⁹⁹ IZI NA₄.MEŠ is translated *išat abnī*, “fire of stones.” Thomson suggests this could be coals or hot stones, while Scurlock translates as “red-hot coals.” The expression *aban išāti*, “fire stone, flint,” has precedent, but this is different. Neither Thompson nor Scurlock comment on the placement of heat to the area in question, though Scurlock adds the parenthetical remark “to ripen the abscess.” It unclear from a modern medical perspective why this would be necessary in either case.

⁵⁰⁰ Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts*, 23.

⁵⁰¹ CAD E *erešu* A, 280.

urpana(?), *storax, *annuḫa[ra]* . . ., crushed flour, the smell of his teeth thou shalt . . ., these drugs thou shalt apply.”⁵⁰²

NA Medical

AMT 34,5:5⁵⁰³ (= KMI 19) *bi-‘-iš*

Bīš is a G stem 3ms stative from the verb *ba’āšu* / *be’ēšu* / *be’āšu*,⁵⁰⁴ translated “smells bad” in reference to the literal stench emitted from the inside of the ears.

In “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Ears,” which contains translations from AMT pertaining specifically to ear troubles, Thompson joins together AMT 35,2 (K. 3215), 34,5 (S. 379), and, after a gap, 36,1, rev. (K. 3696). He suggests these sections were once part of an original whole, and he translates the above reference in context as:

If a man’s ears are affected [and the interior] of his ears makes him swell with offensive foetor, pricking him... [continued after a gap with AMT 36,1, rev.] ...hurts him, and [he can]not [rest(?)], [thou shalt pound] (and) strain pine-turpentine, fir-turpentine, myrtle, **Ferula communis*, roses(?), potash, *mercury, fumigate (therewith) the interior of his ears over a thorn fire . . . : this for [three days thou shalt do (?)], and on the fourth day though shalt cleanse the interior of his ears: [as the pus] exudes and is deposited, though shalt bray alum, (and) blow (it) [into] his ears through a reed-tube.⁵⁰⁵

In discussing middle ear problems with pain and hearing loss resulting from infection, Scurlock and Anderson point out the specific reference to pus that “stinks” is likely the result of infections with anaerobic bacteria. Additional symptoms include pain or soreness from the inner ear (Otitis Media, the portion adjacent to the inner ear within the eardrum), such that the afflicted one is unable to rest, which is precisely the situation

⁵⁰² R. Campbell Thompson, “Assyrian Medical Texts II.,” *Proceedings of the Society of Medicine (Section of the History of Medicine)* 19 (1926): 66.

⁵⁰³ Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts*, 34.

⁵⁰⁴ CAD B *ba’āšu* A, 4.

⁵⁰⁵ R. Campbell Thompson, “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Ears,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 63, no. 1 (1931): 9–10.

described here.⁵⁰⁶ Treatment protocol includes what appears to be three days of fumigation with a special mixture of varied ingredients, followed by the application of an alum powder which is blown into the ear through a reed-tube.

NA Medical

AMT 52,9:5⁵⁰⁷ (= KMI 30) *bi-šú*

Bīšu is a ms adjective (“malodorous”)⁵⁰⁸ used to describe “blood” (ÚŠ.MI) that comes out of the opening of the left lung.

While this fragment contains only five lines, of which all are broken, it apparently involves a medical diagnosis of lung-related troubles with symptoms of coughing up foul-smelling phlegm or blood. Acknowledging the difficulty in reading these lines, Thompson translates ll. 2-6, “[If a man]’s... has inflammation, he being sick of a blow on the breast,... phlegm, wasting of flesh..., of phlegm affects him, he coughing : when he coughs...”⁵⁰⁹ Ebeling renders l. 5, “[Wenn] aus dem ‘Munde’ der linken Lunge [eines Menschen] schwarzes, böses(?) Blut kommt,” and the CAD: “if malodorous, dark blood comes out of the ‘opening of his left lung’” (*šumma ÚŠ.MI bi-šú ina pī hašī šumēlišu illak*).⁵¹⁰ Whether foul smelling phlegm or blood, olfaction is used yet again as a diagnostic medical tool.

NA Medical

Köcher BAM 3 iv 14⁵¹¹ *bi-iš*

⁵⁰⁶ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 452.

⁵⁰⁷ Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts*, 52.

⁵⁰⁸ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

⁵⁰⁹ R. Campbell Thompson, “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Chest and Lungs,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’Archéologie orientale* 31, no. 1 (1934): 17.

⁵¹⁰ Erich Ebeling, “Keilschrifttafeln medizinischen Inhalts,” *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 13 (1921): 16; CAD B *bīšu*, 270 1.

⁵¹¹ The older copy is KAR 202. See also duplicate lines in BAM 503 ii 67’-68’.

Bīš is a G stem 3ms stative from the verb *ba'āšu / be'ēšu / be'āšu*,⁵¹² translated “smells bad” in reference to the literal stench of the inside of the ears.

The CAD points out this passage in relation to AMT 34,5:5, as they are almost identical with the only difference being a matter of spelling (*bi-iš* vs. *bi-'-iš*).⁵¹³ Scurlock and Anderson transliterate and translate the larger context as: DIŠ NA GEŠTU^{II}-šÚ GIG-*ma ŠÀ* GEŠTU^{II}-šÚ *bi-iš* SÌG.SÌG-*su u KÚ-šú-ma la NÁ-lal . . .*, “If a person’s ears are sore and the inside of his ears stinks (and) it continually gives him a jabbing pain and hurts him so badly that he cannot sleep . . .,” reiterating the same scenario as above.⁵¹⁴

NA Medical

Köcher BAM 268:3⁵¹⁵ *ni-ip-še*

Nipše is a ms noun (“smell”), and it occurs in construct with GIG (Akk. *simmu*), a term which indicates a carbuncle/skin eruption or wound as well as disease or sickness in a general sense.⁵¹⁶ The translation “smell of sickness” is fitting.

In Scurlock’s *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, this reference is cited in a discussion of infectious diseases as DIŠ NA *ni-ip-še* GIG [...], “If a person is sick with stink [...].”⁵¹⁷

There is an added gloss in a corresponding text, Uruanna IV i 4: DIŠ NA KA.È GIG : *ni-ip-šú ša sim-me*, “If a person is sick with stink, (that means) stink said of a wound.”⁵¹⁸

⁵¹² CAD B *ba'āšu* A, 4.

⁵¹³ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 1a, 4.

⁵¹⁴ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 205.

⁵¹⁵ Franz Köcher, *Die Babylonisch-Assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* (vol. 1; Keilschrifttexte aus Assur 3; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963), 62. Restored from AMT 77,6:4 (=KMI 59). For partial translations, see R. Campbell Thompson, “Assyrian Prescriptions for Treating Bruises or Swellings,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 47, no. 1 (1930): 2-3 and Thompson, “Assyrian Medical Texts II.,” 69f.

⁵¹⁶ CAD S *simmu* 2, 276.

⁵¹⁷ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 64, also CAD N Part 2 *nipšu* A, 2, 248: *šumma amēlu ni-ip-še* GIG MIN *ni-ip-še* DIR.DIR-*ma* [...].

References to wounds that “stink” are presumed to wounds infected with organisms that profligate in the absence of oxygen. These anaerobic infections intensify when local blood supply is compromised, and “while other types of wound infections may have odors, some of which are less than pleasant, but anaerobic infections truly are putrid with a stink of a feculent nature.”⁵¹⁹

NB Medical

AJSL 36 81:50⁵²⁰ *ú-ša-nu*

Uššanū is a D 3mpl durative verb, translated “they smell bad,”⁵²¹ with the subject being the excrement(?) and urine of a man.⁵²²

In this tablet with prescriptions pertaining to the genitourinary system, Lutz transliterates and translates line 50 as *Ki 5: MA ù šinâti-šu šamnu-za-nu riqqu murra tamaḥaṣ*, “Ditto 5: The excrements(?) and his urine, zanu-plant, bitter-plant thou shalt grind.”⁵²³ Köcher’s collation reads *ú* instead of the determinative for plants, *šamnu*,⁵²⁴ and the CAD follows this reading to present a very different translation: *šumma . . . šinātušu ú-ša-nu*, “if his urine smells bad.”⁵²⁵ While there is a contextual precedent to follow Lutz’s reading, as it is common for multiple plants to be ground up together in a

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. For Uruanna IV i 4, see also CAD N Part 2 *nipšu* A, 2, 248: *šumma amīlu* KA.Ē GIG : *ni-ip-šú šá sim-me*.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Lutz, “A Contribution to the Knowledge of Assyro-Babylonian Medicine,” 81.

⁵²¹ CAD E *ešēnu* 1a, 345.

⁵²² Lutz translates MA as a possible synonym with *kû*, “excrement,” largely due to its pairing with *šinatu* (“urine”). Lutz, “A Contribution to the Knowledge of Assyro-Babylonian Medicine,” 81.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Franz Köcher, *Die Babylonisch-Assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* (vol. 1; Keilschrifttexte aus Assur 4; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1971).

⁵²⁵ CAD E *ešēnu* 2, 345.

concoction, there is no other mention of a zanu-plant in this text, whereas the bitter-plant (*riqqu murra*) is commonly referenced in proximate lines.

If the prescription is for a mixture of various plants to be applied to the “lip” so that the “stone” will pass by urination, it is not clear why excrement would be related, though it must be remembered ancient medical diagnostic practices differed from modern ones. That said, a noted symptom for kidney stones today is urine with foul odor, so there *is* some measure of cross-cultural correlation. It is reasonable to conclude that the offensive odor of urine is used diagnostically in this Akkadian medical prescription to help the passing of a kidney stone.

COMMENTARY

Summary Introduction

Ancient Mesopotamian scholia (grammatical, critical, or explanatory comments) provide more detailed explanations or interpretations of scientific or scholarly texts, as already demonstrated with the lexical commentaries above.⁵²⁶ Scholars commented on scientific texts, such as omens, the *maqlû* and *šurpu* incantation series, and pharmaceutical handbooks detailing therapeutic herbs, minerals, and other ingredients of prescriptions. Commentaries were also sparked by literary texts containing erudite language and rare words, such as the “Righteous Sufferer” and “Theodicy,” as well as texts of religious or theological complexity, such as *Enuma Elish*.⁵²⁷

2R 47 (K. 4387) is a bilingual omen commentary which refers mostly to astrological texts, though others like *šumma izbu*, a teratological series, are featured. It

⁵²⁶ No commentaries exist for other genres, such as epics or hymns and prayers. Reiner, “First-Millennium Babylonian Literature,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3:318.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

is written by the priest Nabû-zuqup-kênu who worked with Sargon II and Sennacherib in Calah. Published nearly a century ago in *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, no editions or translations of the full text are known.⁵²⁸ In this text, explanatory comment is given for what appears to be an omen apodosis which indicates the land will reek.

KAR 307 is an example of a religious commentary text from the late period of Babylonian scholarship.⁵²⁹ This “astralmythologischer Kommentar”⁵³⁰ is rife with esoteric priestly speculation derived from the events of the new year’s festival ceremony.⁵³¹ The cosmological digression about the three-fold earthly realm in ll. 34-38, with its lower region (where the chthothic deities, the so-called Anunnaki, rule), middle section (where Ea, the god of the water deep, has his abode), and upper layer (our earth, where man is placed in “cattle-folds”) sparked ongoing cosmological speculation.⁵³² At the tail end of this murky theological commentary, we find an important pairing of olfactory terms which highlights the efficacy of cedar incense to send evil deities fleeing.

Individual Analysis

NA (SB) Commentary (Omen)

⁵²⁸ Weidner offers some textual improvements based on published photos made available by Sidney Smith, though not pertaining to the lines relevant here. “Ein Omenkommentar des Nabû-Zuqup-Kênu,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 21 (1966): 46. Others have commented on various surrounding lines. See, for example, Caplice’s remarks on 2R 47:26, which interprets an omen apodosis in *L’Astrologie Chaldéenne*. “Akkadian ud(d)û,” in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim: June 7, 1964* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), 65.

⁵²⁹ For transliteration, translation, and discussion, see Ebeling, *Tod und Leben*, n. 7 and Alasdair Livingstone, ed., *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (State Archives of Assyria 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1989), 99–102.

⁵³⁰ Benno Landsberger, “Ein Astralmythologischer Kommentar aus der Spätzeit Babylonischer Gelehrsamkeit,” *Archiv für Keilschriftforschung* 1, no. 2 (1923): 43–48.

⁵³¹ Ebeling, *Tod und Leben*, 28.

⁵³² A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East: With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book* (vol. 46; Transactions of the American Philosophical Society; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 235; Ebeling, *Tod und Leben*, 30.

2R 47 i 19⁵³³ *bu-us-sa*

Būssa is a ms noun *bu'šu / būšu* with the ms suffix pronoun *-ša* translated as “it’s stench”⁵³⁴ in reference to the land (*mātu*).

2R 47 i 19⁵³⁵ *ú-ša-na*

Uššanna is a D 3ms durative of the verb *ešēnu* (“to smell”) presumed used figuratively to reference the smell (*bu'šu / būšu*) of the land resulting from plagues/epidemics, though a literal meaning is possible.

In 2R 47 i 19, the priest’s comment on the Akkadian omen phrase *mātu bu-us-sa uššanna*, “the stench of the land is smelled,”⁵³⁶ is the Sumerian *ÚŠ.MEŠ IG* (Akk. *mūtānū ibaššū*, “they are plagues/epidemics”). One notices a striking resemblance to the apodosis of a terrestrial omen already treated above, CT 39 14:18, which has an almost identical phrase: *mātu bu-us-sa uš-šà-an* (here *ú-ša-na*). If 2R 47 i 19 does, in fact, reference CT 39 14:18, then we are no longer “in the dark” as to what makes the land smell so bad in that context. This commentary suggest the foul-smelling river is an ominous sign that the havoc wrought by Adad takes the form of plagues/epidemics (*ÚŠ.MEŠ, mūtānū*) which result in the loathsome smell that permeates the land.

LB (SB) religious commentary**KAR 307 r. 25 *i-ri-šá***

Iriša is a ms noun used as the object of *eššinūma* (“they smell,” see below) for the odor of burning cedar incense (*erēnu*).

KAR 307 r. 25 [*iš*]⁵³⁷-*ši-nu-ma*

Eššinūma is a G preterite 3mpl of the verb *ešēnu*, translated “they smell,” with the subject being the evil gods (*ilâni limnûti*) and the object being the aroma (*iriša*) of incense (cedar, *erēnu*, to be more specific).

⁵³³ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* 2, 47.

⁵³⁴ CAD B *bu'šu* A, 352.

⁵³⁵ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* 2, 47.

⁵³⁶ CAD B *bu'šu* A, 353.

⁵³⁷ Or *e*. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben*, 37, fn a.

KAR 307 begins with a hymn of sorts to the god Enlil (namely Marduk/Ashur = Bel), a series of mythological allusions from different sources, and a focus on cosmology, an important item of interest in New Year's festivals. The reverse of the tablet cites the first four tablets of Enuma Elish (especially the defeat of Tiamat) with similar wording but unknown significance. At the end of this text (r. 20-25), a ritual involving the king is connected to materials that resemble *Angimdimma* and *Lugale*, as the king is carried out from Ekur and then returned in royal jewels. The mystical explanation of the ceremony identifies the king as Ninurta, who avenged Enlil, his father, and was given kingship upon high.⁵³⁸ Afterwards, the burning of cedar (r. 24, *erinu šá ina pâni-šú-nu i-qu-ud-du*) is perceived by the evil gods (*ilâni limnûti*), and "when they smell the fragrance, they go into hiding" (r. 25, *iriša [e]-ši-nu-ma puzrâte immedu*).⁵³⁹ Here are found two predominant olfactory terms used together (*iriša ešinuma*), both for the sweet smell of burning cedar, which is efficacious in scattering the evil deities.⁵⁴⁰ The tablet ends with an obscure, esoteric reference to the secret of the great gods which is known to the knower and not to the unperceiving.

LOVE LYRICS

Summary Introduction

"Love lyrics" or "love poems" are the expressions often used by Assyriologists to characterize a number of Akkadian compositions from various periods that are focused on love and sex. Within one enigmatic and fragmentary group of late period texts from

⁵³⁸ Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 8; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 6.

⁵³⁹ CAD E *ešēnu* 1a, 345.

⁵⁴⁰ See other instances of this pairing in a hymn (BA 10/1⁵⁴⁰ 73:1f), ritual (LKA 139:49), omen (CT 39 14:18), and incantation (ASKT No. 11, p. 89 ii 25).

Ninevah comes a series of olfactory references (three references to *nipšu* and one to *ešēnu*). While these texts may be characterized as love lyrics because of their preoccupation with the romantic and sexual relationship of a male and female, their language seems scurrilous, abusive, and bizarre, at least to the modern reader.⁵⁴¹

In 1959, Lambert published three Late Assyrian literary texts, all of which dealt with love lyrics between Marduk, the city god of Babylon, and Ishtar his concubine.⁵⁴² Further Assyrian and Babylonian fragments discovered since this publication confirmed these texts belong to a single corpus that was recited in the rituals of Ishtar of Babylon.⁵⁴³ Setting aside the fragmentary state of the documents, translations are still problematic because the rare first-millennium literary style manifests individualistic style/thought with few known parallels. Baffling word pictures are given without proper grammatical form. Bold imagery and some of the most explicit ancient Mesopotamian eroticism is laced throughout. Lambert is uncertain whether these accounts should be taken as factual record, jest, innuendo, or something else.⁵⁴⁴

Individual Analysis

NA Love Lyrics
Lambert Love Lyrics 120 col. B 12⁵⁴⁵ *ni-piš*

⁵⁴¹ Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (2 vols.; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993), 827.

⁵⁴² W. G. Lambert, "Divine Love Lyrics From Babylon," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4, no. 1 (1959): 1–15.

⁵⁴³ The ritual tablet includes incipits of various paragraphs recited with brief statements of the movement of the actors (Marduk, his consort Zarpanitum, and Ishtar his girlfriend/concubine). Apparently the ancient participants knew the actions and procedures well enough that they only needed hints and reminders. Where the text is not broken, some indications of the location and time of day for the rituals is given, though the contents of paragraphs and their interpretations are perplexing. Wilfred G. Lambert, "The Problem of the Love Lyrics," in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1975), 99.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

Nipiš is the noun *nipšu* A, “smell,” used in construct with an uncertain modifier (possibly *rīmu*, “wild ox”) to describe the odor of flatulence created by the speaker’s *tappātu* (“female companion” or “concubine”) emitted while riding in her man’s wagon.

Lambert Love Lyrics 122 col. B 9⁵⁴⁶ *ni-pi-is-su*

Nippissu is the noun *nipšu* A, “smell,” with the *-šu* suffix pronoun used as the sensory characterization of cattle or herds of wild animals (*būlimma*).

Lambert Love Lyrics 122 col. B 9⁵⁴⁷ *eš-ni*

Ešni is the 2fs G imperative form of *ešēnu* (“to smell”) spoken by the male speaker to his girlfriend/concubine (*tappātu*) in reference to cattle or herds of wild animals (*būlimma*).

Lambert Love Lyrics 122 col. B 17⁵⁴⁸ *ni-pi-is-su*

Nippissu is the noun *nipšu* A (“smell”) with the *-šu* suffix pronoun (“its smell”) used as the sensory characterization of the woman’s armpit (*ša sūḫati*) by the male speaker.

Column A of K. 6082 begins with a description of Marduk in an idyllic setting of trees and birds. There it seems the unknown speaker (Ishtar) whispers instructions not to neglect the temple Eturkamma.⁵⁴⁹ What follows in lines 3-12 of column B is obscure.

Foster translates lines 6-12:

- 6 Before her was a fieldmouse,
 7 Behind her was a rat.
 8 He girded(?) his hems,
 9 He’s a shrew, son of a fieldmouse.
 10 I sent [you(?)], my girl friend, to Kar-bel-matati.
 11 Why did you break wind and feel mortified?
 12 Why did you stink up her boyfriend’s wagon like a wi[ld ox]?⁵⁵⁰

While the meaning of the part about small rodents is not obvious, it is clear that the speaker asks why his concubine/girlfriend “broke wind,” which caused her embarrassment because she made her lord’s wagon smell bad. The use of the verb

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Lambert, “Divine Love Lyrics From Babylon,” 4.

⁵⁵⁰ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 1:827.

šakānu (“to cause/make”) in the phrase *ammēni taškuni nipiš* (“why did you make the smell of...”) is unique, as a causative form of *ešēnu* or *ba’āšu* is used in other instances. Because the line is broken, it is unknown what kind of smell is referenced, though Foster suggests the smell was like a “wild ox” (*rīmu*) based on the legible sign *ri-*.⁵⁵¹ If it is correct to assume the smell of flatulence is not a positive one, it does not appear to dampen his enthusiasm for her.⁵⁵² The lines immediately following (ll. 13-17) describe this woman’s appearance with peculiar similes (“white as a gecko” and “skin as dusty as a pot”), and they express the speaker’s affections when he saw his lady.⁵⁵³

The next group of texts in Lambert’s collection (those from LKA 92, ll. 1-23) also employ olfactory imagery and references. First, in line 9, a feminine subject (assumedly the concubine) is commanded to sniff the smell of something. Lambert translates *bulimma nipissu ešni* (l. 9) as “sniff the smell of cattle.” Then, after saying he will make a *ḥaḥḥuru* bird (a euphemism, I presume) enter and nest in his girlfriend’s vulva, the speaker instructs his birds not to approach fungus/mushrooms or “the smell of the armpit” (*ša sūḥati nipissu*) when they enter or exit (ll. 14-17). While Lambert highlights the obscurity of this passage, suggesting “lovers’ talk in any age has limited intelligibility, at least to the uninitiated,” what is noteworthy from a sensory perspective is the tension between the lady’s odors that are offensive or repellent (both flatulence and armpits) and her visual charms which attract him.⁵⁵⁴ Just as in the preceding example, an obviously positive characterization of the female follows this seemingly negative olfactory

⁵⁵¹ Lambert, “The Problem of the Love Lyrics,” 121.

⁵⁵² W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 222.

⁵⁵³ Lambert, “The Problem of the Love Lyrics,” 121.

⁵⁵⁴ Lambert, “Divine Love Lyrics From Babylon,” 5.

description: “the beautiful one, oh so beautiful! Whose figure is oh so lustrous, oh so beautiful!” (ll. 21-22).⁵⁵⁵

EPIC/LEGEND

Summary Introduction

As stated in the introduction, the epic/legend genre has been variously defined and interpreted. For our purposes, it includes texts narrating traditional or legendary stories about the acts of cultural heroes. The distinction between epics and legends is somewhat arbitrary, but, generally-speaking, extended narratives concerning the deeds and adventures of heroic figures that utilize extended poetry have been considered epics, whereas more historically-based narration of heroes from early stages of a people’s history without poetic form have been considered legends. With this distinction, the chronicle of the quest and adventures of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk in mid-third millennium BCE, is decidedly an epic, whereas “The Siege of Urshu,” as it is now referred to, would fit better as a legend.⁵⁵⁶

The Epic of Gilgamesh is the longest Akkadian literary composition written in cuneiform, and is deemed the most widely copied piece of literature in the ancient world—no other epic is so well attested from so many different periods.⁵⁵⁷ The “classic,” “final,” “late,” or “Standard Babylonian” form with twelve carefully structured tablets was found in the mid 9th century in the remains of the NA library of Ashurbanipal, the Assyrian king who assembled in Ninevah the greatest library of the pre-Hellenistic Near

⁵⁵⁵ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 1:828.

⁵⁵⁶ Gurney classifies it as Hittite legend based on the early history of the Hittite kingdom. O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Rev.; London: Penguin, 1990), 148.

⁵⁵⁷ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 3.

East. Increasingly earlier forms of the epic (and texts of related literary compositions) continue to be discovered and identified, highlighting the complex tradio-historical processes by which the epic evolved through written stages over approximately 1,500 years to reach its latest form.⁵⁵⁸

A conglomeration of eight olfactory references appear in this famous Gilgamesh Epic. In one instance, the gods smell Utnapishtim's aromatic offering, on another a snake smells Gilgamesh's plant, and finally the spirits of the underworld smell Enkidu's fragrant anointing oil. A text and transliteration of the Assyrian standard version of the Gilgamesh epic, known mainly from the tablets found at Ninevah, was published in 1930 by Thompson in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.⁵⁵⁹ His arrangement and line count is used here, though more and more fragments have come to light since then, making it even more difficult to produce one coherent edition.⁵⁶⁰ Due to its immense popularity, many translations exist in varied languages.⁵⁶¹

In addition to the references in the Gilgamesh Epic, a single instance to *bīšim* appears in KBo 1 11, a fragmentary MB narrative discovered in the archives of the Hittite

⁵⁵⁸ Tigay traces this long and complicated history of composition in *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*. The earliest Sumerian versions of the epic date from as early as the Third Dynasty of Ur (2150-2000 BCE). The earliest Akkadian versions are dated to the early second millennium Old Babylonian period. The "standard" Akkadian version, which added the flood story and transformed the epic into a wisdom composition by virtue of its prologue and epilogue, was said to have been edited by Sin-liqe-unninni sometime between 1300 and 1000 BCE. See also R. George, A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003)., part 1, chapter 1, "The Literary History of the Epic of Gilgameš," 3-70.

⁵⁵⁹ R. Campbell Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgameš* (repr. 1981; Oxford: Clarendon, 1930). See p. 5-6 for his history of publication, to date.

⁵⁶⁰ Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia*, 39.

⁵⁶¹ Benjamin R. Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period* (vol. 2; Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), 72. For full bibliography, see Paul Garelli, *Gilgameš et sa légende: Études Recueillies par Paul Garelli à l'occasion de la VII Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Paris - 1958)* (Cahiers du groupe François-Thureau-Dangin 1; Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1960)., Rykle Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* (vol. 3, 3 vols.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), 63, or R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*.

kings in Boghazkoy and published by Weidner in 1916.⁵⁶² The text, thought to be an Akkadian translation of a lost Hittite original, recounts Old Hittite wars in North Syria during the reign of either Hattušili I or perhaps Muršili I.⁵⁶³ Though presented as a historical account, the literary approach utilizing extended speeches by main actors leads scholars to conclude it is not a primary historical source but rather a historiographic interpretation.⁵⁶⁴ Beckman's new transliteration, English translation, philological commentary, and literary discussion provides a welcome update to Gütterbock's edition from 1938.⁵⁶⁵

Individual Analysis

NA (SB) Epic

Gilg. XI 159⁵⁶⁶ *i-ši-nu*

Ṭšinū is a G preterite 3mp of the verb *ešēnu*, translated "(they) smelled" with respect to the gods (*ilī*) as the stated subject and the fragrance (*iriša*) of aromatics as the object.

Gilg. XI 159⁵⁶⁷ *i-ri-ša*

Iriša is a ms noun in the accusative case ("aroma"), used literally for the pleasing aroma of cane, cedar, and myrtle (*qanâ erīna u asâ*).

Gilg. XI 160⁵⁶⁸ *i-ši-nu*

⁵⁶² H. H. Figulla, E. Forrer, and Ernst F. Weidner, *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazkōi: Erstes bis Viertes Heft* (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 30; J. C. Hinrichs, 1923), 44.

⁵⁶³ Gary Beckman, "The Siege of Uršu Text (CTH 7) and Old Hittite Historiography," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 47 (1995): 27.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 31; Hans-Gustav Güterbock, "Die Historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 42, no. 1-4 (1934): 138-9; Harry A. Hoffner Jr, "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites," *Orientalia Roma* 49, no. 4 (1980): 299-300.

⁵⁶⁵ Beckman, "The Siege of Uršu Text (CTH 7) and Old Hittite Historiography"; Hans-Gustav Güterbock, "Die Historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200.," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 42, no. 1-4 (1934): 1-91.

⁵⁶⁶ Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamish*, 49.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Īšinū is a G preterite 3mp of the verb *eṣēnu*, translated “(they) smelled,” and also referencing the gods (*ilī*) as the subject and the sweet aroma (*eriša tāba*) as the object.

Gilg. XI 160⁵⁶⁹ e-ri-ša

Eriša is the same ms noun of the previous line (“aroma”), modified with the adjective “good” or “fragrant” (*tāba*) and also used literally for the aroma inhaled by the gods.

Gilg. XI 287⁵⁷⁰ i-te-ši-in (var. –en)

Itešin or *itešen* is a G perfect 3ms of the verb *eṣēnu*, translated “smelled” with the subject being a snake (*ṣīru*) catching scent of Gilgamesh’s plant (*nipiš šammu*).

Gilg. XI 287⁵⁷¹ ni-piš

Nipiš is a form of the noun *nipšu* (“smell” or “odor”) used in a genitival construct with “plant” (*šammu*), as the object smelled by the snake. Based on the usage of *nipšu* in other instances where it is obviously foul, and the normal use of *erešu* for pleasing smells, translating with “odor” not “fragrance” is preferable.⁵⁷²

Gilg. XII 17⁵⁷³ i-ri-ši-šu

Irišišu is the ms noun *erešu* with the ms suffix pronoun attached to be translated “its smell” for the fragrant anointing oil (*šaman būri tābi*) smelled by spirits of the netherworld.

Gilg. XII 36⁵⁷⁴ i-ri-š[i-šu]

Irišišu is used in exactly the same fashion as line 17 above.

At the end of the Gilgamesh epic, as part of a long series of failed attempts in his quest to escape death, Gilgamesh seeks out Utanapishtim, the lone survivor of a great flood who has attained immortality. In a long speech, some of which is an abbreviated version of the Atrahasis epic, Utanapishtim recounts his flood experience, which culminates in a ritual offering to the gods (all but Enlil) after surviving the deluge. One aspect of his offering includes an aromatic incense offering. Lines 158-160 read, “in

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 53.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² CAD N Part 2 *nipšu* A 2, 248, contra CAD E *eṣēnu* 1a, 345.

⁵⁷³ Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 55.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

their cups I heaped up cane, cedar and myrtle, the gods smelled the incense, the gods smelled the fragrant incense” (*ina saplīšunu attabak qanâ erīna u asâ ilū īšinū iriša ilū īšinū eriša ṭāba*).⁵⁷⁵

It is important to note there is no mention of burning the substances as an incense offering.⁵⁷⁶ Rather, it appears three known aromatics (cane/reed, cedar, and myrtle)⁵⁷⁷ are simply poured or heaped (*attabak*, from *tabāku*) into or at the bottom (*ina šaplūšunu*) of seven bowls (*adagurru*) that are set up in rows. These small vessels are elsewhere known to be used for libation rituals. The earlier summary statement *aškun surqinnu* (l. 156) may be translated “I strewed/scattered” or “I sprinkled” offerings, so it could reference the sprinkling of libations and/or the scattering of incense offerings. There remains some uncertainty about what was actually done here with the libation vessels and aromatic substances, and if fragrant leaves or gums/resins were in fact offered here to the gods without being burned, but it is clear that this ritual presentation involving aromata is explicitly identified as an “offering” or “sacrifice” in l. 155 (*nīqu*).⁵⁷⁸ It was deemed much pleasing to the gods, as they swarm around the agent of the offering/sacrifice like flies (l. 161). The explanation with the most textual support, in my mind, involves Utanapishtim’s heaping of cane/reed, cedar, and myrtle into libation

⁵⁷⁵ CAD E *ešēnu* 1b, 345. See also CAD E *erešu* A d, 280. The legible portion of the text from Atra-Ḫasīs reads [*i-ši-nu i-ī*]u *e-re-ša*, “[the gods sniffed] the smell” (l. 34). W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Ḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 98–99.

⁵⁷⁶ George challenges the interpretation that Utanapishtim places perfumed leaves and resin onto fire beneath the *adagurru* (CAD A/1, p. 93) on a couple counts: 1) this container is not known to be associated with fire and 2) libations are not expected to be warm. A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (vol. 2, 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), 890.

⁵⁷⁷ The three specific substances here mentioned are cane/reeds (*qanâ*), cedar (*erīna*), and myrtle (*asâ*), all three known aromatics.

⁵⁷⁸ This word is elsewhere used for slaughtered animals (oxen and especially sheep) and to offerings in general (including commodities and libations of beer). See CAD N Part 2 *niqû*, 252.

vessels for the purpose of sprinkling aromatic ritual libations as an offering for the gods (no fire necessary).

Later, after leaving Utanapishtim with a special plant of rejuvenation that he retrieved from the ocean bottom, Gilgamesh is foiled one final time when, unaware, the fragrance of the plant attracts the attention of a “serpent” (*ṣēru*), which slithers out of the water while Gilgamesh is bathing to carry off the plant. It leaves behind its skin, thus showing the plant’s efficacy (which had been doubted). Line 287 of tablet XI says “a serpent smelled the odor of the plant” (*ṣīru itešin nipiš šammu*), highlighting the role of the olfactory sense of the snake in distinguishing the unusual smell of this unique plant. Most commentators have understood the plant, which is identified as thorny like the *amurdinnu* (l. 269), as being or looking like a rose.⁵⁷⁹

Finally, the epilogue (tablet 12), which contains a partial Akkadian translation of a Sumerian poem, references an olfactory word two more times. In preparing his companion, Enkidu, to visit the netherworld, Gilgamesh counsels him in how to avoid drawing attention to himself. He tells him not to put on a clean garment because that would attract attention to him as a stranger by appearance. Gilgamesh cautions him against tossing a throw stick because it might hit “them” (ghosts/spirits, we presume), and then he instructs Enkidu to go barefoot and to avoid kissing or striking family members because those sounds would give him away. Amidst these multi-sensory warnings (sight, touch, sound) is an olfactory one as well.

Gilgamesh tells him not to anoint himself with aromatic oils because, “for its smell, they will gather around you,” *ana irišišu ipaḥḥurūka* (XII 17).⁵⁸⁰ Unfortunately,

⁵⁷⁹ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 1:895.

⁵⁸⁰ CAD E *erešu* A d, 280. This is perhaps miscategorized as an offering in the CAD.

Enkidu does not take Gilgamesh’s counsel on all points, resulting in his detainment in the netherworld. With respect to his scent, lines 35-6 say he did, in fact, perfume himself with the anointing oil and they (ghosts, spirits) gathered around him (*ana iriš[īšu ip[ah]rūšu*). *Šaman būri tābi* (literally, “good oil of a shallow bowl”) was considered a special, high quality perfumed oil, often used in medical treatments as well as in ritual anointing.⁵⁸¹ Here it appears that wearing fragrant anointing oil is in some sense commonplace (in that it is accessible and treated in alongside other commonplace images, such as wearing new clothes, throwing a stick, kissing one’s wife, or disciplining one’s child), and yet it is clearly outstanding in certain contexts, such as the netherworld where one would presume its absence.

MB Legend

KBo 1 11 obv.(!) 13⁵⁸² *bi-ši-im*

Bīšim is a ms adjective used in the genitive case, translated figuratively as “bad,” or “evil”⁵⁸³ and used in construct with *awātu* (“word, matter”).

Because this single surviving manuscript is missing both beginning and ending, there is much to befuddle scholars. That said, the text clearly deals with the Hittite siege of the town Uršu and provides useful information about the nature of Hittite siege warfare, though there is relatively little action.⁵⁸⁴ The intelligible paragraphs provide anecdotes about the oversights and failures of Hittite military officers as seen from the vantage point of the king who oversees the operation from afar. Whether or not there is intended humor, as Beckman interprets, the king unmistakably rages with withering

⁵⁸¹ See CAD P *pūru* A, 526. Dalley translates “perfumed oil from an ointment jar.” Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia*, 121.

⁵⁸² Figulla, Forrer, and Weidner, *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi: Erstes bis Viertes Heft*, 44.

⁵⁸³ CAD B *bīšu* 3a, 271.

⁵⁸⁴ Trevor Bryce, *Hittite Warrior* (Oxford: Osprey, 2007), 44.

sarcasm and mockery.⁵⁸⁵ When the Hittite's battering ram is broken, the king is furious, exclaiming "They are always bringing me foul news!" (l. 13'-14', *awat bi-ši-im ittanabbalunim*).⁵⁸⁶ What follows provides an interesting glimpse at how anger and frustration was communicated in this context: "May the Storm-god wash you away!" The king continued: 'You shall not continually *slack off*? Construct a battering-ram of Hurrian type and let it be put in place!'"⁵⁸⁷ The "bad" news about the broken battering ram results in a curse and accusation of laziness followed by specific instructions.

POPULAR SAYINGS (WISDOM)

Summary Introduction

Within the diverse wisdom literature corpus (which includes poems, theodicy, precepts and admonitions, preceptive hymns, dialogues, fables and contest literature, and proverbs), Lambert includes "popular sayings" as a possible genre.⁵⁸⁸ By "popular sayings," he means short anecdotes easily passed on mouth to mouth among the common people.⁵⁸⁹ It is unknown whether popular sayings were in fact a distinct genre within wisdom literature, and if so, how they relate to proverbs, largely because the only collection of such sayings is preserved on one Neo-Assyrian tablet from the time of Sargon II (716 BCE).⁵⁹⁰ The obverse of this tablet is almost completely destroyed, but

⁵⁸⁵ Beckman, "The Siege of Uršu Text (CTH 7) and Old Hittite Historiography," 31.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 24. The CAD reads "They constantly bring bad news." CAD B *bīšu* 3a, 271.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25–6.

⁵⁸⁸ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*.

⁵⁸⁹ Lambert feels justified in seeing these sayings as popular by comparisons with other literatures. The Ahiqar sayings, especially the Aramaic recension, present a similar mix. One of these even shows up in the Greek tales of Aesop (III. 50-54). *Ibid.*, 213.

⁵⁹⁰ Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, plates 55–7.

the reverse contains a series of short anecdotes (often about animals or insects) that appear to be arranged by subject matter or common phrase. For example, rev. III. 5-16 all pertain to the pig, which—not surprisingly—contains an olfactory reference. Though these sayings are devoid of direct moral instruction,⁵⁹¹ in his edition of this text, Ebeling demonstrates how they provide the first Akkadian evidence of the same unique mix of sentence, wit, and fable that is present in the Aramaic Ahiqar sayings. He calls these collected humorous sayings the ancient equivalent to joke books or comics today.⁵⁹²

Individual Analysis

NA (SB) Wisdom

Lambert BWL 215 r. iii 14⁵⁹³ *mu-ba-ḥi-iš*

Muba'iš is a D ms participle from the verb *ba'āšu*, translated “makes stink” to reference the literal, foul smell of the streets (thanks to the pig).⁵⁹⁴

In this text, anecdotes about the pig precede those of the mongoose, mouse, fox, dog, wolf, mosquito, elephant, and horse. Perhaps as expected, a negative olfactory assessment is levied at the animal, though the animal itself is not said to smell. Lambert translates lines 13 and 14: “The pig is unholy [. . .] bespattering his backside, making the streets smell, polluting the houses” (*šahû la qa-šid [. . . muball]il ar-ki muba'iš sūqāni [mu]ḥannipu bītātī*).⁵⁹⁵ Ebeling translates “Das Schwein ist nicht <<rein>>, [macht schle]cht, was hinter (ihm) ist, beschmutzt die Strassen, besudelt die Häuser.”⁵⁹⁶ The

⁵⁹¹ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 213.

⁵⁹² Erich Ebeling, *Die Babylonische Fabel und ihre Bedeutung für die Literaturgeschichte* (vol. 3; Mitteilungen der altorientalischen Gesellschaft 2; Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Pfeiffer, 1927), 39–40.

⁵⁹³ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 215.

⁵⁹⁴ The anomalous *ḥi* in scribal transliteration may reflect a proto-semitic aleph.

⁵⁹⁵ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 215.

⁵⁹⁶ Ebeling, *Die Babylonische Fabel und ihre Bedeutung für die Literaturgeschichte*, 41.

foul stench of the streets, according to the author of this text, derives from the pig, an animal that is said to “make dirty/soil” (*tanāpu*) living quarters as well as public spaces (l. 14).

In *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals*, Clutton-Brock notes that pigs are significantly more akin to dogs than herd animals, having versatile feeding habits that allow them to survive by eating most of the foods that dogs and humans consume.⁵⁹⁷ For that reason, it was common in ancient times for urban as well as rural households to keep a sty pig fattened on household scraps. The relative ease and affordability of raising a pig is no doubt the reason why it became known as “the poor man’s animal.”⁵⁹⁸

While the pig was domesticated and eaten since early times in ancient Mesopotamia, its use in the temple cult was extremely rare.⁵⁹⁹ As this Assyrian text puts it, “The pig is not fit for a temple . . . an abomination to all the gods, an abhorrence [to (his) god,] accursed by Šamaš” (ll. 15-16).⁶⁰⁰ Because it was not unusual for family-owned pigs to wander the city streets scavenging on garbage, defecating, at times eating their own excrement, it makes sense that they would receive this criticism of being senseless, a pollution to the environment, and deemed unfit for temple use in sacrifice to the gods. While the pigs’ omnivorous predilection to consume kitchen refuse that human digestive tracts cannot handle as well as human excreta no doubt

⁵⁹⁷ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 213.

⁵⁹⁸ Juliet Clutton-Brock, *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals* (2nd ed.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 97.

⁵⁹⁹ Roland de Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, trans. Damian McHugh (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 256.

⁶⁰⁰ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 215. That said, the pig played a very important role in healing rituals and the exorcism of demons in the ancient Near East. One Akkadian healing ritual prescribed the immolation of a piglet in a substitutionary manner for the sick person, and in a rite of exorcism, a similar process is used to consign Lamashtu (the enemy of pregnant women, young mothers, and their babies) to her subterranean abode. De Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, 257.

contributed to their perceived “filthiness,” they also served an important role in keeping a community clean and suppressing disease.⁶⁰¹ This helps reconcile the negative human perceptions about pigs with their prevalence in the ancient world.

ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS

Summary Introduction

Any document in which a reigning monarch places on record his official activities for contemporary and future readers is regarded a royal inscription, whether nomination/ownership inscriptions (basically, property labels), votive/dedicatory inscriptions, building inscriptions, or narrative inscriptions.⁶⁰² The basic purpose of all royal inscriptions was to perpetuate the king’s place in the human and divine world through the medium of the enduring written word. Aside from the NB use of SB language, NA and NB inscriptions differ primarily with respect to the focus on military achievements versus building/restoring sites. NB kings preferred to be known as builders more than warriors, restorers of the cults more than conquerors of foreign lands. The propagandistic political use of religious piety to justify power brought continuity to the royal institution after the liberation of the land from the Assyrian occupation in the eighth and seventh centuries.⁶⁰³

After a presentation with the king’s name and royal titles and epithets praising his intellectual, religious, political, and military prowess, some situation is introduced,

⁶⁰¹ Sarah M. Nelson, ed., *Ancestors for the Pigs: Pigs in Prehistory* (vol. 15; MASCA Research Papers in Science and Archaeology; Philadelphia, PA: Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1998), vii.

⁶⁰² Rocio Da Riva, *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction*, Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 4 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 24.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, 115.

whether childhood or accession to the throne, political circumstances, divine intervention, building activities, or military achievement. The main topic is usually a description of building projects, always stylized in the first person singular, with a concluding section with blessing formula appealing to a god, the structure itself, and future readers.⁶⁰⁴ Often included in the details of NA and NB building improvements, whether for palace or temple, is a specific reference either 1) to the pleasing aroma (*erišu / erešu / irišu*) of 1) cedar, cypress, or juniper doors or 2) the forests from which they come. LB inscriptions reflect a noteworthy shift from an emphasis on the positive, literal smells of aromatica and aromatic materials to the negative, figurative usage of *bīšu* for “evil.” Before the close examination of each of these references, a general introduction to the inscriptions will establish the context.

NA Inscriptions

The earliest known cylinder/prism of Sennacherib (OIP 2), presumably written early in 702-701 BCE and of unknown provenance, gives record of his first campaign in the south against Marduk-apal-iddinna of Elam (703-702 BCE).⁶⁰⁵ The first two-thirds of the text recount the plotting and maneuvering of the Arameans in the south leading to the campaign, which was wildly successful, while the latter portion describes the improvements undertaken by Sennacherib at Ninevah.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 96.

⁶⁰⁵ Sidney Smith provided the first complete publication of the text, thought to have been a foundation deposit on one of the gates of Ninevah. Sidney Smith, *The First Campaign of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, B.C. 705-681. The Assyrian Text, Edited With Transliteration, Translation, and Notes* (Eothen Series 2; London: Luzac, 1921). Luckenbill's chronological arrangement of the historical record is used for citations. *The Annals of Sennacherib* (University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 2; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1924).

Numerous hexagonal clay prisms from Ninevah, Ashur, and Susa record Esarhaddon's military campaigns and construction works. One inscription, commonly referred to as Ninevah A (copies from 673 and 672 BCE), describes the events leading up to his accession to the throne (though there is no mention of his father's murder, interestingly enough), with an emphasis on the ceremonies installing him as rightful king and the wickedness of his brothers. After rebuilding temples in Ashur and Babylon, Esarhaddon marched from Ninevah to suppress revolts in areas such as the Sealands, Sidon, Hatti, Syria-Palestine, the Chaldean lands, Arab regions, and Elam, and the subjugated kings were conscripted for labor or tribute. The end of this inscription details his elaborate renovation project at the palace in Ninevah.⁶⁰⁶

Found in north palace excavations at Ninevah, the so-called Rassam Cylinder is a ten-sided clay cylinder, or prism, inscribed in cuneiform with the most complete annals of Ashurbanipal. Dated to no later than 636 BCE, this colossal series of 1,304 lines describes nine campaigns against various enemies and the construction of buildings in Nineveh. It was assumedly set up at the completion of the building of the royal palace at Ninevah.⁶⁰⁷

NB Inscriptions

Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon between 604 and 562 BCE, famous for conquering and exiling Judah and Jerusalem beginning in 589 BCE, came to Lebanon to

⁶⁰⁶ Borger's text edition of Esarhaddon's inscriptions has served as the standard for half a century. *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons: Königs von Assyrien* (Archiv für Orientforschung. Beiheft 9; Graz: Weidner, 1956). However, Leichty now provides an up-to-date edition with an English translation. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)* (The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

⁶⁰⁷ The text is published by Rawlinson (5R plates 1-10) with transliteration and German translation by Streck and English translation by Luckenbill. Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia 5*; Maximilian Streck, *Assurbanipal und die Letzten Assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's* (vol. 2, 3 vols.; Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 7; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1916); Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*.

procure cedar wood in order to worthily embellish his palace and the temple of the god Marduk. Two rock inscriptions found on the west and east side of the old passage of Wadi Brisa commemorate his conquest of Lebanon and repulsion of Pharaoh Necho in 586 BCE.⁶⁰⁸

A somewhat lengthy clay cylinder inscription inscribed in the NB script was found in the remains of Ebbabbar temple in Sippar. In it, Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon (556-539 BCE), commemorates his rebuilding of three temples (Ehulhul, Ebabbar, and Eulmash) in the 13th year of his reign.⁶⁰⁹ Also, two large clay cylinders with a royal inscription concerning the rebuilding by Nabonidus of the Ebarra/Ebabbar temple to the sun-god, Shamash, were discovered in Sippar excavations.⁶¹⁰

A total of four basalt stelae were found a few miles east of Harran, several of which were used secondarily as paving stones in a ruined mosque. There are two inscriptions, each with a copy: 1) the autobiography of Nabonidus' mother, Adad-guppi, who observed the rites of the moon cult and prospered, and 2) Nabonidus' building-inscription of Harran and Ehulhul, which provides an apologetic for his irregular accession by virtue of divine summons and a heavy dose of praise to the god Sin.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁸ Langdon's publication was the first edition of NB royal inscriptions and became the standard. *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 4; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912).

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 218–229.

⁶¹⁰ See Hanspeter Schaudig's published doctoral dissertation for an edition and grammatical analysis of the inscriptions of kings Nabonidus and Cyrus. *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Veröffentlichungen zu Kultur und Geschichte des alten Orients und des alten Testaments 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001).

⁶¹¹ The first person inscription of a woman is without parallel in Assyrian literature, as are the elaborate funerary and mourning descriptions. Though obscured by the damage, the rites depicted are unattested in Babylonian texts, though familiar to biblical traditions (for example, throwing dust on the head, rending garments, shaving/plucking hair, cutting flesh). Cyril John Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958): 51, 92.

The purpose is demonstrably didactic, advocating worship of the god Sin and his associates and establishing the legitimacy of Nabonidus' kingship.⁶¹²

LB Inscriptions

Mount Behistun, named after the village at its base, rises 1,700 feet out of the plain on the high road from Babylonia to the East. On a prepared surface of this rock, 500 feet from the level of the plain, in a difficult to access location, Darius Hystaspis (Darius I, or Darius "the Great"), third king of the Achaemenid Empire, commissioned the now famous monumental relief in Elamite, Old Persian, and Babylonian called the Behistun Inscription. Along with pictorial relief representations of the king in triumph over his enemy and in adoration of the god Ahura Mazda, a trilingual inscription of 112 lines recounts the principal events of Darius I's reign (550-486 BCE), beginning with an account of his genealogy.⁶¹³ To aid the presentation of his ancestry and lineage, the sequence of events which occurred after the death of Cyrus the Great are given, which included his overthrow of the alleged usurper Bardiya after Cambyses II's death.

Less importantly, but also from Darius, a fragmented four-paneled inscription from Susa (identified as Darius Susa e) contains in trilingual inscription (Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian) a report concerning the construction or reconstruction of an unknown military fortress (unfortunately the fifth paragraph is still missing).⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² Tremper Longman, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 102–3.

⁶¹³ F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 3; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), xi-xii. Rawlinson first published the text in "The Persian Cuneiform Inscription at Behistun, Decyphered and Translated," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (1847): 1–349, with a definitive edition by Leonard W. King, R. Campbell Thompson, and E. Wallis Budge, *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great: On the Rock of Behistûn in Persia* (London: British Museum, 1907).

⁶¹⁴ Ernst Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften*, *Archaeologische mitteilungen aus Iran* 1 (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1938), 81. Weissbach reconstructs the text with German translation and analysis in "Achämenidisches,"

Four inscribed stone tablets made in the shape and fashion of clay tablets (two with Persian, one with Akkadian, one broken with Elamite) and probably intended as a foundation deposit were found at Persepolis and are thought to have come from the early years of Xerxes reign.⁶¹⁵ This inscription, known as “The Daiva Inscription,” outlaws the worship of *daiva*’s, those pre-Zoroastrian deities whose temples Xerxes destroyed. After the Darius Behistun inscription, this has been identified as one of the most important of the Achaemenid historical inscriptions and perhaps the most important religious document discovered at Persepolis because of its implications for the history of Zoroastrianism.⁶¹⁶

Finally, a short dedicatory inscription for a new portico written in Persian and Akkadian (VAB 3) was found in Hamadān and attributed to Artaxerxes.⁶¹⁷

Individual Analysis

NA Inscription (Sennacherib)

OIP 2 96:81⁶¹⁸ e-re-eš

Erēš is the ms noun translated “scent/fragrance,” here used literally in construct with *ṭābu* (“good”) to describe the pleasing aroma of the cypress doors installed in Sennacherib’s new palace.

Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 91 (1937): 80–87 and “Die Dreisprachige Inschrift Darius Susa E.,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 44, no. 1-2 (1938): 150–69.

⁶¹⁵ The events were thought to have transpired between 486-480 BCE. Roland G. Kent, “The Daiva-Inscription of Xerxes,” *Language* 13, no. 4 (1937): 305.

⁶¹⁶ Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften*, 35. Herzfeld was the first to provide full publication, with text, translation, and commentary in “Xerxes’ Verbot Des Daiva-Cultes,” *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 8 (1937): 56–77. Kent updated it with additional photographs of Old Persian tablets. “The Daiva-Inscription of Xerxes.” Later editions were provided by Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis* (vol. 2, 3 vols.; University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 69; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953) and George G. Cameron, “The ‘Daiva’ Inscription of Xerxes: In Elamite,” *Die Welt des Orients* (1959): 470–76.

⁶¹⁷ Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, 127.

⁶¹⁸ Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, 96.

After the formulary invocation with titles and legitimacy of succession, and the account of Sennacherib's first campaign, the balance of the text concentrates on Sennacherib's building operations in the city of Ninevah, which was badly neglected by former kings. He recounts the palace improvements, both structural and cosmetic. In giving the specifics of the architectural embellishments of his "palace without a rival" (*ekal šāninu la išū*, l. 79) in lines 80-86, he boasts of the cedar beams and the *dalāti šurmēni šīrāti ša ina petê u târi e-re-eš řābu*, "doors of cypress, whose fragrance was sweet when one opened or closed them" (l. 81).⁶¹⁹ Aside from its ritual, magical, and medical applications, the wood, resin, and oil of *šurmēnu* ("cypress") is commonly used as an aromatic, and its durable, scented timbers are a common feature of building construction, especially as the roof beams and doors of palaces.⁶²⁰

NA (SB) Inscription (Esarhaddon)

Borger Esarh. 61:13⁶²¹ *e-re-si-na*

Eriššina is the ms noun *erišu / erešu / irišu* with the 3fpl suffix pronoun *-šina* attached, used literally in a nominal clause with *řābi* ("good") to characterize the favorable scent of the cypress doors in Esarhaddon's new palace.

Valuable building materials, such as large beams, columns, and planks of cedar and cypress were brought from Mount Lebanon and Sirara to Ninevah, where Esarhaddon used them to upgrade his palace. Lines 13-14 read "I fastened bands of silver and copper on doors of cypress, whose fragrance is sweet, and installed (them) in their gates" (GIŠ.IG.MEŠ GIŠ.ŠUR.MÌN šá e-re-si-na DÙG.GA me-ser KÙ.BABBAR ù

⁶¹⁹ CAD E *erešu* A b, 280.

⁶²⁰ CAD Š3 *šurmēnu*, 349. Note the use of cypress wood in royal construction by Assyrian kings (Assurnasir-apli II, Sargon II, Sennacherib) and Babylonian kings (Nebuchadnezzar II, Nabonidus).

⁶²¹ Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons*, 61.

URUDU *ú-rak-kis-ma ú-rat-ta-a KÁ.MEŠ-šin*.⁶²² Esarhaddon goes on to describe not only the attention to artistic detail (copper covered cornices at the gates, black and blue glazed bricks for the frieze and coping, gates with arch and a vault like a rainbow, nails of silver, gold, and copper, etc.), but the joyfulness of the workers. The inscription ends with a very festive dedication to the gods.

NA Inscription (Assurbanipal)

Streck Asb. 88x99⁶²³ *e-ri-si-na*

As above, *eriššina* (ms noun, “scent, fragrance”) with the 3fplsuffix pronoun (“their”) is used literally in a nominal clause with *ṭābu* (“good”) to describe the favorable scent of the wood doors, this time of juniper doors in Assurbanipal’s remodeled living quarters.

At the end of Assurbanipal’s longest inscription, after detailing nine successful campaigns, Ashurbanipal recounts his renovation of the royal dwelling (*bīt ridūti*) in the palace, which had become worn-down over the years. He used cedar beams from Mount Sirara and Lebanon for its roof supports, and for the doors, he installed ^{isu}*dalātī li-ia-a-ri ša e-ri-si-na ṭābu*, “door leaves of juniper (*liaru*), whose odor is pleasant” (l. 99)⁶²⁴ with a copper sheathing in the doorways. The wood product used for the doors, *liāru / tiālu*, is identified as a “white cedar” (*Juniperus oxycedrus*), a proven aromatic wood.⁶²⁵ The only additional architectural detail provided involves shining bronze columns on the corners of the portico. With the construction completed, and with fruit trees planted at its sides, Ashurbanipal offers sacrifices to the gods to dedicate his magnificent royal dwelling.

⁶²² Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)*, 24.

⁶²³ Streck, *Assurbanipal und die Letzten Assyrischen Könige*, 88. The CAD cites this text and some of the following by page (88) and line (99), not the common reference by page (88) column (10) and line (99).

⁶²⁴ Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2:322.

⁶²⁵ CAD *tijār/lu*, AHW. *ti(‘)āl/ru*.

NB (SB) Inscription (Nebuchadnezzar II)**VAB 4 174 ix 15⁶²⁶ *i-ri-iš-su***

Irīššu is the ms noun *erišu / erešu / irišu* with 3cs suffix pronoun, used literally for the forests of Lebanon as the subject in a nominal clause with *ṭābu* (“good”) as the predicate.

The main report of the inscription (ix 13-x 24) describes how Nebuchadnezzar pushed back the Egyptian aggressor, Pharaoh Necho, and restored peace to the people of Lebanon. Moreover, he describes in detail how he created roads across the mountains, enabling him to transport the giant cedar trees from Lebanon back to Babylon. These cedars of Lebanon are described in a multi-sensory fashion (strong, tall, huge, extremely valuable, excellent dark beauty),⁶²⁷ including the olfactory: *šaddû qišātim* ^d*Marduk šummuḥtim ša i-ri-iš-su ṭābu*, (Lebanon) the mountain of the luxuriant forests of Marduk, the scent of which is sweet (ll. 13-15).⁶²⁸

NB (SB) Inscription (Nabonidus)**VAB 4 222 ii 12⁶²⁹ *i-ri-is-si-na***

Irīššina is the ms noun *erišu / erešu / irišu* with the 3fpl suffix pronoun attached, used in a nominal clause with *ṭābi* (“good”) to describe the pleasing scent of the cedar doors of the Ehulhul temple.

Nabonidus received a dream from Marduk giving him instructions to take bricks to Harran to rebuild the Ehulhul temple so that Sin could reestablish his presence there. His concern for the Medes’ control of the city was mitigated by the prediction of its collapse, followed by a remarkable direct historical reference to the victory of Cyrus.

⁶²⁶ Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, 174.

⁶²⁷ Ll. 39-40 ^{isu}*erinī dannūti šīḥūti paglūtīm ša dumuqšunu šūquru šūturu būnašunu ṣalmu*, “gewaltige Zedern, hochragend und stark, deren Güte köstlich, deren dunkles Aussehen Ausgezeichnet war.” Ibid., 175.

⁶²⁸ CAD E *erešu* A b, 280.

⁶²⁹ Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, 222.

Mustering his troops, at the prompting of the gods, Nabonidus went to Harran and rebuilt the temple from its foundations. Its beauty is detailed, as the walls were coated with gold and silver, and cedar was brought from Lebanon not only for the beams but also the gates. Lines 11-12 of column ii describe these doors: *iṣu dalâtī^{meš} iṣu erini ša i-ri-is-si-na ṭābi urattâ ina babânišu*, “Doors of cedar wood, whose scent is pleasing, I affixed at its gates.”⁶³⁰ The scent of cedar would characterize not only the inner portions of the temple but also its very entry.

NB (SB) Inscription (Nabonidus)

VAB 4 256 ii 5⁶³¹ *i-ri-is-su*

Irišu is a ms noun (“smell, scent, fragrance”) used literally for the positive scent of a *ḥašurru* forest. These types of olfactory references can be interpreted literally or figuratively (as a metaphor for the pleasing scent of the newly rededicated Ebabbar/Ebarra temple).

VAB 4 256 ii 14⁶³² *i-ri-šu*

Irišu is a ms noun (“smell, scent, fragrance”) used literally for the sweet fragrance of the temple thanks to the aromatic oils that anointed the thresholds, locks, doors, bolts, and doors.

In this inscription, Nabonidus narrates how he was devoted in prayer for the Ebabbar/Ebarra temple, which had fallen into ruins. After consulting the oracle for advice, he determines to rebuild the temple. In describing the actual reconstruction, Nabonidus boasts of the elaborate and exotic building materials utilized to make it not only pleasing to the eye but also to the nose. Column ii, line 5 states: *kīma qīšti ḥašurri i-ri-is-su ušṭibišu*, “like a forest of *ḥašurru*-trees, “I will make its smell pleasing.”

⁶³⁰ CAD E *erešu* A b and Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “The Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus (2.123A),” in *Monumental Inscriptions From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 2, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 311.

⁶³¹ Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, 256.

⁶³² *Ibid.*

He goes on to itemize its other impressive features, such as massive cedar doors, strong bronze door pins, the gold and silver furnishings and décor. Before the closing prayers to Shamash, Nebo, and Nergal for political and military help, the main body of the inscription ends with a summary description of the temple's ultimate adornment—its sweet fragrance, which appears to be derived from aromatic anointing oils applied to door thresholds, locks, bolts, and doors (ll. 13-14 *sippū šīgārī mēdilū u dalāti igulâ uṭaḥḥidma . . . 14 širti simat bīti umalla i-ri-šu ṭābi*, “I made the threshold, the lock, the bolt and the doors drip with . . . –oil and filled the appurtenances of the temple with sweet scent”).⁶³³ It appears the anointing of the newly rebuilt temple with aromatic oils (*igulū*)⁶³⁴ was the final step in its dedication. With wide open doors, Nabonidus says, the temple was filled with joy.

NB Inscription (Nabonidus)

VAB 4 292 iii 17⁶³⁵ *i-ri-ši*

Iriši is the ms noun used literally with *ṭābi* (translated “good scent”) alongside *taḥdūti* (used adjectivally as “pleasing?” < *ḥadū*) to qualify the *surqinu* (grain or incense offerings that are strewn, sprinkled, or poured).

At the very end of Adad-guppi's autobiography in VAB 4, just before the third-person description of her funeral, she describes her devotion to Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, and Neriglissar, the kings preceding her son Nabonidus, which includes the ongoing sacrifices she offered for them after their death: *surkinnū taḥdūtu i-ri-ši ṭābi ana ginâ ukînšunūtima*, “I established for them (the dead) sweet smelling incense(?) (and) scattered offerings in abundance” (l. 17).⁶³⁶

⁶³³ CAD E *erešu* A a, 280.

⁶³⁴ See CAD I *igulū*, 45ff. for other examples suggesting a perfumed oil.

⁶³⁵ Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, 292.

⁶³⁶ CAD E *erešu* A d, 280.

LB Inscription (Darius)**VAB 3 15 10:14**⁶³⁷ *bi-i-šu**Bīšu* is a ms adjective used figuratively to modify *libbi* (“heart”) in describing the “evil heart” of the people.

In recounting his own rise to the throne, Darius explains how Cambyses II (the prior king) fled to Egypt, where he eventually took his own life. Cambyses II had killed his brother, a potential rival to the throne, but the lie had circulated that his brother was not dead, and the people rallied around a usurper named Gaumata who claimed to be that brother. To describe the hostility of the Persian people against Cambyses II, Darius states *arki uqu libbi bi-i-šu ittaškan*, “afterwards the people became disposed to evil” (l. 14).⁶³⁸ Weissbach translates “da wurde das Volk feindlich.”⁶³⁹

LB Inscription (Darius)**VAB 3 91:33**⁶⁴⁰ *bi-i-ši**Bīši* is a ms adjective used in a figurative, nominalized sense for “the evil” to which Darius, his house, and his land were potentially subject to.

In the context of describing how King Darius accomplished everything according to the will of Ahuramazda, who helped him carry out the work, lines 32-33 read: DN *liššuranni lapani mimma bi-i-ši u ana bītija u ana mātija*. Weissbach translates “Mich soll Ahuramazda schützen vor dem Widerwärtigen, und mein Haus und dieses Land.”⁶⁴¹ The “repulsive” or “vile” (*bīšu*) from which Darius seeks protection is not spelled out in this

⁶³⁷ Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, 15.⁶³⁸ CAD B *bīšu* 3b, 271.⁶³⁹ Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, 15.⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

context. For all his supreme power, he recognizes his need for divine protection and favor for his own life, his “house,” and his land.

LB Inscription (Darius)

Herzfeld API⁶⁴² 19 § 4 *bi-i-šī*

Bīšī is a ms adjective used in a figurative, nominalized sense for “evil” that was done in various lands prior to Darius doing “good” (*babbanatû*).

In a six paragraph inscription, after reciting a litany of conquered countries, Darius is said to have brought peace and calmed fears through his law. Rev. 23 reads *ša bīšī epšuma anāku ana babbanû ītepuš*, which Weissbach translates “Vieles was übel gemacht war, das machte ich schön.”⁶⁴³ Here we find a unique contrast between “the evil” (*bīšī*) that was done and the “good” (*babbanû*) that the king brought about.

LB Inscription (Xerxes)

Herzfeld API 30:35⁶⁴⁴ *bi-i-šī*

Bīšī is a ms adjective used in a figurative, nominalized sense for the “bad” or “evil” ways of the people in lands conquered that were righted by Xerxes.

Herzfeld API 30:48⁶⁴⁵ *bi-i-šī*

Bīšī is a ms adjective used in a figurative, nominalized sense for “the evil” to which Darius, his house, and the conquered countries were potentially subject to.

In Xerxes’ “Daiva” Inscription, repeated emphasis is placed upon the necessity of worshipping the single god Ahuramazda, with promises that those who observe his law will experience happiness in this life and beyond.⁶⁴⁶ After stating his subjugation of rebellion among conquered peoples, eradication of the worship of false gods (*daiva*’s),

⁶⁴² Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften*, 19.

⁶⁴³ Weissbach, “Die Dreisprachige Inschrift Darius Susa E.,” 163, 165.

⁶⁴⁴ Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften*, 30.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁶ Cameron, “The ‘Daiva’ Inscription of Xerxes,” 470.

and substitution of reverence for Ahuramazda, l. 35 reads *ša bīši epšu ullû anāku babbanû etepuš*, “Furthermore, there were other things which were done in a bad way, and these (too) I made in the correct way.”⁶⁴⁷ Similar to Herzfeld API 19 § 4 above, there is a blunt contrast between “the bad” (*bīši*) and the “good” or “correct” (*babbanû*). Ahuramazda is credited with being the agent who accomplished such transformation through Xerxes.

As in VAB 3 91:33 above, the formulaic closing petition of this inscription reads *lišsuranni lapani imma bīši u bītija u ana mātātē* (l. 48), “May Ahuramazda protect me, my family and these countries from all evil.”⁶⁴⁸

LB Inscription (Artaxerxes)

VAB 3 127 b5⁶⁴⁹ *bi-i-ši*

Bīši is a ms adjective used with *gabbi* (“all”) in a nominalized, figurative and generic sense for “all the evil” that threatens.

In this short dedicatory inscription for a new portico, Artaxerxes asks Ahuramazda, Anahita, and Mitara to protect against “all evil” (*lišsurû lapani gabbi bi-i-ši*)⁶⁵⁰ and not to destroy what he built.

TREATY

Summary Introduction

Ancient Near Eastern treaties are, in essence, simply promises between two or more parties. Though not a large extent group of texts, comparably speaking, they have

⁶⁴⁷ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 316.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, 127.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 127. CAD B *bīšu* 3b, 271.

given rise to a vast literature, largely because of correspondence with biblical material.⁶⁵¹

The ancient treaty included curses invoking the punishment of the gods to ensure the promise was kept. While the structure of the treaty changed over the centuries, the curse-list was always included and even grew more elaborate in later times.⁶⁵²

There are two main groups of ANE treaties with curses:

- 1) More than two dozen separate treaties have been published from the Hittite archives of ancient Hattusas and Ugarit (15th to 13th centuries BCE).
- 2) The more elaborate and colorful curses come from a smaller group from the 9th to the 7th centuries BCE, the longest of which are the vassal-treaties made by Esarhaddon in 672 BCE with at least nine vassals from regions east and northeast of Assyria.⁶⁵³ These vassal treaties are referenced in the singular as one vassal treaty because they are almost identical, except for the governor or chieftain named in each.

Reconstituted from more than 350 fragments of clay tablets found in the temple of Nabu at Nimrud, this treaty is unique in that it is entirely dedicated to the subject of royal succession after Esarhaddon's death.⁶⁵⁴ Before this text, only a few treaties imposed by Mesopotamian sovereigns were known, and those were fragmentary.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵¹ Early work by Viktor Korošec with Hittite treaties (1931) established the primary components of ANE suzerain treaties (between king and vassal) and parity treaties (between kings of equal status): preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, provisions for preservation and reading, a summoning of gods as witnesses, and a formula of curses and blessings. George Mendenhall (1954) first pointed out the resemblance in structure between this legal structure and certain covenants of the Hebrew Bible. Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, *Biblica et Orientalia: Sacra Scriptura antiquitatibus orientalibus illustrata* 16 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 1.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 7. For bibliography, see Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, eds., *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (State Archives of Assyria 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1988).

⁶⁵⁴ Its general features are stylistically close to the Aramaic treaty between Barga'ayah and Mati'ilu of Arpad (8th century BCE), bearing many affinities with second millennium treaties (especially Hittite kings and the Hebrew covenants). D. J. Wiseman, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," *Iraq* 20/1 (1958): 3.

⁶⁵⁵ James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3d, with supplement.; Princeton: Princeton University, 1974), 531. Most notably: Shamshi Adad of Assyria with Marduk-zakir-

Because it is one of the largest texts written in the Assyrian dialect, it sparked extraordinary linguistic interest, especially in the nearly 250 lines of curses. Within a cluster of curses based on similes drawn from daily life are two olfactory references declaring a cringe-worthy consequence for breaking the terms of the deal—that the vassal will become as repugnant to the gods, the king, and other people as the smell of urine is repulsive.

Wiseman provides an introduction, transliteration, English translation, and short commentary in *The Vassal-treaties of Esarhaddon (Iraq 20/1)*.⁶⁵⁶ McCarthy's *Treaty and Covenant*, along with reviews by Borger and Gelb, contribute significantly with critical apparatus and comments.⁶⁵⁷ Lauringer provides a preliminary edition of a new manuscript of this treaty.⁶⁵⁸

Individual Analysis

NA Treaty

Wiseman Treaties 603⁶⁵⁹ *bi-šú-u-ni*

Bišuni is a G infinitive of the verb *ba'āšu* with the subjunctive *-ni* ending, translated “[is] smelling bad,” and it is used literally to refer to the negative smell of urine (*pispisu*).

Wiseman Treaties 605⁶⁶⁰ *ni-piš-ku-nu*

shumi of Babylon (Ernst F. Weidner, “Der Staatsvertrag Aššurnirâris VI. von Assyrien mit Mati'ilu von Bît-Agusi,” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 8 (1932): 28), Ashurnirari V with Mati-ilu of Bît-Agusi (Ibid., 24ff) and Esarhaddon of Assyria with Baal of Tyre (Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons*, 107–9. and Weidner, “Der Staatsvertrag Aššurnirâris VI. von Assyrien mit Mati'ilu von Bît-Agusi,” 29–34.)

⁶⁵⁶ Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon.”

⁶⁵⁷ Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (New ed.; Analecta biblica 21a; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981). Rykle Borger, “Zu den Asarhaddon-Verträgen aus Nimrud,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 56, no. 1 (1961): 173–95; Ignace J. Gelb, “Review of The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 19 (1962): 159–62.

⁶⁵⁸ Jacob Lauringer, “Esarhaddon's Succession Treat at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 87–123.

⁶⁵⁹ Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon,” 75.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

Nipiškunu is the ms noun *nipšu* (“smell”) with the 2mpl suffix pronoun *-kunu* (“your”), and it is used figuratively to reference the treaty-breakers’ repugnant reputation before god, king, and others.

In Esarhaddon’s vassal treaty, after a series of conditions the vassal swears to keep (372 lines), 254 whopping lines of curses are pronounced upon treaty breakers. Included with the normal, individualized curses, which invoke deities by name with their special curse formulae (ll. 414-71, 519-25), and the anonymous curses of general character (ll. 472-93), there is a series of forty curses bearing the form of a simile.⁶⁶¹ Comparisons are drawn from the rain (ll. 530-3), melting lead (ll. 534-6), a mule (ll. 537-9), molten iron (ll. 545-6), slaughtered lambs and kids (ll. 551-4), the enmity between snake and mongoose (ll. 555-9), food and wine (ll. 560-6), gold (ll. 567), a honeycomb (ll. 568-9), the bow (ll. 573-5), a hunted gazelle (ll. 576-8), a trapped bird (ll. 582-4), pitch (ll. 585-7), the chameleon (ll. 591-3), locusts (ll. 599-600), a swatted fly (ll. 601-2), urine (ll. 603-5), a rope (ll. 606-7), a wax figurine (ll. 608-11), a blood-splattered chariot (ll. 612-5), a spindle-whorl (ll. 616-7), a tortoise (ll. 618-20), fire (l. 621), oil (ll. 622-5), a bucket (ll. 626-31), a worm caught in a mill (ll. 637-40), a hole (ll. 641-2), medicine (ll. 643-5), gall (ll. 646-8), a bird trap (ll. 649-51), and a leaky water bottle (ll. 652-5). Though this type of curse is not unusual for treaties in the larger world of the ANE (see, for example, the Hittite treaty of Shuppiluliuma with Mattiwaza of Mitanni), it is very rare in Akkadian literature, so the phrases are of special interest and difficulty.⁶⁶²

While there are other curses containing sensory imagery, including sight, taste, and touch (no hearing), there is only one simile in this series tapping into the olfactory

⁶⁶¹ Rintje Frankena, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy,” *Oudtestamentische Studien* 14 (1965): 132–3.

⁶⁶² Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon,” 26.

realm.⁶⁶³ Lines 603-5 read *kī ša pispisu bi-’-šú-u-ni ki-i ḥa-an-ni-e ina IGI DINGIR u LUGAL LU₂-ti nipiškunu libši*, and are variously translated “as bad smelling as urine(?) is, so may your breath be (to god, king, and man)”⁶⁶⁴ and “just as this *p.* stinks, may your breath stink.”⁶⁶⁵ The interpretation of *pispisu* as “urine” is refuted by Watanabe, who argues on etymological grounds that the term designates an insect, likely heteropterous insects with scent secretion glands such as bedbugs.⁶⁶⁶ This curse is preceded by the image of an enemy squashing the subject like a fly caught in the hand, and is followed by another graphic image of strangling with a rope/cord. The obvious conclusion is that the smell of the *pispisu*-insect is not deemed a neutral, contextualized odor; it is, in fact, loathsome. The implication is that any covenant violation will jeopardize good relations with not only the king, but with other individuals in general and, perhaps more importantly, with the gods (listed first in the series).

LETTERS

Summary Introduction

Assyrian/Babylonian epistolary literature developed into the first literature of international correspondence as early as 2000 BCE. For more than two and a half millennia, it knit together the whole ancient Near East as the common diplomatic language of communication until it ceased to be used for affairs of the state during the

⁶⁶³ Sight: lead melting in fire (ll. 534-6); Sight/touch: entrails of sons and daughters rolling down over feet (ll. 551-4); taste: blood of your family sweet like honey in your mouth, family relationships bitter like the gall-bladder (ll. 646-8).

⁶⁶⁴ CAD B ba’āšu A, 4. CAD *nipšu* A2, 248 provides *ki ša pispisu bi’šuni kī hannie ina pan ili u šarri LU-ti nipiš-ku-nu* (for *ni-paš-ku-nu*) *libši* (var. *lib’iš*), “just as urine(?) stinks, so may your smell be (var. stink) to god, king, and men.”

⁶⁶⁵ CAD P *pispisu*, 425.

⁶⁶⁶ Kazuko Watanabe, *Die adê-Vereidigung anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons*, *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 3 (Berlin: Mann, 1987), 204.

Hellenistic period. In addition to royal letters pertaining to political, military, legal, and commercial interests, a host of private letters have also been published. The four main collections of Assyrian letters, excluding more peripheral cuneiform texts,⁶⁶⁷ are: 1) Old Babylonian letters from Hammurabi's period, mostly royal and private (c. 2000 BCE), 2) letters of the Kassite period dealing with the administration of the Ekur temple in Nippur (17th-12th century BCE), 3) the Assyrian letters found in the library of Ashurbanipal at Ninevah from the Sargonid period (722-626 BCE), and 4) Neo-Babylonian royal, temple administration, and private (mostly commercial) letters from, for the most part, the reigns of Nabonidus to Darius (604-485 BCE).⁶⁶⁸

Assyrian letters are often difficult to understand in subject matter due to the variety of topics covered, the confidential character of the information, and allusions to matters well known to the ancient recipient but outside our present-day knowledge. At times they are perplexing in language because of an extensive and technical vocabulary, a frequent use of vernacular expressions, and an informal ease of style.⁶⁶⁹ Nonetheless, they provide invaluable insight into the language, history, and culture of Assyria's golden age, reflecting such a wide cross section of culture and society:

They were written by generals on the battlefield, by physicians in the sick room, governors assuming the duties of a new post, by astronomers reporting on their observations on the skies, by priests making arrangements for sacred rites, by persons in confinement or in distress begging for relief, by courtiers furthering their own interests and defaming their rivals, by architects and boat builders reporting on the progress of their work, by police detectives and spies, by tax collectors and recruiting officers, by cities and tribes, by princes and beggars.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁷ For example, the El Amarna tablets from c. 1400 BCE, the Nuzi tablets from 1500 BCE, and Cappadocian texts from the end of third millennium.

⁶⁶⁸ Robert H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Official Assyrian Letters Dating From the Sargonid Period (722-625 B.C.)*, American Oriental Series 6 (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1935), 11.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, v.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

Ancient letters can take us into the middle of life in an ancient, vanished civilization better than any other source is able to do, and this proves especially valuable with olfactory cultural constructs.

An abundance of olfactory references turn up in the letter genre—there are 60-some references to various forms of *ba'āšu*, *bīšu* / *bi'iltu*, *erīšu* / *erēšu* / *irīšu*, and *ešēnu*. The order of individual examination will roughly follow distribution based on time period (OA, OB, NA, NB, LB) and geographical location (Ninevah, Uruk, Ur, Borsippa, Sippar) within time periods.⁶⁷¹ Common authorship, orthographies, introductory formulae, or other unifying features can be employed in clustering some texts, though it is not often clear that letters written by two individuals with the same name reference the same person.⁶⁷² Thankfully, letters can be easier to date than some other genres because they may include specific dates or at least provide names of officials and other references which help approximate their origination with respect to a given period or ruler, as summarized here.

Old Assyrian Royal Letters

The verb *ubta'iš* comes in a letter dated to the late 18th century BCE, written from King Anum-hirbi of Mama to King Waršama of Kaniš. This letter was one of a number of tablets removed *in situ* from the palace of Waršama on the mound of Kültepe (the ancient Hurrian city, Kaniš/Kanesh, which housed a large merchant quarter of the Old

⁶⁷¹ Provenance becomes the central organization method here with texts of unknown origination date.

⁶⁷² For example, several letters written by Nabu-ah-iddina are grouped because of similar content related to farming irrigation projects (TCL 9 129:17, YOS 3 17:19, 19:21, 79:35), with additional letters also dealing with commerce written by the same name following, though they deal more with animal husbandry (TCL 9 88:15 and BIN 1 26:31).

Assyrian kingdom).⁶⁷³ Two more olfactory terms (*eriš*, *ešin*) appear in a single letter coming from the palace at Mari. Despite the fragmented state of this letter and its poor Mari-styled Akkadian, it remains of great interest in portraying the relationship of the kingdom of Mari to the Hittites around the time 2000 BCE.⁶⁷⁴

Old Babylonian Private Letters

Two references to *ešēnim* occur among a host of letters from the first dynasty of Babylon (2300-2000 BCE). One appears in a private, commercial letter from Larsa dealing with the shipment of oils, assumedly part of temple commerce.⁶⁷⁵ The second occurrence is found in a private letter, thought to be from Sippar,⁶⁷⁶ involving a conflict situation with a slave.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷³ These documents witness to the political and commercial interests of this part of Anatolia. Kemal Balkan, *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi of Mama to King Warshama of Kanish*, Turk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından 7/31a (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1957).

⁶⁷⁴ More specifically, these confirm and amplify the conclusion already established that the monarchs of the middle Euphrates were very interested in the northern lands, appreciating not only the horses but the exotic beauty of the industrial products coming out of the workshops of Kanish, Harsamma and of Hattusha. For text, transliteration, translation, and commentary, see G. Dossin, "Une Mention de Hattusa dans une Lettre de Mari," *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* 5, no. 35-36 (1939): 76. A new translation is offered by Balkan. *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi of Mama to King Warshama of Kanish*, 48ff.

⁶⁷⁵ Lutz published 152 official and private letters from the classical age of Babylonian history (c. 2000 BCE) discovered at the ancient city of Larsa, most of which relate to technical business matters pertaining to temple commerce. *Early Babylonian Letters From Larsa* (Yale Oriental Series. Babylonian Texts 2; New Haven: Yale University, 1917). Ebeling provided a transliteration and German translation in *Altbabylonische Briefe Amerikanischer Sammlungen aus Larsa* (vol. 1/2; Mitteilungen der altorientalischen Gesellschaft 16; Osnabrück: Zeller, 1972). Driver's transcription and English translation is found in *Letters of the First Babylonian Dynasty* (Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts 3; London: Oxford University, H. Milford, 1924), 49.

⁶⁷⁶ Unfortunately, few of these OB texts come from scientific excavations; most came from antiquities dealers, so the place of origin is determined on the basis of affiliation to certain collections or the statements of traders. Arthur Ungnad, *Babylonische Briefe aus der Zeit der Hammurapi-Dynastie* (Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 6; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1914), xi.

⁶⁷⁷ Pinches published texts from 81 tablets, mostly commercial documents from this period, in Theophilus G. Pinches, *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part VI (49 Plates)*, vol. 6, 50 vols., Reprinted by the Trustees of the British Museum, 1959. (London: Cambridge University, 1898). Ungnad collected all published OB letters up to 1913 in Ungnad, *Babylonische Briefe aus der Zeit der Hammurapi-Dynastie*.

NA/NB Royal Letters From Ninevah

Harper's fourteen volume *corpus epistolarum* of Assyrian royal correspondence includes 1471 texts from the Sargonid period found in the library at Ninevah. Almost all are addressed to the king and deal with public affairs, coming from all over central Mesopotamia and beyond—as far as Sealand and Ur in the South to Armenia in the north, from Elam in the east to Syria in the west.⁶⁷⁸ Fourteen different texts contain 18 usages of varied forms of *bīšu* and *ba'āšu*, along with one instance of *erešu*. The terms are woven into letters most often directed to the king (usually Ashurbanipal) or a royal official, authored by various officials and occasionally the king himself in writing to a governor or the people. The most outstanding feature is their idiomatic use in a context rife with political and personal conflict where complaints are levied against disloyal individuals or groups, attestations of allegiance are given, and pleas for intervention are offered.

NB/LB Royal and Private Letters From Uruk

⁶⁷⁸ Robert Francis Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum* (ed. Leroy Waterman; 14 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1892-1914). A complete transliteration, English translation, and commentary of all fourteen volumes of Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters* was published by Waterman. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire* (University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 17-20; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930-1936). Pfeiffer transliterates and translates into English a selection of these texts (approximately one fourth of the material in Waterman), with some significant differences in interpretation. *State Letters of Assyria*. A handful of references come from letters cited in the State Archives of Assyria (SAA) series (ABL 283/793, 716, 1131, 1374) which provides critical text editions of Neo-Assyrian texts, organized by text genres and translated into English, many for the first time. Steven William Cole and Peter Machinist, eds., *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (State Archives of Assyria 13; Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1998); *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* (State Archives of Assyria 17; Helsinki: Helsinki University, 2003); Frances Reynolds, ed., *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon, and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-Šarru-Iškun From Northern and Central Babylonia*, State Archives of Assyria 18 (Helsinki: Helsinki University, 2003).

Twenty-nine references to nominal and verbal forms of *b's* come from the ruins of the administrative archives of the Eanna temple (the temple of Ishtar) at Uruk/Erech, an ancient city of Sumer and later Babylonia.⁶⁷⁹ The letters date to various points between the reign of Kandalanu (c. 648 BCE) and Darius I (522-486 BCE), and because it can be difficult to distinguish which are NB and which are LB, all are included here.⁶⁸⁰ Most deal with business matters that relate to the management of temple property or the income of the Eanna temple, which remained a hub of legal and business transactions with large business holdings of its own well into the Persian period. Within these 29 letters reflecting the interaction between various social strata and administrative ranks, both figurative and tangible meanings are expressed: emotional anger or even outrage, “evil” with respect to words or reputation, and bad or inferior quality with respect to debt, agricultural products, food quality, and animal health. One debatable reference to *bi'iltu* (UCP 10 p. 260:13) could suggest a figurative use for corrupt or fraudulent business practices.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ Publications include Albert Tobias Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech* (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 3; New Haven: Yale University, 1919); Georges Contenau, *Contrats et Lettres d'Assyrie et de Babylonie* (Textes cunéiformes 9; Paris: P. Geuthner, 1926); *Contrats Néo-Babyloniens* (vol. 2, 2 vols.; Textes cunéiformes 13; Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927); Raymond Philip Dougherty, *Archives From Erech* (Goucher College Cuneiform Inscriptions 2; New Haven: Yale University, 1933); *Records from Erech, Time of Nabonidus (555-538 B.C.)* (Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 6; New Haven: Yale University, 1920); Arch Tremayne, *Records from Erech, Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538-521 B. C.)*, Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 7 (New Haven: Yale University, 1925); Clarence Elwood Keiser, *Letters and Contracts From Erech Written in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies, Yale University 1; New Haven: Yale University, 1918); Henry Frederick Lutz, *Neo-Babylonian Administrative Documents from Erech* (vol. 1; University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 9; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1927), which includes an English translation. Hundreds of the letters were translated into German by Erich Ebeling in *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk* (4 vols.; Beiträge zur Keilschriftforschung und Religionsgeschichte des vorderen Orients; Berlin: Im Verlage des Herausgebers, 1930) and *Neubabylonische Briefe* (Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Neue Folge 30; München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1949). For transliteration and translation of TCL 13, see Ellen Whitley Moore, *Neo-Babylonian Business and Administrative Documents; With Transliteration, Translation and Notes* (Ann Arbor L: University of Michigan Press, 1935).

⁶⁸⁰ Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 10.

⁶⁸¹ Henry Frederick Lutz, “A Recorded Deposition Concerning Presentment for Tax Payment,” *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 10, no. 10 (1940): 257–64.

NB Commercial and Private Letters From Ur and Borsippa

While most of the NB letters come from the archive of the Shamash temple in Sippar or the Eanna temple archives at Uruk, excavations at Ur and Borsippa also brought NB letters to light. Two olfactory references from these cities come from private letters. Figulla's *Ur Excavation Texts* contains various legal and business documents including one letter which involves the delivery of a slave girl to the palace (UET 4 188).⁶⁸² Ungnad's publication of a private NB letter from Borsippa provides a nice glimpse into the private life of a patrician Borsippa family.⁶⁸³ Both letters include a form of the verb *ba'āšū* in an idiomatic fashion to reference anger.

LB Commercial and Private Letters (From Sippar and Babylon)

LB letters dating from time of Nabonidus to Darius (555-485 BCE) do not exhibit a significant shift in colloquial language from NB letters, and there is even less change with respect to the character and habits of the Babylonian people. Most of these letters come from the archives of the Shamash temple in Sippar, were written by or to temple officials, and emphasize mercantile and business correspondence.⁶⁸⁴ Thompson's *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum (XXII)*⁶⁸⁵ provides six

⁶⁸² H. H. Figulla, *Business Documents of the New-Babylonian Period* (Publications of the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, to Mesopotamia. Ur Excavations, Texts 4; London: Printed by Order of the Trustees of the Two Museums, 1949); translation in Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe*.

⁶⁸³ Arthur Ungnad, "Neubabylonische Privaturkunden aus der Sammlung Amherst," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 19 (1959): 82.

⁶⁸⁴ R. Campbell Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters: Transliterations and Translations of a Series of Letters Written in Babylonian Cuneiform, Chiefly During the Reigns of Nabonidus, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius*, Luzac's Semitic Text and Translation Series 17 (London: Luzac and Co, 1906), xiii.

⁶⁸⁵ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*.

references to various forms of the words *bīšū* and *ba'āšū*, all of which convey the figurative idea of things/words being “bad” or the idiomatic sense of being angry.

Transliteration and translations have been given by Thompson, Ebeling, and Oppenheim.⁶⁸⁶

Six more references appear in texts published by Strassmaier: one dating to the time of Cambyses, one to Nabonidus, and four to Darius. Camb. 217 is a private letter coming from the archive of the Egibi family in Babylon, and from it we have a reference to a “bad” (*bīšū*) field. Similarly, Nbn. 17 comes from the Iddin-Marduk family of Babylon and references “bad” (*bīšū*) onions. Wunsch has written extensively on both family archives, providing transliteration and translation of these texts.⁶⁸⁷ The four Darius letters come from the temple of Shamash in Sippar. They present a consistent usage of the adjective *bīšū* to designate spoiled barley products (cakes and beer). Thought lacking a translation at this point, a transcription and summary of these Babylonian texts is provided as an internet publication by Francis Joannès.⁶⁸⁸

Individual Analysis

OA Letter (Kaniš)
Balkan Letter 7:29⁶⁸⁹ *ub-ta-i-iš*

⁶⁸⁶ Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*. Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe*. A. Leo Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia: Official Business, and Private Letters on Clay Tablets from Two Millennia* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967).

⁶⁸⁷ Cornelia Wunsch, *Das Egibi-Archiv* (Cuneiform Monographs 20; Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000); *Die Urkunden des Babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk: zum handel mit Naturalien im 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr* (Cuneiform Monographs 3b; Groningen: Styx Publications, 1993); for Camb. 217, see also J. Kohler and F. E. Peiser, *Aus dem Babylonischen Rechtsleben* (vol. 2, 4 vols.; Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1890).

⁶⁸⁸ Francis Joannès, *Textes Babyloniens: Joannès, Darius Ier*, n.d., n.p. Online: <http://www.achemenet.com>.

⁶⁸⁹ Balkan, *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi*, 7.

Ubta'iš is a D perfect 3cs form of the verb *ba'āšu* with the object *qutram* (“smoke”), translated “he made smoke stink.”⁶⁹⁰ Used literally for negative odor, the source of the stench is smoke created by the Taishmeans’ burning of Anum-ḥirbi’s *mātu* (country, land), though it is not clear from the text what exactly is burning to produce the smoke.

In this letter, Waršama has asked Anum-ḥirbi for resumed relations and a mutual ending of hostilities in the border region so Assyrian merchants can travel between cities safely and securely. Peace and friendship once existed between Mama and Kaniš for many years, and envoys regularly went back and forth between the two until a shocking offense took place under Waršama’s watchful eye, resulting in Anum-ḥirbi shutting down the frontiers for commercial caravans to and from Kaniš.

Lines 25-29 spell this out: *kīma mātiya našārim u libbim tadānim u mātī ištarap u qutram ubta'iš*, “Instead of protecting my country and ‘giving me heart’ (i.e. encouraging me), he not only burned up my country, but created evil smelling smoke.”⁶⁹¹ Balkan translates *ubta'iš* with a consequential sense (“he not only burned up my country, but created evil smelling smoke”), though this is not required, as is reflected in the CAD translation: *mātī ištarap u qutram ub-ta-i-iš*, “he set fire to my land making it smell of smoke.”⁶⁹²

Apparently, Anum-ḥirbi was locked in mortal combat with an unnamed adversary when the king of Taišama attacked him from the rear as easy prey. Taišama was a border town to the land of Kaniš, and its king (*šarru*) was subservient as a vassal to Waršama (*rubā'um*), not at all free to conduct foreign policy on his own account or to take independent military action.⁶⁹³ Therefore, when the vassal king of Taišama attacked

⁶⁹⁰ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 3a, 5.

⁶⁹¹ Balkan, *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi*, 8.

⁶⁹² CAD B *ba'āšu* A 3a, 5.

⁶⁹³ For the significance of the titles *rubā'um* (independent kings) and *šarrum* (vassal kings), see Paul Garelli, *Les Assyriens en Cappadoce* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'institut français d'archéologie

and destroyed Anum-ḫirbi's country, he was outraged at Waršama, and he holds his so-called "ally" accountable for not intervening, encouraging and protecting him when he was in a weakened state.

OA Letter (Mari)

RHA 35 71:3⁶⁹⁴ *e-ri-iš*

Eriš is a ms noun ("smell, scent"), used figuratively in construct with *bēlija* ("my master"), and the phrase is variously translated *bonne odor*,⁶⁹⁵ "fragrance,"⁶⁹⁶ or "sweet fragrance."⁶⁹⁷

RHA 35 71:3⁶⁹⁸ *e-šī-in*

Eššin is the G 1cs preterite of the verb *ešēnu* ("to smell"), translated "I smelled," used figuratively by this servant for the good smell (*erēš bēlija*) of his master.

Unfortunately, the introduction of this letter is missing, so we do not know the recipient. Judging by the type of writing, Dossin believes it was Zimri-lim, king of Mari from about 1775 to 1761 BCE, rather than the predecessor he outstated, Yasmah-Adad.⁶⁹⁹ The sender is a "servant" of the king of Mari, perhaps a reigning prince in some north Mesopotamian or Hittite region.⁷⁰⁰ The first complete line includes the following statement: *e-ri-iš bēlija ṭābam ina bītija e-šī-in* (ll. 3-4).

d'Istanbul 29; Paris: Libr. A. Maisonneuve, 1963). Pp. 209ff contains a French translation and discussion of this letter, focusing on the economic and political organization of the native principalities in comparison to that of Assyria.

⁶⁹⁴ Dossin, "Une Mention de Hattusa dans une lettre de Mari," 71.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁹⁶ CAD E *ešēnu*, 1ak, 345.

⁶⁹⁷ CAD E *erešu* A a, 280.

⁶⁹⁸ Dossin, "Une Mention de Hattusa dans une lettre de Mari," 71.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 70.

⁷⁰⁰ The mention of Hattusha, the capital of the Hittite kingdom, and two other cities known to be in the same area from the "Cappadocian" tablets, another Mari letter, and Hittite documents of Boghazkoy is a significant contribution of this small fragment of a letter. Ibid.

Here occur two different olfactory words in the same sentence, as the servant begins to profess his allegiance and faithfulness. The CAD variously translates the action in a conditional sense (“I would like just to smell the fragrance of my master’s [presence] in my house”)⁷⁰¹ and in the present tense (“I smell the sweet fragrance of my lord in my house”),⁷⁰² but the past tense works as well if we are to understand this as an idiomatic expression which communicates a positive predisposition towards another party.⁷⁰³ In other words, the writer says the king of Mari has been respected in his “house” (“I *smelled* the fragrance of my lord in my house”).

He follows up with a statement of his loyalty (*kīnatim*) in the present and, depending on how the following phrase is translated, either invites his lord’s rebuke if he doesn’t give due reverence or asks his lord to return the favor of speaking respectfully of his lord.⁷⁰⁴ Before breaking off, the letter mentions a rich abundance of goods (such as artistic works) from the Hittite cities Kanish, Harsamna, and Hattusha.

OB Letter (Larsa)

YOS 2 58:9⁷⁰⁵ *e-še-ni-im*

Eṣēnim, the G infinitive verb “to smell,” is used in the genitive case with *ul naṭû* and translated “is not fit to smell,” as referring to *šamnum ḫalṣum* (sesame oil obtained by pressing, used generally for cooking, anointing, libations, and as a key ingredient in medical potions and perfumes).⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰¹ CAD E *eṣēnu* 1a, 345.

⁷⁰² CAD E *erešu* A a, 280.

⁷⁰³ Balkan translates accordingly in *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi of Mama to King Warshama of Kanish*, 48.

⁷⁰⁴ Dossin translates, “Si (jamais) je fais à mon maître une déclaration d’insouje veux (encourir) mission, la vengeance de mon maître!” “Une Mention de Hattusa dans une lettre de Mari,” 71. The CAD takes the positive sense of the *gimilla turrû* expression (“to return an act of kindness” or “to wreak vengeance”) in *gimillu* 2a.

⁷⁰⁵ Lutz, *Early Babylonian Letters From Larsa*, Plate xxiv.

⁷⁰⁶ CAD H *ḫalṣu*, 50.

Šamaš-ḥazir writes to Belshunu a short, fifteen-line letter of instruction concerning oils. Though broken in parts, lines 8-9 are clear: *šamnum ḥalṣum ša tušābilam ana ešenim ul naṭû*, “the refined oil which you sent me is not fit to smell.”⁷⁰⁷ Note that the expression “not fit to smell” is used instead of *ba’āšu*, “to smell bad.”

OB Letter (Sippar)

CT 6 34a:13⁷⁰⁸ e-šé-nim

Ešenim is a G 3ms verb (“to smell”) used in the genitive case with *ul naṭû*. Translated literally, the phrase “is not fit to smell” is here used figuratively to reference the abuse (*magriātim*) that one individual directed to another.

Zimri-erah writes to his “father” concerning a troubling situation with Nabium-atpalam, an individual who had approached Ibi-ilabrat (who was either Zimri-erah’s boy or servant)⁷⁰⁹ in a pressured manner, saying things against Zimri-erah that resulted in problematic relations between Zimri-erah and Ibi-ilabrat. Olfactory language is used to characterize the verbal abuse directed against Zimri-erah. Lines 11-14 read *u jāšim magriātim ša ana e-šé-nim la naṭâ idbub*. The CAD translates “and even to me he made rude and disgusting (lit. which were not fit to smell) remarks,”⁷¹⁰ and Ungnad translates “auch gegen mich hat er feindselige Worte, die unmöglich zu ertragen sind, geredet.”⁷¹¹ Zimri-erah is clear that he decided not to talk about what was done to him to “one and all,” (l. 17) but rather he chose to write for counsel and deliberation, in order that Nabium-atpalam may be informed of the verdict after a thorough investigation. The letter ends with urgent appeals for his father’s response.

⁷⁰⁷ CAD E *ešēnu* 1a, 345.

⁷⁰⁸ Pinches, *Cuneiform Texts VI*, 6:34.

⁷⁰⁹ CAD Ş *šuḥāru*, 231.

⁷¹⁰ CAD E *ešēnu* 1c, 345.

⁷¹¹ Ungnad, *Babylonische Briefe aus der Zeit der Hammurapi-Dynastie*, 179.

NB Letter (Ninevah)**ABL 266:13**⁷¹² *bi-i-šú*

Bīšu is a ms adjective, translated “malodorous,” “bad,” or “evil.”⁷¹³ The sense is definitely figurative, as it is used to describe the offensive actions of two individuals in Uruk with respect to the country of Assyria.

This letter to Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria (668-626 BCE), from Nabu-ushabshi, a trusted royal official from Uruk in lower Babylonia before, during, and after the civil war between Ashurbanipal and his brother (652-648 BCE),⁷¹⁴ seeks to inform the king of the actions of a certain Pir'-bel and Bel-etir, that man's father, who came from Elam to Uruk only to stir up trouble against Assyria. The exact date of the letter is not known.

In the month of Marcheshvan, a troublemaker from Elam by the name of Pir'-bel brought letters to Nabu-ushabshi in Uruk, which he forwarded to the king via Daru-sharru, the body guard. These letters are, he claims, completely falsified (“these letters of wind,” *šipirēti a^r-g¹a ša šarēti*, r. 14-15), and if the king needs proof, Idua and Daru-sharru can provide confirmation of this. Nabu-ushabshi wants to make sure the Ashurbanipal knows that Pir'-bel is not, nor has he been for some time, in Elam. Pir'-bel has not left the country for Uruk since he first arrived with the letters.

In describing of Pir'-bel's character to the king, Nabu-ushabshi makes a scathing indictment on both him and his now-deceased father, Bel-etir: *mimma ša ana muḥḥi māṭ Aššur bīšu ina Uruk ītepšu*, “in Uruk they have done all that is detrimental to Assyria” (ll. 12-14).⁷¹⁵ The adjective *bīšu* with the verb *epēšu* is used idiomatically for an individual

⁷¹² Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 267.

⁷¹³ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

⁷¹⁴ Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*, vol. 4, 4 vols., University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1936), 103.

⁷¹⁵ CAD B *bīšu* 3b, 271.

or group that is acting in a way that is negatively predisposed toward a given party.

More than just having an antagonistic posture, though, this formula seems intended to convey emotional appeal. Waterman's translation better communicates this sense:

"after they had come, they practiced in Uruk everything that was despicable against the land of Assyria."⁷¹⁶ Nabu-ushabshi feels it is his duty to report the underhanded actions of Pir'-bel.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 283:10⁷¹⁷ (= ABL 793:12) *bi-i-šú-ti*

Bīšuti is a fpl adjective (ms *bīšu*), used figuratively, translated "evil" or "bad" and used to describe the "words/reports" (*dibbī*) that were pronounced and circulated to the "palace" (*ēkalli*, taken as the officials and functionaries connected to palace administration).

ABL 283:r. 5⁷¹⁸ 289 *ú-ba-'-áš*

Uba'aš is a D 3cs durative from *ba'āšu* ("to besmirch, to cast aspirations"),⁷¹⁹ used figuratively in reference to Bel-ibini's "words" (and the intentions that are behind them) being offensive to court officials.

In this letter, Bel-ibni writes an unnamed official (*rab rêšī*) to make an urgent appeal for intercession on his behalf in order to gain or regain the king's favor.⁷²⁰ The identity of the author and king referenced in this letter cannot be discussed without mentioning the parallel text, ABL 793, which is almost entirely the same in content, though it contains minor but significant details. Most notably, it is addressed to the king directly, whereas ABL 283 is addressed to one of his officials for the purpose of

⁷¹⁶ Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, vol. 1, 4 vols., University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930), 179.

⁷¹⁷ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 288.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁷¹⁹ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 3b, 5.

⁷²⁰ Dietrich believes this official is the chief eunuch not a military general. Dietrich, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib*, 49.

sequestering his aid in appealing to the king on his behalf.⁷²¹ Additionally, ABL 793:8 and 18 mention two incidents that occurred during the reign of the king's *father*. It is this detail that leads Waterman to conclude that Bel-ibni was the well-known Sealands viceroy during the reign of Ashurbanipal from 668-626 BCE, as most of his letters deal with lower Babylonia and Elam.⁷²² He was once a distinguished figure in the Assyrian court but had suffered much criticism and opposition before 640 BCE (as evident in ABL 736, 1106, 291). Now, after the 626 BCE accession of Ashur-etil-ilani (Ashurbanipal's son), Bel-ibni is seeking to return to his prior place of service to the king.⁷²³ Dietrich, however, believes this comes from the Bel-ibni who was appointed viceroy of Babylon during the time of Sennacherib *not* a lesser known namesake.⁷²⁴ In general, dating based on references to political problems and instability are problematic because similar conflicts often existed at end of one king's reign at a time of succession, and scribes often overlapped various kings' reigns.

The letter begins with an explanation for why Bel-ibni has been absent—men from Elam had slandered him to the (former) king to advance their own interests. In particular, one Elamite, identified as an “enemy” (*zi'irāna*), did something so offensive toward him that he was terrified of even coming into the court of the king. The phrase *dibbī bīšūti ana muhhia iškunuma ana ekalli išpura* (ll. 10-11) can be literally translated, “he pronounced malodorous words toward me and sent (them) to the palace,” though

⁷²¹ This explains why the final line of ABL 283, which mentions the ardent gripping of the general's hands so that he would not be put to shame, is *not* present in the corresponding letter to the king (ABL 793).

⁷²² Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*, 4:107.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, 4:110–1.

⁷²⁴ Manfred Dietrich, “Bēl-Ibni, König von Babylon (703-700). Die Rolle des Königs in den Neubabylonischen Briefen,” in *Dubsar Anta-Men. Studien zur Altorientalistik (Alter Orient und altes Testament, Veröffentlichungen zu Kultur und Geschichte des alten Orients und des alten Testaments 253; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998)*, 83.

translators use the figurative resonance of the expression to convey the sense of a bad/evil or shameful report against him.

Later in the letter, Bel-ibni expresses his ambition that the king himself would put a stop to the denigration he has been experiencing. He needs the king's protection so that others at court would not "misconstrue my actions" (Pfeiffer), "misrepresent my words" (Waterman), or "worsen my reputation" (Dietrich), the literal translation being "may no one make my words stink in the palace" (r. 5 *mamma dibbīa ina ēkalli lā uba'aš*).

NA Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 290:6⁷²⁵ *bi-šū-ú-tu*

Bišūti is a feminine adjective from the verb *ba'ašū*, this time a plural (-*ūtī*), usually translated "evil," used to reference "words" (*dibbī*) that were spoken by one party against another.

This letter was written by King Ashurbanipal to Sin-tabni-usur, governor of Ur under Ashurbanipal and a member of one of the oldest patrician families of it in his time. He was thought to have been appointed as early as 652 BCE, so this text may have been written c. 650 BCE. Ashurbanipal is responding to previously-written letter by Sin-tabni-usur in which he indicates concern that his brother, Sin-shar-usur,⁷²⁶ spoke against him.

Lines 5-6 read *mīnamma dibbīka bišūtu iqabbamma u anāku ašemmēš*, "how could he say evil words about you to me and I listen to him?"⁷²⁷ The phrase used in this rhetorical question, *dibbīka bišūtu* ("your evil words"), communicates more than mere

⁷²⁵ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 296.

⁷²⁶ See Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*, 4:114.

⁷²⁷ CAD B *bīšu* 3a, 271.

derogative comments. The context shows it carries all the intensity and emotion as you would expect from matters of life and death, for Ashurbanipal goes on to indicate that Sin-shar-usur and Umman-igash⁷²⁸ have teamed up to slander him *and* plot his death (obv. 16-rev. 3 “is it not for their purpose to have you perish with the house of your lord? . . . He and Umman-igash have conspired to bring about your death”).

However, the king reassures Sin-tabni-usur that he will not listen to Sin-shar-usur, for Shamash has “deranged his mind.”⁷²⁹ Ashurbanipal recognizes Sin-tabni-usur’s loyalty, posing the rhetorical question “what could they say against the servant who loves the house of his lord, that I would believe” (rev. 10-13). Sin-tabni-usur’s commitment to the king, withstanding enemy pressures and famine for his sake, evokes praise from the king, with a promise for favors to be extended to his grandchildren.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 301:8⁷³⁰ *bi-'-šū-ú-te*

Bišūte is a fpl of the adjective *bīšū* describing the noun “words” (*dibbī*), translated by the CAD as “bad things,”⁷³¹ by Waterman as “shameful words,”⁷³² and by Pfeiffer as “evil.”⁷³³

ABL 301:13⁷³⁴ *lu-ba-iš*

Luba'iš is a D injunctive 1cs verb from *ba'āšu*, translated figuratively as “I will make ____ vile/shameful.”⁷³⁵ It is here used in a negative manner in direct speech attributed to

⁷²⁸ Probably one of the sons of Urtaku of Elam, fugitive from Assyrian and later king of Elam. Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*, 4:114.

⁷²⁹ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 1:209. Pfeiffer translates: “robbed him of his senses.” Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 150.

⁷³⁰ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 305.

⁷³¹ CAD B *bīšū* 3a, 271.

⁷³² Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 1:209.

⁷³³ Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 70.

⁷³⁴ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 305.

⁷³⁵ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

Shamash-shum-ukin to refer to the name/reputation of the Babylonians, who side with Ashurbanipal against him.

ABL 301:22⁷³⁶ *tu-ba-‘-a-šá*

Tuba‘aša is a D stem durative 2cp from *ba‘āšu* with the *la-* negator, referring figuratively for the name/reputation of the Babylonians, though this time it spells out the exactly who their standing would be compromised with: the king and the surrounding countries (l. 20 *ina pāniya u ina pān mātāti gabbu*).

Written in Assyrian characters with notable a Babylonian dialect, this letter from Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria (668-626 BCE), to the people of Babylon, dated to May 23, 652 BCE, makes a last minute effort to win the Babylonians over to his side, despite the fact that Shamash-shum-ukin, his older brother who had been installed as viceroy in Babylon (668-648 BCE), had already taken a rebellious posture. The intentional and varied rhetorical techniques utilized in this letter (open insults, compelling sensory imagery, subtle word plays, praise and threat) are intended to persuade a change of position for the Babylonians with respect to their political loyalty. History shows the tactic did not work, and just two months later Ashurbanipal had troops marching to Babylon.⁷³⁷ Three occurrences of olfactory terminology occur in this letter (two *ba‘āšu* verb forms and the adjective *bīšū*).

Ashurbanipal’s attempt to get the Babylonian people to abort their allegiance to his older brother rests on emotional appeal every bit as it does on logical reasoning. To begin, Ashurbanipal brings up the *dibbī ša šāri* (“words of wind” or “empty words”) spoken by his brother, whom he insults as a “pseudo” or “false” brother (literally *lâ aḫi*, “not brother”). He tells them not to believe him, again calling them “wind” (*šāru*).

⁷³⁶ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 305.

⁷³⁷ See PRT 102 (LXIV). Waterman IV, 118.

Swearing by the gods Ashur and Marduk, he retorts that all the things spoken against him are *dibbī bīšuti*, that is, “false reports” or “evil words.”

Then Ashurbanipal makes a direct quote of Shamash-shum-ukin, charging him with worse than deceit for saying “I (Šamaš-šum-ukīn) will make the reputation of the Babylonians, his (Assurbanipal’s) friends, as vile as my own.”⁷³⁸ Here is our second explicit use of olfactory language, *luba’iš* (“I will make ___ vile/shameful”). It is now apparent that the use of threats based in sensory imagery is not the privy of Ashurbanipal alone, for Shamash-shum-ukin has already exploited similar language. Shamash-shum-ukin’s boast to undermine the reputation of Ashurbanipal supporters is outright rejected by Ashurbanipal, who highlights their brotherhood with the Assyrians and the rights and privileges they now have by virtue of his rule. He tells them not to believe “his lies,” or rather “his wind” (*šaratēšu*), for this would only bring disrepute on their presently spotless name.

The phrase *šunkunu ša ina panā u ina pan mātāti gabbu banû la tu-ba-‘a-šá* (II. 20-22), translated “do not besmirch your reputation, which is good in my eyes and in the eyes of the whole country”⁷³⁹ or “do not contaminate your good name, which is unsullied before me and before the whole world,”⁷⁴⁰ contains the last reference: *lâ tuba’áša* (“you shall not make ___ stink”). The hope (with a threat implicit) is that they would not compromise their presently good name/reputation by believing Shamash-shum-ukin’s lies.

⁷³⁸ LI. 12-13. CAD provides *šumu ša LÚ DIN.TIR.KI.MEŠ rā’imānīšu ittija lu-ba-iš*; Pfeiffer, “I will cover with shame the name of the Babylonians that, besides me, love him (also)” (Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 70); Waterman, “I will make the reputation of the Babylonians, who love him, as shameful as my own” (Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 1:209.).

⁷³⁹ Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 71.

⁷⁴⁰ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 1:209.

In this instance, it is not left to assumption with whom their reputation would become noxious too. Citing the king and surrounding countries implicates more than the Assyrian king's wrath, it also brings to fore their relationship and standing among their neighboring countries. The sentence immediately following, *u ramankunu ina pān ilī lā tuḥaṭṭâ* ("do not make yourselves sinners against the gods"), is placed in such a way as to suggest they are at risk of jeopardizing not only their status with Assyrian and local principalities, but their actions could stir up the ire of the gods.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 456:11⁷⁴¹ e-ri-šū

Erišu is a ms noun meaning "smell, scent, fragrance" (*erišu / erešu / irišu*). It is used literally in reference to ^{še}*zêru agannâ* ("fruits of the land"), as perceived by the individual making assessment as to the suitable fertility of the land.

In this letter, an unidentified individual, recently relocated from Uruk to Ninevah with his family, is requesting from the unspecified Assyrian king an apportionment of land in Ninevah suitable for producing fifty measures of grain and two homers of wine. Whoever this official was, he feels entitled to a certain income and living standard.⁷⁴²

The context in which the word appears is direct speech, as Nabu-ushabshi (see ABL 266 above) has made the letter-writer swear by the gods of the king (Ashur and Marduk, assumedly) as follows:

9-11 ^{šêr}*irti-a i-na* ʾUruk^{1(?)}^{ki} *ul ma-aḳ-ḳat-ma ap-pi-i lib-bi* ^{še}*zêru a-gan-na ul e-ri-šū*

⁷⁴¹ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 488.

⁷⁴² Oppenheim argues the phrase "in the shadow of the king" describes the special status and privilege accorded the kings' officials. A. Leo Oppenheim, "Assyriological Gleanings IV," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 103 (1946): 9. This phrase or a variation of it occurs four times in this letter.

“A suitable sacrificial portion is not found in Uruk, and my nostrils do not smell here the fruits of the cultivated land.”⁷⁴³

There are several noteworthy items with respect to the role of olfaction here. First, *erišu* is used for a positive, good smell. Second, it is captured in a direct quote as part of an oath sworn with an appeal to the gods. It appears the use of the olfactory reference, since it is not essential to the content, is intended to heighten the intensity, urgency, or impact of the statement. Third, the object making the olfactory assessment is not a group of people, or even an individual person, it is a particular feature of the human body, the nostrils (*appī libbi*). The use of nostrils rather than the nose is unique.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 460:4⁷⁴⁴ *bi-šu-tu*

Bišūtu is a fpl adjective describing *dibbī* (“words”), together rendered “bad/evil/foul words.” Ummanisibar and nobles of Elam are the subjects uttering these words, which are directed against the king.

Though not dated, this letter can be placed during the period of wars with Elam (648-640 BCE).⁷⁴⁵ It puts forth an appeal for Ashurbanipal to arrest Nabu-bel-shumate by military force in the city of Der, near the Elamite border. Nabu-bel-shumate, the grandson of Merodach-baladan II and king of the Sealands in approximately 652 BCE, had protested his loyalty to Ashurbanipal. However, ABL 289, which gives the official proclamation of Bel-ibni as the new governor of the Sealands in April 650 BCE, shows Nabu-bel-shumate had defected to Shamash-shum-ukin’s side during the war. For ten years afterwards, he was problematic to Assyrian interests in Babylon.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴³ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 1:319.

⁷⁴⁴ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 493.

⁷⁴⁵ Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, vii.

⁷⁴⁶ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*, 4:114.

In this letter, Umman-ishibar and other leaders have come together to lead a revolt against the king. Lines 4-5 indicate “they spoke evil words against their king” (*dibbī bi-šū-tu* [*ana muḥḥī*] *šarrišunu iddibbu*).⁷⁴⁷ Bel-ibni urges them to act swiftly to capture these cohorts, most noteworthy of whom is Nabu-bel-shumate, who is “rejected by Bel” and “accursed of the gods.” The sending of troops to squash this uprising is not just a necessary political move for Bel-ibni, its personal. With graphic detail, he relates the backstory about how Nabu-bel-shumate had imprisoned his older brother, Bel-shunu, for four years in horrible conditions until he rescued him. There is a high intensity of emotion evident in this letter.

NA Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 498 r. 9⁷⁴⁸ *bi-’-šū-tu*

Bi’šūtu is a fpl adjective used with *dibbīa*, translated “evil” for Marduk-zeribni’s accusations against the craftsman Ibashshi-ilu.

So far, all the letters have been focused on court officials. This one involves the religious sphere, as it pertains to the king’s work order for various votive gifts. The author, Ibashhi-ilu,⁷⁴⁹ itemizes the completion of crowns and disks and asks for access to the treasure house of the temple of Ashur (via the priest and Nabu-etir-napshate) to acquire gold and jewels already designated for the remaining items.

After giving his work status update and making the request for additional materials, Ibashshi-ilu reports that Marduk-zeribni, in collaboration with two other unknown figures (Arad-Nabu and Nadinu), has “spoken evil of him” (*dibbīa bi’šūtu idabbub*). The reason for this frank disclosure is not given, as he does not express his concern about this,

⁷⁴⁷ CAD B *bīšū* 3a, 271.

⁷⁴⁸ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 536.

⁷⁴⁹ Associated with the reign of Esarhaddon, and author of ABL 496-501.

unless we are to understand the abundant expressions of blessing and trust in the king, prayers for the well-being of the king, and praise for the king that are heaped upon him as, in some way, a subtle apologetic. Explicitly, though, there does not seem to be much concern about the false words spoken by Marduk-zeribni, though the way the letter ends is telling—Ibashshi-ilu wants the king to know that Marduk-zeribni has taken precious stones from the sealed treasury of Shum-idinna.

NA Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 716:27⁷⁵⁰ *bi-il-ti*

If read *amātā bi'iltī* with the CAD, instead of *amāt abilti* (“a word of violence”),⁷⁵¹ then *bi'iltī* is a fpladjective for *amātu* (“word, report”), translated “evil words,” spoken about an administrative official by his enemies to the king.

ABL 716:r. 3⁷⁵² *bi-il-tú*

If as above, this is another fpladjective for *amātu* (“word, report”), translated in the same sense.

In this letter, the longest one seen yet, the administrative official Nabu-balatsu-ikbi, in outright desperation, addresses the king (Ashurbanipal),⁷⁵³ taking up two main issues: 1) the lack of response regarding his prior letter involving his unjust suffering at the hands of men who are intent on taking his life, and 2) the injustice practiced by the new magistrate, Sharruludaru. In terms of dating, the repeated references to Sharruludaru, whose name is found in eponym in 664 BCE, and the phrase “before the hostility” (obv. 10) suggest it was written after the war with Babylon (648 BCE), perhaps from

⁷⁵⁰ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 768.

⁷⁵¹ From *apālu*. Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, vol. 2, 4 vols., University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930), 4; Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 145.

⁷⁵² Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 769.

⁷⁵³ Presumably Assurbanipal by virtue of the title “Lord of Kings” (Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*, 4:223.) and *limmu* dating of ABL 176 to 654 BCE (Ibid., 4:74.).

Borsippa.⁷⁵⁴

Nabu-balatsu-ikbi describes the unjust and inhumane treatment he received at the hands of Arrabi, who publically seized his possessions and took custody of him without the authorization of the king, leaving him hungry and thirsty and without adequate care. That was what first prompted him to send word to the king that he was being held capture without orders and there was daily plotting to take his life, with two men having been hired as hitmen.

The expression “they report evil words (*amāta bi’ilti*) about me to the king” occurs twice in this context. In quoting his prior letter, Nabu-balatsu-ikbi states “they speak *amāta bi’ilti* before the king so that the king will kill me” (ll. 27-28, *u kī amāta bi’ilti ina pān šarri iqabbūma šarru dīkanni*), and then “because they have caused *amāta bi’ilti* to reach the king” (r. 3-4 *kī amāta bi’ilti adi pān šarri bēlia ultakšiduni*). Nabu-balatsu-ikbi rightly understands his life is on the line, as the evil plotting and scheming of his enemies could evoke the wrath of the king if he were to believe their word against his.

The rest of the letter delves into Sharru-ludaru’s unjust practices and the reversal of the former magistrate’s decision to release the men of his father’s house. When Nabu-balatsu-ikbi spoke out against him, it backfired,⁷⁵⁵ and Sharru-ludaru appointed one in the assembly of the servants of the king to contend against him. Angrily, Nabu-balatsu-ikbi casts a curse against Sharu-ludaru—“May Marduk, whose strength/frightfulness is in the storm/is the tempest, strike him with lightning” (r. 25).

From a position of weakness and anticipation, Nabu-balatsu-ikbi states his final appeal

⁷⁵⁴ Wright believes the *nābu* language suggests this. “The City of Larsa in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Study of Urban and Intercity Relations in Antiquity” (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1994).

⁷⁵⁵ Twenty to thirty *ikkata* came up missing (Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 5; Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 146).

for the king's intervention to restore all the missing property.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 752 r. 24⁷⁵⁶ *bi-šú-tu*

Bišūtu is a fpl adjective used with *dibbi*, translated together as “evil words” that were spoken, in opposition to “honorable words” (l. r. 25).

Thought difficult to decipher because of the broken context, particularly in the middle, this letter from Nabu-ushabshi (see ABL 266) to King Ashurbanipal,⁷⁵⁷ comes at the time of the civil war (652-648 BCE), where paranoia peaked.⁷⁵⁸ Nabu-ushabshi asks the king to inquire after the city of Pukudnu in the southern part of Babylon, in particular to question Bel-ibni of the Sealand for confirmation. After an update on artisan projects and troops (which is not positive), the context breaks up around the reference to *ù dibbi bi-šú-tu [... idab]bub* (“evil words”).⁷⁵⁹ There is an interesting contrast of this phrase with *dibbī babbunûtu*, (“honorable words”) in r. 25. The adjective *babbanû* (from *banû*, “to be good, beautiful”), is used descriptively for good quality (of objects, people, buildings) and for something that is good or positive.⁷⁶⁰ ABL 301 r. 7 (see above) uses *šumu babbanû* (“good reputation”) in juxtaposition with *dibbī bišuti* (“evil report”), and BIN 1 75:12 (see below) contrasts *amat babbanitu* (“good news”) with *amat...bi'ilti* (“bad news”).

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 1106 r. 15⁷⁶¹ *bi-'il-ti*

⁷⁵⁶ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 807.

⁷⁵⁷ Line r. 22 references “Esarhaddon the king, your father.”

⁷⁵⁸ On the general situation at this time, see A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria* (New York: C. Scriber's Sons, 1923).

⁷⁵⁹ CAD B *bīšu*, 270. Waterman renders [*i-dib*]-*bu-ub*. Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 2:28.

⁷⁶⁰ See CAD *babbanû* b, 8.

⁷⁶¹ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 1219.

As with ABL 716, if the reading *amātā bi'iltī* is taken,⁷⁶² then *bi'iltī* is a fpladjective for *amātu* (“word, report”), translated “evil words,” spoken by Bel-ibni about the writer and his “brother.”

This letter deals with the prelude to the final revolt of Shamash-shum-ukin. The author is thought to be Nabu-ushabshi of Uruk due to reference to Sin-ibni as the writer’s “brother,”⁷⁶³ and it is closely related to ABL 1241 and ABL 754.⁷⁶⁴ Though the tablet is broken at the beginning, it is apparent this letter involves the situation at Uruk as Shamash-shum-ukin’s advance is felt. A series of informational items are given, including the author’s insistence that 1) he did give orders to a certain individual, whose name we do not know due to damage to the text, who did not execute them,⁷⁶⁵ 2) he did in fact send a message to Apla, the governor of Arrapha(?), and to Kudurru of Uruk, warning them of Shamash-shum-ukin’s military advance, and 3) ever since the king gave the Sealand to Nabu-kudurri-usur (Nebuchadrezzar), Bel-ibni (son of Nebuchadrezzar) has hated them. The author claims in r. 15-16 that Bel-ibni “spoke evil words” (*bi'ilti [iqa]bbi*) against him and his “brother” (a king of equal status), Nebuchadrezzar,⁷⁶⁶ but the king should not listen to the words of his mouth. The remaining ten lines are so damaged as to not be helpful.

Waterman questions whether this Bel-ibni, here identified as heir to

⁷⁶² With the CAD B *bīšū*, 270, instead of *amāt abilti* (“words of violence” or “abusive words,” from *apālu*), as per Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 2:269.

⁷⁶³ See ABL 974 r. 5. Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part III Commentary*, vol. 3, 4 vols., University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1931), 300.

⁷⁶⁴ ABL 1241 involves the people of Ur, Kisik, and Shattina appealing to King Ashurbanipal for military protection against the Sealand, Pukudu, and Gurasimmu who mobilize against them. ABL 754 includes mention of Sin-tabni-usur’s message to Apla and Nabu-ushabshi that Shamash-shum-ukin gaining control of the land, with indications of their helpful intervention.

⁷⁶⁵ The individual’s name ends with -iddina and he is identified as bearer of the dagger of Sin-balatsu-ikbi.

⁷⁶⁶ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part III Commentary*, 3:300.

Nebuchadnezzar, is the well-known Bel-ibni, appointed by Ashurbanipal as governor of the Sealands in 650 BCE, who authored some of the letters already studied.⁷⁶⁷

However, in *A History of Assyria*, Ohmstead argues the accusation against Bel-ibni in this letter occurs prior to Bel-ibni receiving his father's governance in 650 BCE, which shows the king sided against the author of this letter despite his admonition. As such, the time of disgrace suffered by Bel-ibni (mentioned in ABL 283 and ABL 793) would have taken place prior to these events.⁷⁶⁸

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 1131 r. 9⁷⁶⁹ *bi-'-šú-ti*

Bi'šūti a fpl adjective translated “bad” or “evil” and describing the *dibbī* (“matters” or “things”) done “behind the king’s back” (*ina kutal šarri epšū*).

Authored by Silla to the king, probably Ashurbanipal, somewhere around 650 BCE, this letter invokes Enlil, Ninurta, and Nusku, suggesting the Nippur area as the source.⁷⁷⁰ This short letter makes a dire request for the king’s presence and leadership, as Silla relates the advance of Nabu-shallim and Elamite troops into Epadu, Dummuku, and Banana, where slaughter was taking place.⁷⁷¹ He explains he has not come because it is in the best interest of the king, for *dibbī ibâšši bi-'-šú-ti ina kutal šarri epšū*, “evil things indeed are done behind the king's back”⁷⁷² or “the matters are bad in the rear of the

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁸ Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, 454.

⁷⁶⁹ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 1254.

⁷⁷⁰ Reynolds, *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon, and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-Šarru-İškun From Northern and Central Babylonia*, 18.

⁷⁷¹ Mention of Silla and Nabu-shallim point to the early years of Ashurbanipal's civil war (c. 652 BCE). Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part III Commentary*, 3:306.

⁷⁷² CAD B *bīšu* 3b, 271.

king.⁷⁷³ This expression differs in syntax with other uses of *bi'sūti* already studied, as it is the subject of the verb *bāšu* and not in construct with *dibbi* as the object of a verbal clause (often *dabābu*).⁷⁷⁴ It is followed by ardent appeal for the king's presence to come and direct, as they are lost without it.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 1286:10⁷⁷⁵ *i-bi-'-iš*

Ibi'iš is a G durative 3cs from *ba'āšu*, used figuratively in referring to the future of the king. The CAD translates “is even worse,⁷⁷⁶ Waterman as “will be more vile.”⁷⁷⁷

Bel-ibni, it is assumed, writes to King Ashurbanipal concerning the seizure and extradition plans for Nabu-bel-shumate from Humbanshibar in Elam.⁷⁷⁸ The letter can be dated just prior to January, 642 BCE, when two embassies from Humbanshibar come to Bel-ibni, the first indicating Nabu-bel-shumate would be delivered up, the second indicating it was too late, that he had taken his own life.⁷⁷⁹ In making his recommendation that a messenger be sent by the king with extradition papers stating Nabu-bel-shumate has been taken into guard and prevented from escape, and the people of Elam will seize other “sinners,” Bel-ibni makes a startling comment: “your future is even worse than your past” (*ūmka urkū alla mahrî i-bi-'-iš*).⁷⁸⁰ Waterman

⁷⁷³ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 2:289.

⁷⁷⁴ Also unique is the prepositional phrase “in the rear of the king” (*ina kutal šarri*) or, more figuratively, “behind the king's back.”

⁷⁷⁵ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 1436.

⁷⁷⁶ CAD *ba'āšu* A 1b, 4.

⁷⁷⁷ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 2:397.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 339 (more details in ABL 281).

⁷⁷⁹ Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, 483.

⁷⁸⁰ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 1b, 4.

translated “the latter will be more vile than the first.”⁷⁸¹ The saying seems to convey a grave and somewhat accusatory tone about the future.

NB Letter (Ninevah)

ABL 1374:12⁷⁸² *ú-ba-‘-a-šú-ú*

Uba‘ašū is a D durative 3mp from *ba‘āšu* translated figuratively “they bring into disrepute,” referring to the author’s words (“my words,” *dibbīya*). The subject responsible for making his words noxious to the king is an unknown opposition group.

Written as an entreaty for intervention to “the king of the world” (suggesting either Sargon or Ashurbanipal),⁷⁸³ this unknown author testifies to a miserable treatment at the hands of his captors, who attack and threaten his life on a daily basis. It appears the author has been physically detained by palace officials, and he has not only been imprisoned but physically assaulted and accosted with death threats on a daily basis. Without permission to take his life, this man’s enemies have taken a different tact—to spread slanderous words about him throughout the palace. Cole and Machinist translate lines 12-16: “But because they couldn’t kill me they are speaking to the king’s magnates, their allies, and they are filing complaints against me before the king” (*ki-i šú-nu la id-du-ku-in-ni ana LÚ.GAL.MEŠ šá LUGAL LÚ.EN.MEŠ—MUN.HI.A-šú-nu i-qa-ab-bu-ú-ma di-ib-bi-ia ina pa-an LUGAL uba‘ašū*).⁷⁸⁴

The author is absolutely incredulous that not one bad report about their actions has circulated in the palace, whereas they have “turned the whole palace against me!”

⁷⁸¹ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 2:397.

⁷⁸² Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 1540.

⁷⁸³ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part III Commentary*, 3:355.

⁷⁸⁴ Cole and Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*, 153. Note: ABL 1374 ll. 12-16 = 20'-26' because damaged lines were added to the beginning. Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*, 2:397.

(7'-8', *ekalli gabbi ana muḥḥia ul-te-ed-bi-bu*).⁷⁸⁵ The implications of this are not only disadvantageous, they are perilous: “the king must not deliver me into their hands! I am alone. I have no one. They beat me, and with each blow [. . .] I die. I have no one.”⁷⁸⁶ The text breaks off before it finishes, but not before communicating this sobering and frenzied appeal.

NB Letter (Uruk)

TCL 9 129:17⁷⁸⁷ *bi-šū-*'

Bīšu could be a G stative 3ms with subjunctive *-u* from *ba'āšu* (as per CAD) or the ms adjective *bīšu* used in a verbless sentence. With *panīšu*, the CAD and Ebeling render this figuratively in the sense of “to be angry” or “to be bad-off” (in reference to the planter, Zukaya).⁷⁸⁸

Nabu-ah-iddina writes to Nadinu, his “brother” (in the sense of business associate) to report on work conditions and situations with respect to canal digging and farming. He discusses sending five individuals (Shula, Nadin, Na'id-Ishtar, Mukkea, and Shadunu) and the work they were hired to do. He relays word from Etillu, the planter, concerning irrigation channels that have been dug already and need to settle accounts with individuals not yet paid so they can continue to work. In lines 15-17, he says, *Zukkaya mimmu ša ikkalu jānu u panīšú bišû*, and the CAD translates “PN has nothing to eat and he is angry.”⁷⁸⁹ The letter goes on to express Nabu-ah-iddina’s frustration about profit margins and the accusation that he’s committing an offense (of which he swears is not the case). The letter ends with an ardent appeal for payment to be sent.

⁷⁸⁵ CAD D *dabābu* 9d, 13.

⁷⁸⁶ LI. r. 11-13. Cole and Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*, 153.

⁷⁸⁷ Contenau, *Contrats et Lettres*, 44.

⁷⁸⁸ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5. Ebeling translates “es geht ihm schlecht (sein Antlitz ist böse),” showing how he makes sense of this awkward expression. Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 281.

⁷⁸⁹ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

NB Letter (Uruk)**YOS 3 17:19**⁷⁹⁰ *bi-šu-*'

As with the parallel letter discussed above (TCL 9 127), *bîšu* could be a G stative 3ms with subjunctive *-u* from *ba'āšu* (as per CAD), translated along the lines of “to be angry,” or the ms adjective *bīšu* used in a verbless sentence.⁷⁹¹

This letter from Nabu-ah-iddina to the administrator of the Eanna temple (*šatammu*) is very similar, at times identical, to TCL 9:129 (see above).⁷⁹² In dealing with payment for the digging of particular irrigation canals, Nabu-ah-iddina relays the news that Zukkaya has nothing to eat and he is either angry (CAD) or in poor condition (Ebeling).⁷⁹³ After complaining about a series of things, he mentions various dealings with the *šangû* (temple manager), *šerkû* (“temple devotees”), and *agrūtû* (“wage workers”). The primary concern is reiterated again at the end of this long letter—concern for proper payment of the planters/farmers.

NB Letter (Uruk)**YOS 3 19:21**⁷⁹⁴ *bi-šu-*'

As in TCL 9 129:17 and YOS 3 17:19 above, *bîšu* can be taken as a G stative 3ms with subjunctive *-u* from *ba'āšu*, though in this case, because it lacks the *panīšu*, the CAD renders it in the figurative sense of “to be of a bad quality.”⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁰ Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 6.

⁷⁹¹ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

⁷⁹² It is not clear if the individual addressed in TCL 9 129, Nadinu, is in fact the name of the temple administrator (*šatammu*) addressed in this letter. While both Nadinu and “the temple administrator” are addressed as “my brother,” the slight differences, such as the use of third person address with titulary (l. 5 *bêlu išakkana*) instead of the second person (l. 6 *tašakkana*), as in TCL 9 129, suggest these are different individuals.

⁷⁹³ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5. Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 15. Note the corrected reading, *mimma ša ilka(!)lu jānu [pa]nišu bi-šu-*'.

⁷⁹⁴ Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 8.

⁷⁹⁵ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 1a, 4.

Another letter from Nabu-ah-iddina to the *šatammu*, this letter addresses the work of farming plots of land recently acquired by the Eanna temple in Uruk.⁷⁹⁶ Conditions are not good, he explains, with extremely laborious work, salary payment difficulties, and food shortages among workers. In relaying the various troubles and difficulties encountered, Nabu-ah-iddina mentions the antagonism/opposition felt from others.⁷⁹⁷ The CAD translates the phrase *dibbī lu mādu akanna ina muhḫini bi-šu-‘* as “there is a great deal of grumbling against us here,”⁷⁹⁸ and Ebeling translates “Wisse, viele böse Redereien sind hier wider uns” (“know that much gossip is against us here”).⁷⁹⁹

The statement is made in passing, though not without significance. The fact that “the words...are bad” (*dibbi...bišu’*) against them is not a matter of mere insults, for the letter goes on to indicate Gimillu son of Innimma-shum-ibni has been taken in iron shackles. This court official, Gimillu, is known to have extensive criminal dealings involving theft, duplicity, and double-dealing.⁸⁰⁰ In exasperation, Nabu-ah-iddina states in ll. 23-24: *ina muḫḫia pī marṣu nubattum la tabāta*, “Wegen des bösen Geredes sollst

⁷⁹⁶ According to Cocquerillat, a new formula of farming was instituted at the accession of Cambyses (530 BCE), creating a transition period that, for the head of the control of Eanna, was a source of extra work and worry. Having to compensate for the absence of farmers caused a significant correspondence between himself and the farm officials. Denise Cocquerillat, *Palmeraies et Cultures de l'Eanna d'Uruk <559-520>* (Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka 8; Berlin: Mann, 1968), 98.

⁷⁹⁷ The location of the farm is not apparent, though it is peripheral to Uruk, as demonstrated in YOS 3 79:22-27, which compares the price of dates in Uruk with that in the area the farm is located.

⁷⁹⁸ CAD B *ba’āšu* A 1b, 4.

⁷⁹⁹ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 19.

⁸⁰⁰ See YOS 7 7, 31, and 35 for the court trials involving animal mishandling and theft (including those belonging to the temple) and YOS 7 102 and 198 for more litigation involving this scoundrel. Dated from the first year of Cyrus’s reign all the way up to the sixth year of Cambyses, Tremayne marvels that this individual could hold office for so such a history. Tremayne, *Records from Erech, Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538-521 B. C.)*, 11–13.

du nicht übernachen”⁸⁰¹ (“Because of the evil talk against me, you shall not stay the night”), thus explaining the need to send 20 minas of silver to release him right away.

NB Letter (Uruk)

YOS 3 79:35⁸⁰² *bi-šu-‘*

Bîšu is a G stative 3ms with subjunctive *-u* from the verb *ba’āšu*, figuratively rendered as “to be of a bad quality.”⁸⁰³ In context, the reference is explicitly to the people there (*šābū akanna*) and not just their words about them.

Again writing the administrator of the Eanna temple (*šatammu*), Nabu-ah-iddina further recounts the adversity encountered in the farming temple lands. The work, he says, is laborious for them, as they have to keep going day and night without reprieve. After asking for input on his plan to provide dates as rations, he confirms the need for provisions as requested via Zabdia, the commander of the watch, letting him know it is better to send money to purchase dates rather than buying in Uruk because of inflated prices there. He informs the administrator that the silver which was supposedly sent had not arrived, and he wants to know how much silver it was—“if only 10 mina, then send another 10 quickly!” he says.

At the end the end of the letter, in describing the general conditions, Nabu-ah-iddina laments *dulla in muhhija dānu šābū akanna bi-šu-‘* (ll. 34-35). Ebeling translates “*Die Arbeit lastet schwer auf mir. Die Leute sind hier schlimm*”⁸⁰⁴ (“The work is heavy on me. The people here are bad/awful.”), indicating the locals are really bad (in terms of how they deal with or perceive the work crews), whereas the CAD translates, “the work is too much for me, the work crews are in bad condition here,” with reference to the

⁸⁰¹ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 19.

⁸⁰² Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 31.

⁸⁰³ CAD B *ba’āšu* A 1b, 4.

⁸⁰⁴ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 67, 69.

workers themselves suffering under the conditions.⁸⁰⁵ Whether or not *bišu'* refers to antagonistic locals or the workers' status, Nabu-ah-iddina's concern is for the workers' experience, as they are in desperate need of encouragement and relief. In that vein, the final request is to send Itti-Shamash-balatu, who was specifically requested by the people.

NB Letter (Uruk)

TCL 9 88:15⁸⁰⁶ *ṛi'-bi-'i-šū*

Ibi'išū is a G durative 3mpl from *ba'āšu*. As seen already, when used with *panū*, the verb can be translated "will be angry,"⁸⁰⁷ but in this case, the sense of anger does not seem to fit the context, as cattle (not certain individuals) are the subject. Though there are no similar examples cited, the CAD translates "will look bad."

What is legible of this letter from Nabu-ah-iddin to Nabu-bel-shunu concerns animal husbandry, presumably the administration of breeding herds of cattle and sheep for the temple.⁸⁰⁸ There is a specific concern stated in this letter that the cattle should not be transported until no sooner than the twentieth of the month Tebētu because they will lose weight due to bad weather conditions, with the stated result that *panīšunu ibi'išu* ("they will look bad").

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 26:31⁸⁰⁹ *bi-šū-tu*

Bišūtu is a fpl adjective used figuratively to modify *suluppī* (dates) in the sense of "bad quality."⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁵ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 1b, 4.

⁸⁰⁶ Contenau, *Contrats et Lettres*, 37.

⁸⁰⁷ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁰⁸ See G. Van Driel, "Cattle in the Neo-Babylonian Period," *Bulletin of Sumerian Agriculture* 8 (1995): 215–40 for more information about the subject.

⁸⁰⁹ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 8.

⁸¹⁰ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270.

Nabu-ah-iddina is here writing to Nabu-bani-ahi to address various goods related to the commerce of the Eanna temple (agricultural seed, wool, goat skins, ships, baskets, and dates). Before the text breaks off, Nabu-ah-iddina quotes a prior letter sent by Nabu-bani-ahi where he posed the question, “why is it that you send bad dates?” (In. 31-32 *ammīnî kî suluppī bi-šu-tu tušebbila*).⁸¹¹ We are left to imagine his response to this accusation.

LB Letter (Uruk)

YOS 3 185:14⁸¹² *bi-i-šú*

Bīšu a nominalized ms adjective used figuratively. The CAD renders as “the evil,” supplying the object qualified as “this affair” in a generic sense,⁸¹³ and Ebeling translates as “Das Böse (Debet)” (“bad debt”).⁸¹⁴

YOS 3 185:16⁸¹⁵ *bi-i-šú*

Bīšu is a nominalized ms adjective meaning “the bad” or “the evil,” like above.

This letter is broken at the beginning, so we do not know the full names of the author (...-Nabu) or the addressee (...-Uballit), but references to Gimillu place this text in the reigns of Cyrus or Cambyses. Short and cryptic, it involves a balancing or settling of accounts and what appears to be the “evil” (*bīšu*) of bad debt. As shown above, Ebeling renders lines 14-16, “Das Böse (Debet), das dabei stark ist,” with the subsequent phrase, “rechne als böses (Debet)”⁸¹⁶ (“The bad debt, which is strong, maintain as bad debt”), whereas the CAD is less specific: *bi-i-šú šá ina libbi lu mādu bi-i-šú* as “the evil of

⁸¹¹ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

⁸¹² Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 69.

⁸¹³ CAD B *bīšu* 3c, 271.

⁸¹⁴ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 147.

⁸¹⁵ Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 69.

⁸¹⁶ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 147.

this affair is very evil” (14-16).⁸¹⁷

Unique to this context is the figurative use of the adjective *bīšū* as a noun related to financial dealings gone awry. The following phrase, *u rihtu ana Gimillu idin* (17-18, “and give the remainder to Gimillu”) suggests a debt situation related to Gimillu, which comes as no surprise, as we have seen this individual is no stranger to scandal (see YOS 3 19). The letter ends with a request to hear a decision about an unknown matter quickly.

LB Letter (Uruk)

YOS 3 198:8⁸¹⁸ *bi-i-šú*

Bīšū seems to be a G stative 3ms of *ba’āšū*, with the subjunctive *-u*. When used with *paniya*, the verb is translated idiomatically as “I [am] angry.”⁸¹⁹ In this case, a dispute over seed results in conflict between two individuals.

In the ten lines of text preserved before the break, Eanna-shum-ibni expresses his frustration with Gimillu related to “his seed” (*zērišū*), used in the agricultural sense. He directly states, “I am angry with you” (l. 8 *paniya bi’išū*), though the basis is not altogether clear. Lines 6-7, which read *atta ta’idi kī ú-ba-ka*, are rendered “Du weisst, dass ich dich suche(?)” by Ebeling.⁸²⁰ We might expect the form *ti’di* not *ta’idi*, and the exact meaning of the verb *bu’û* is not clear.⁸²¹ It may be that Eannashumibni has sought out, called to account, or even filed a formal lawsuit against “his brother,” Gimillu, the rascal who we know to be implicated in all sorts of business misdealings.

⁸¹⁷ CAD B *bīšū*, 270.

⁸¹⁸ Clay, *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*, 73.

⁸¹⁹ CAD B *ba’āšū* A 2b, 5, no translation given. Ebeling translates “und dass ich ärgerlich.” Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 157.

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, 156–7.

⁸²¹ CAD B *bu’û*, 360ff.

LB Letter (Uruk)**YOS 6 222:6**⁸²² *bé-'e-e-šú**Bīšu*, carefully written out by the scribe, is a nominalized ms adjective used figuratively for “bad quality” with respect to dates and pomegranates.**YOS 6 222:13**⁸²³ *bé-'e-e-šú**Bīšu* is used in the same sense as above.

Dated to the twelfth year, 7th month, and 4th day of Nabonidus' reign (c. 543 BCE), this letter records a decision leveled against the ^{lú}GAL.DÙ, an official in charge of orchards for the temple of Eanna, who compromised his religious obligations by presenting an improper offering of dates and pomegranates. Dougherty, who published this text, believes this letter portrays a man bringing an offering to the temple for festal meal of Ishtar, the goddess of Erech, but because he failed to enter the temple in reverent manner (whether purposefully or inadvertently it is not clear), he was put into chains and the defiled offering was absconded and debarred from use in the temple.⁸²⁴ Cocquerillat, however, argues the offering was compromised not by an irreverent attitude but rather by inferior quality, for the ^{lú}GAL.DÙ would not have physically presented the fruit at the table of the goddess (it was the job of cooks to prepare the offerings). He would have delivered them to the temple, though, and was responsible for their quality.⁸²⁵

⁸²² Dougherty, *Records from Erech*, 75.

⁸²³ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸²⁵ Denise Cocquerillat, “Recherches sur le verger du Temple Campagnard de l’Akītu (KIRI6 Hallat),” *Die Welt des Orients* 7, no. 1 (1973): 111–12.

Line 6 reads *kūm bi-'e-šú ana Bēlti-ša-Uruk la iqrubu* and is translated “à, cause de (leur) mauvais état, celles-ci n'ont pas été présentées à la Dame d'Uruk”⁸²⁶ (“since [the dates and pomegranates] were bad, they were not presented to the Lady of Uruk”). Replacement dates and pomegranates from the temple of Eanna were presented by Zeriaah, the administrator of the Eanna, and the ^{lú}GAL.DÙ was locked up in the temple irons, for his impropriety had interrupted the regularly scheduled offerings. Meanwhile, Anum-sumli-isir sealed up the “bad” meal for the goddess (l. 13 *lurindu ša ana naptanu ušelamma kūm bi-'e-šú la iqrubu ina Eanna iknuk*).

LB Letter (Uruk)

YOS 7 90:15⁸²⁷ *bi-i-šú*

Bīšū is a mpl adjective used figuratively for something that has a bad quality.⁸²⁸ In this case, bad quality fish could also be bad-smelling fish, so the literal translation would work just as well contextually.

Written in 533/2 BCE, this document is a prebendal rental agreement with the Eanna temple, in which four individuals split fishing rights for a specified period of five and a half days (Samas-zero-lisir and Anu-Kashir on days one through three, and Nidintu and Tabnéa on days four through half of the sixth), dividing equally the surplus of their catch above the portion designated for the temple.⁸²⁹ In the midst of detailed liability and penalty clauses, this line appears: *kī nūnu ina sussullu indaṭū u KU₆.ḪI.A bi-i-šú ina manzaltišunu uqtarribi*, translated in the CAD as “should there be a shortage of fish in the basket or should bad fish be offered at their service places (they commit a sin

⁸²⁶ Ibid., 112.

⁸²⁷ Tremayne, *Records from Erech, Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538-521 B. C.)*, 37.

⁸²⁸ CAD B *bīšū* 2, 270.

⁸²⁹ Transliterated and translated into German by M. San Nicolo, “Parerga Babylonica XII,” *Archiv Orientalní* 6 (1934): 84ff.

against god and king).⁸³⁰ The deficiency in either quantity or quality would introduce unwelcome consequences.

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 18:19⁸³¹ *bi-'-šú*

Bīšu appears to be a G stative 3ms of the verb *ba'āšu* with the subordination marker *-u*. Because of the association with *pānišu*, the CAD places it with other examples of “to look or be angry.”⁸³² The object of the anger is *ana libbia*, that is, “to me.”

This letter of unknown dating references a legal transaction in which Rimut became a “son” to Nadin, though it is not clear if this involves a formal adoption. Marduk-sharrani and Nabu-zer-iddina are writing about this to Nadin (their Lord and the “father” of Rimut), communicating their request for Rimut to stay with them in Uruk. The phrase in line 18-19 (*ana libbia bi-'-šú*) demonstrates there has been some friction in the relationship. It is not translated in the CAD, but Ebeling renders, “Seine Verstimmung ist für mich schlimm” (“his mood is bad for me”),⁸³³ expressing the sense that Nadin is angry with him/them. The fundamental problem is made clear by the question Nadin had asked of them: “why was my loved one taken to Uruk without my permission?” Their answer—“your door is my door,” conveys the sense of mutuality between them with the hopeful request that Rimut can stay there with them.

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 22:6⁸³⁴ *bi-'-il-ti*

Bi'ilti is a fs adjective modifying *amātu*, “word.” The meaning is figurative, and it is

⁸³⁰ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

⁸³¹ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 6.

⁸³² CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

⁸³³ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 173.

⁸³⁴ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 7.

translated “böses Wort”⁸³⁵ or “evil rumors.”⁸³⁶ Note that *amāt* is later used in the phrase *amāt ša ana tikkia iddû* (“the word placed on my neck/throat”), an idiomatic expression not entirely clear in meaning.⁸³⁷

BIN 1 22:31⁸³⁸ *bi-sú-tu*

Bišūtu is a fpladjective modifying *dibbū*, also figuratively used and translated as above. This letter demonstrates the interchange of both *amātu / dibbu* as nouns and *bi'ilti / bištu* as adjectives.

Ninurta-sharru-usur writes his “brother” Nabu-ushabshi, reacting to something Nabu-ahu-iddina has written. The beginning of the letter reads *atta tīdi kī amat bi'ilti ina pī ibaššū*, “you well know that evil rumors are circulating.”⁸³⁹ “It’s nothing,” Ninurta-sharru-usur responds, hearkening the gods Bel and Nabu who know this to be true. An appeal to the gods as witnesses like this in the context of *amat bi'ilti* (“evil words/rumors”) is rare, which may heighten the significance of this situation. The insistence that nothing written about him was done “in goodness” (*ina dumqu*) indicates the malicious intent. Saying he has not spoken *to the king* the matter attributed “to his neck/throat” (ln. 10) indicates the bad reports circulating have ultimate consequence in relation to the highest authority. After tackling the subject of the repair and sending of signet ring/seal (the content of which is unknown due to lines 19-28 being badly damaged), Ninurta-sharru-usur questions why Nab-ahê-iddina wrote “bad words” about him (30-31, *mīnamma dibbi bisūti išappar*). Clearly the negative reports have had a major impact on him, to the point that he evidences his confusion and distress that his reputation has been soiled with the rhetorical question “why?”

⁸³⁵ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 173.

⁸³⁶ CAD B *bīšū* 3a, 271.

⁸³⁷ Cf. CAD N1 *nadû* 2a, 13', 82.

⁸³⁸ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 10.

⁸³⁹ CAD B *bīšū* 3a, 271. Ebeling unnecessarily inserts *šu* as follows: *atta tīdi kī amat bi'ilti ina pi-i-<šu> ibaššū*: “Du weisst, dass ein böses Wort in (seinem) Munde ist und dass nichts (daran) ist” (You know that a bad word is in (his) mouth and that (it) is nothing). Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 175.

NB Letter (Uruk)**BIN 1 36:30**⁸⁴⁰ *bi-še-e-tu₄*

Bišītu is a unique writing of the fs adjective *bištu*, used figuratively with the sense of “bad” or “evil”⁸⁴¹ to modify *šibtētu* (“fettters, imprisonment”).⁸⁴²

BIN 1 36:38⁸⁴³ *bi-še-e-tu₄*

Bišūtu is used again in the same manner as above.

The uniqueness of this letter is immediately apparent. Instead of specific names in the opening address, a generic group of Urukeans held captive writes to another. The urgency of their appeal erupts in the first statement (after the customary wish of health from Belit and Nana of Uruk) which begins with, in essence, “shame on you” (“an abomination to Shamash...”). The offense is that from the day they were apprehended, no one looked upon them or examined their side of the story. In fact, they are said to have concealed their cause from the royal officials (*rabūti ša šarri*). In conveying their frustrating situation, twice they reference the “grievous imprisonment” (l. 30 *bi-še-e-tu₄* *šabtāni*, böse Fesseln; l. 38 *bi-še-e-tum* [*šabtāni*], bösen [Fesseln])⁸⁴⁴ to which they are subjected. While the exact circumstances and needs of these captives are unclear, the desperation of their situation is unmistakable.

NB Letter (Uruk)**BIN 1 43:18**⁸⁴⁵ *bi-šu-tu*

⁸⁴⁰ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 13.

⁸⁴¹ CAD *bīšu* 3b.

⁸⁴² Ebeling reads *šib-te(!)-e-tum*. *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 188.

⁸⁴³ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 14.

⁸⁴⁴ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 189.

⁸⁴⁵ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 17.

Bišūtu is a fpl adjectivemodifying *dibbā*, translated figuratively as “evil words about me.”⁸⁴⁶ The writer of this letter fears others will report negatively about him to his supervisor.

Writing to the *šangu* (chief temple administrator) of Eanna, Ishtar-Ibni appears to be in dire straits. Allusions to guarding for the *šattumu* (another administrator) and something being taken suggest he may have been accused of theft. His primary concern is *dibbīja bi-šu-tu ana PN akkīja kī iddibbub*, “as soon as (anybody) says evil words about me.”⁸⁴⁷ The consequence of this negative report to the *šattumu* is severe: *Šilla dīnu ša napšāti ana libbia idibbub*, Silla will declare a verdict of life for me” (l. 23). The “verdict of life” (*dīnu ša napšāti*) is a capital offense implicating capital punishment, which demonstrates yet again the serious nature of one’s “bad/evil words” being reported to temple authorities.

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 52:5⁸⁴⁸ *ú-ba-’i-šú*

Uba’išu or *ubāšu* is a D preterite 3cs with the subjunctive *-u* from *ba’āšu* (“to smell/be bad”), rendered “to besmirch” or “to cast asperations.”⁸⁴⁹

Arad-Nabu writes his “brother” Bel-iddina concerning a disputation with Shula, who has rendered slanderous accusations against him in the course of their argument. The CAD provides (without translation) PN <šumī> *lu māda kī ú-ba-’i-šú*.⁸⁵⁰ Ebeling translates, “*Die Verläumdungen, so viele vorhanden sind, hat er bei mir vorgebracht.*”⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁶ CAD B *bīšu* 3a, 271.

⁸⁴⁷ CAD B *bīšu* 3a, 271.

⁸⁴⁸ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 204.

⁸⁴⁹ CAD B *ba’āšu* A 3b, 5.

⁸⁵⁰ CAD B *ba’āšu* A 3b, 5.

⁸⁵¹ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 204.

This idiomatic language conveys the sense that Shula has made slanderous accusations against Arad-Nabu. The dispute between them relates to barley being provided without proper recompense.

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 68:23⁸⁵² *bi-šū-tu*

Bišūtu is a fpl adjectivemodifying cattle (*alpē*), figuratively translated in the sense of “bad quality.”⁸⁵³

BIN 1 68:32⁸⁵⁴ *i-bi-’-šū*

Ibi’išu is a G durative 3cs from *ba’āšu*, with the *-u* subjunctive marker. As seen already, when used with *panū*, the verb is translated “will be angry.”⁸⁵⁵ In this case, one individual will be angry with another if there is not compliance with his counsel related to an important commercial matter.

Nabu-nasir writes Nabu-ushallim, his “brother,” with instructions pertaining to a sales transaction involving cattle. Those cows older than seven years are to be given the farmers, and a document is to be written up concerning the matter, stating that it is a gift. Nabu-nasir is sending Bel-ibni to receive ten cattle by the bulls, and he wants to make sure Nabu-ushallim expedites the process of selection himself. He specifically commands him: *alpē bi-šū-tu la tabeḥḥir la tanandaššu*, “Do not select poor quality cattle to give him.”⁸⁵⁶ The matter is urgent, as Nabu-nasir makes it clear that if he does not follow the instructions, he will be angry with Nabu-ushallim (*jānû pa-ni-ia ittika i-bi-’-šū*, “otherwise I will be angry with you”).⁸⁵⁷ This letter shows the range of meaning for

⁸⁵² Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 26.

⁸⁵³ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270. Ebeling: “schlechte.” Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 219.

⁸⁵⁴ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 26.

⁸⁵⁵ CAD B *ba’āšu* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁵⁶ CAD B *bīšu*, 270.

⁸⁵⁷ CAD B *ba’āšu* A 2b, 5. Ebeling translates, “Wo nicht, bin ich böse mit dir (ist mein Antlitz böse mit dir).” Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 219.

the words of a *bš* root, both as bad quality in reference to tangible, animate objects, and in the idiomatic usage as anger from one person toward another.

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 73:6⁸⁵⁸ *bi-šū-*'

Bīšu appears to be a G stative 3ms of the verb *ba'āšu* with the subordination marker *-u* used with *pānīja* in the figurative sense of “to be angry,”⁸⁵⁹ though the subjunctive is not explicit. Ebeling translates differently: “es geht mir schlecht (mein Antlitz ist schlecht)” (“I feel bad [my face is bad]”).⁸⁶⁰

Balatshu writes his “father,” Nabu-ah-iddina about the difficult situation he finds himself in. Calling Shamash as his witness, he exclaims *pānīja lā bišu'* (“I am not angry”). The use *lā* to negate the verb is puzzling, for the rest of the letter seems to indicate there is just cause for him to be agitated. Perhaps the sense is “Should I not be angry?” The *šangu* (temple administrator) does not speak with him and refuses to give the four shekels. Likewise he doesn't give something (unknown because of damaged text) to Zeriya son of Baniya. The *šangu* claims it is under the king's orders that he does so, but Balatshu refutes this, pointing out how he did not give money to Nabu-nadinshumi either. The letter breaks off before it ends, but Balatshu is definitely writing to seek full restitution for losses incurred. Passages like this suggest the use of the verb *ba'āšu* with *panū* as an expression of “to be angry” could indicate a heightened offense greater than a more common form of anger.

NB Letter (Uruk)

BIN 1 75:13⁸⁶¹ *bi-'il-ti*

⁸⁵⁸ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 27.

⁸⁵⁹ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁶⁰ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 221.

⁸⁶¹ Keiser, *Letters and Contracts from Erech*, 28.

Bi'ilti is a fpl adjective (“bad”) used figuratively alongside *babbānītu* (“good”) to describe *amātu*, “words.”

In this short letter, Innina-zer-ushabshi asks for a response from Innina-zer-ushabsi (written the same, though obviously a different person) and Nabu-musetiqu-irri, his “brothers.” More specifically, he wants to see the decision of Nabu-bani-ahi, though it is not clear what that pertains to. He is clearly agitated over the fact that he faithfully passes on “good and bad words, whatever I may hear here” (*amat babbānītu u bi-'il-ti mala akanna ašemmû*) to the chief temple administrator (*šatammu*), but no one will relay Innina-zer-ushabshi’s message to him (ll. 12-15).⁸⁶² Aware that his words could anger Innina-zer-ushabshi and Nabu-musetiqu-irri, there is an apologetic tone to his appeal.

NB Letter (Uruk)

TCL 9 138:7⁸⁶³ *bi-'e-šû*

Bīšû is a G stative 3ms form of the verb *ba'āšû* with the *-u* to mark subordination, translated figuratively in the sense of “to be angry” because of the presence of *panû* following.⁸⁶⁴ The parallel phrase, *malê libbāti*, communicates intense fury.

TCL 9 138:14⁸⁶⁵ *bi-'-šû*

Bīšû is similar to line 7 above, though without the “e” sign, and the word *panī* includes the suffix pronoun *šû* (“his”). In both cases, the literal expression involving a face that is bad is meant to communicate anger.

Unfortunately, the damaged introduction to this letter precludes an understanding of its authorship and audience, though references to “my lord” indicate a lower social standing. The legible portion begins with *hiṭu ša ana bêliya aḥṭû [an]nati ša malê libbāti bi-'e-šû pa-ni bêlī išpura*, “my lord has written me something that causes anger and

⁸⁶² Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 222.

⁸⁶³ Contenau, *Contrats et Lettres*, 52.

⁸⁶⁴ CAD B *ba'āšû* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁶⁵ Contenau, *Contrats et Lettres*, 52.

wrath” (ll. 5-7).⁸⁶⁶ Ebeling interprets more literally with “Die Sünden, die ich an meinem Herrn begangen (gesündigt) habe, sind diese, um voll zu sein von Zorn (und) Misstimmung (böse sein des Gesichtes)? Der Herr hat geschrieben.”⁸⁶⁷ Whether referring to offensive actions committed against the recipient of the letter which were full of anger/wrath and ill humor/evil (as per Ebeling) or to the author’s reaction of what his “lord” has written, which *provoked* anger and wrath (CAD), in either case, the offense between two individuals is apparent, along with the emotional intensity that accompanies it.

The letter goes on to quote Marduk-natsir’s instructions, the text of which is damaged. The author claims (on oath by Shamash and Marduk) to have fulfilled everything he wrote. The phrase in line 14, *bi-’-šu pa-ni-šú*, may relate to what follows in line 15 -16 (*nadī aḫi bišû ša akanna u ša akannaka ša bêliya*). Ebeling translates “wegen (?) seiner Misstimmung (Böse sein des Gesichtes) ist Nachlässigkeit hier und dort (bei Meinem Herrn).”⁸⁶⁸ The negligence pertaining to the affairs of his lord “here and there” seems to be characterized as “evil” or “awful,” but the author goes on to state his commitment to “my lord,” protesting his loyalty for the past ten years as he has guarded for his lord as one would guard his own father and his father’s house.

NB Letter (Uruk)

TCL 9 143:14⁸⁶⁹ *i-bi-šú-’*

lbišû is a G durative 3mpl from *ba’āšû*. With *panû*, it is translated figuratively “to be angry” or, in this case, “to look bad.”⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁶ CAD B *ba’āšû* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁶⁷ Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*, 287.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁹ Contenau, *Contrats et Lettres*, 53.

⁸⁷⁰ CAD B *ba’āšû* A 2a, 5.

The broken beginning of this letter limits a complete understanding of this letter, though it clearly contains a series of directives for temple personnel as relates to the importance of not interrupting temple service/offerings. Amidst other terse instructions, the following statement appears: *pa-ni ša alpī* UDU.NITA.MEŠ *u* MUŠEN.ĤI.A *la i-bi-šū-*, “cattle, sheep, and poultry must not look bad,”⁸⁷¹ indicating careful attention was given to the quality of animals that were to be sacrificed.

LB Letter (Uruk)

TCL 13 221:18⁸⁷² *bi-i-šú*

Bīšū is a ms adjective used figuratively for something that has a bad quality,⁸⁷³ which in this case is a feast (*naptānu*) presented to the deities.

Deposited in the Eanna temple in Uruk/Erech, this document produced by nineteen of the bakers, cooks, and other meal staff of the Bêlit of Erech contains a promise to fulfill their duties, chiefly to prepare attractive (*būnu*) meals for the deities. If they are the cause of an interruption to the feast schedule, or if they set out a bad feast (*naptānu bīšū ītepû*), they invite the wardens of Eanna to “utterly fill them.”⁸⁷⁴ As seen in YOS 6 222, disrupting the meals of the gods/goddesses is not to be taken lightly.

NB Letter (Uruk)

GCCI 2 399:19⁸⁷⁵ *bi-i-šú-*

Bīšū appears to be a G stative 3mpl of the verb *ba’āšū*, used figuratively with *pāniya*.

⁸⁷¹ CAD B *ba’āšū* A 2a, 5.

⁸⁷² Contenau, *Contrats Néo-Babyloniens*, 2:118.

⁸⁷³ CAD B *bīšū* 2, 270.

⁸⁷⁴ *mu-li-e*. Moore, *Neo-Babylonian Business and Administrative Documents*, 227.

⁸⁷⁵ Dougherty, *Archives From Erech*, 62.

The CAD renders “my face is bad” in the sense of “to be angry,” whereas Ebeling interprets as sadness: “Darüber bin ich betrübt.”⁸⁷⁶

Though this is a fragmentary letter of unknown author and recipient, its style of cuneiform is similar to other commercial and legal contract material attributed to the reign of Nabopolassar. A distinct sense of emotional distress is conveyed (most likely anger), for it appears multiple messages have been sent to “my lord” with no corresponding response. The reaction of *pāniya bīšū* (“my face is bad”) *ina libbi* (“in my heart”) explains the ardent closing appeal for the recipient to communicate back with the sender and the people.

NB Letter

UCP 10 p. 260:13⁸⁷⁷ *bi-il-tu₄*

Bi-il-tu₄ may be the fs adjective *bi'iltu* (“bad”) used to figuratively to describe *ḥarrānu* (“business venture/trip”), translated by the CAD as “he engages in disreputable business in the city.”⁸⁷⁸

The text is a recorded deposition before six councilmen, either concerning the presentation of a tax liability (as per Lutz) or as witness testimony of corrupt business practice in the city by beer merchants (CAD interpretation).⁸⁷⁹ If used in the latter sense, the word *bi'iltu* is used figuratively for general business practice in order to describe

⁸⁷⁶ CAD B *ba'āšu*, 2b, 5, no translation given.

⁸⁷⁷ Lutz, “A Recorded Deposition,” 261.

⁸⁷⁸ ll. 12-13: KAŠKAL¹¹ *bi-il-tu₄ ina āli illak*. CAD B *bīšu* 3b, 271.

⁸⁷⁹ Lutz, who published the text, translates *bi-il-tu₄* as the ms noun *biltu* (“tax”) with the latter portion of this phrase (*bi-il-tu₄ ina āli illak*, “he goes for tax (payment) to the city”). This reading places *ḥarrāni* in construct with words preceding it: *kurunnu amēlūti^{mes} maḥīru ū ḥarrāni*, “(concerning) prime beer of men of gain and business enterprise.” “A Recorded Deposition,” 261. This interpretation has lexical support for the form *biltu*, “tax” (whereas *bi'iltu*, “bad,” is not found in any lexical texts). For example, see CAD B *biltu*, 229: ŠU.GÁ.GÁ // *na-še-e bi-il-tú*, ŠU.GÁ.GÁ // *na-še-e še-er-ti* GCCl 2 406:5f. (comm. to med. text). However, the idiomatic use of the verb *alāku* (“to go”) with *ḥarrānu* for a business trip or venture is attested, supporting the first reading. For example, see CAD *ḥarrānu*, 5: KASKAL¹¹ *ana elātišunu ul illaku*, they must not engage in a business venture other than that (stipulated in the agreement) TCL 13 184:15; *našparta ša KASKAL¹¹-šú-nu illaku*, they shall carry out the instructions for their business venture Nbn. 653:12.

corruption or fraud, which is an altogether unique usage.

NB Letter (Ur)

UET 4 188:8⁸⁸⁰ *bi-iš-šú*

Bīšu is here a G stative 3ms of the verb *ba'āšu*, with subjunctive marker *-u*, used in the phrase *pa-an ša* 'PN *ina libbi bi-iš-šú*, translated in the CAD as "PN is angry about that."⁸⁸¹ Used in reference to Ubarti, the official in charge of feeding livestock.

Written in the early years of Nabopolassar, c. 625 BCE, this letter from Sin-abkal-ilani to his master (Sin-etel-ili) relates to the delivery of a slave girl to the palace.⁸⁸² There is discussion about the circumstance of Sin-etel-ili making the slave sleep in the cattle house, and how that was or was not communicated by the *rab kiššati* (the official in charge of fodder). The letter contains a clear statement of Ubarti's agitation (using the expression *pān ša* 'PN *ina libbi bīšu*) with respect to all of this, though the precise details are unclear because the role of Ubarti and the intent of the *rab kiššati* are ambiguous in this passage. What is clear is that the communication about the problem to Sin-etel-ili has now been sent.

NB Letter (Borsippa)

AfO 19 82:13⁸⁸³ *i-bi-iš-šu(!)-'*

Ibi'iššu G durative 3cs from *ba'āšu* with *-šu* 3ms suffix pronoun("it") and subjunctive *-u* ending, used figuratively with *panu* ("face") in the expression "to be angry with."⁸⁸⁴

Bel-iddin, an individual who shows up in a number of similar letters, writes a private letter to Rimut-Bel, his lord, giving a good report of Re'indu (perhaps his wife)

⁸⁸⁰ Figulla, *Business Documents*, 58.

⁸⁸¹ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁸² Figulla, *Business Documents*, 15.

⁸⁸³ Ungnad, "Neubabylonische Privaturkunden," 82.

⁸⁸⁴ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5. The duplication of the shin is curious.

and the rest of the household.⁸⁸⁵ The reason for the letter may be a financial matter and its implications. He instructs him, *lā tamḥaraṣ u pānika la ibi'iššū*, “you shall not deduct, and you must not be angry.”⁸⁸⁶ The letter goes on to indicate Bel-iddin’s concern for the health and life of his lord and desire for his presence with them in Borsippa.

LB Letter

CT 22 4:23⁸⁸⁷ *bi-i-šū-*'

Bīšū is a G stative 3ms with the subjunctive *-u* from *ba'āšū*, translated with the sense of “to be angry” by the CAD⁸⁸⁸ because of the connection to the preceding *pāni ša bēliya ana libbiya . . .* (“the face of my Lord in his heart. . .”). As stated in other instances above, the form could also be the ms adjective *bīšū* used in a verbless sentence.

This letter from Ebabbara-shadunu to an unnamed governor/high official (*kīpu*), his “father,” follows up on prior letter in which the official asks about iron (*parzillu*) which is due him.⁸⁸⁹ Ebabbara-shadunu insists he neither ate food or drank water until he had obtained and sent it to his lord. He renounces having cheated his lord (*ḥīṭu ana bēlia ul aḥṭū*, l. 17-18) and inquires “why is my lord angry with me . . .” (*eli mīnu kī ḥannaqāta . . .*, ll. 19-20), followed by a related question: . . . *u pāni ša bēliya ana libbija bi-i-šū-*' , ll. 21-23), which Thompson translates “. . . and the face of my lord is unkindly turned against me?”⁸⁹⁰ This is a unique pairing of the stative verb *ḥanāqu* with *ba'āšū*. *Ḥanāqu* is used literally as “to strangle, to constrict, compress,” and, on a few occasions, figuratively for

⁸⁸⁵ Ungnad, “Neubabylonische Privaturkunden,” 82.

⁸⁸⁶ CAD B *ba'āšū* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁸⁷ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:4.

⁸⁸⁸ CAD B *ba'āšū* A 2b, 5.

⁸⁸⁹ Other letters from Ebabbara-shadunu deal with updates concerning shepherds (CT 22:3) and requests for flour, salt, silver, and iron ore, of which Ebabbara-shadunu explains there is none (CT 22:2). Apparently, this was not acceptable, as seen in this letter.

⁸⁹⁰ Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*, 9. Similarly, Ebeling renders “und ist das Antlitz meines Herrn gegen mich böse?” *Neubabylonische Briefe*, 4.

“to be annoyed.”⁸⁹¹ One wonders if there is any significance to the choice of this verb over the more familiar words for “to be angry”: *zenû*, *kamālu*, and *ṣarāḫu*. Perhaps further study would shed light on whether it was indiscriminate or if they are in some way semantically related.

LB Letter

CT 22 40:9⁸⁹² *bi-šū-'-a*

Bīšū'a is listed in the CAD as uncertain, as the *-a* ending is an anomaly.⁸⁹³ Following the reconstructed [*dib*]-*bi*, and ignoring the *-a*, this may be the G stative 3ms with subjunctive *-u* from *ba'āšū*, used figuratively with *dibbi* to convey the sense of “matters” or “things” being bad.⁸⁹⁴

CT 22 40:20⁸⁹⁵ *i-bi-šū-'*

Ibi'išū is a G durative 3cs from *ba'āšū*, with the *-u* subjunctive marker, used with *panū* figuratively, and negated by the *la* preceding it, thus translated as “so-and-so will not be angry.”⁸⁹⁶

Arad-bel is the author of several letters (CT 22 37-40), through which he directs business transactions with Marduk-shuma-iddin (silver, wine, sheep, corn, sesame, grapes), he responds to the priest of Sippar who has written him about the corn and wine that he owes to Shamash-upahhir, and he provides Shamash-ahi-iddin, his “father,” with explanations and instructions pertaining to the money due and goods transferred. In this letter, Arad-bel writes his “sister,” Epirtum, with expressions of personal interest—for example, he is glad to know she is about to become a mother).⁸⁹⁷ He, on the other

⁸⁹¹ CAD H *ḥanāqu*, 77.

⁸⁹² Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:40.

⁸⁹³ CAD B *bīšū* 3a, 271.

⁸⁹⁴ Ebeling translates “[und die Wor]te sind schlimm.” *Neubabylonische Briefe*, 25.

⁸⁹⁵ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:40.

⁸⁹⁶ Ebeling translates “Das Antlitz der Bazitu möge nicht böse sein!” *Neubabylonische Briefe*, 25.

hand, is not doing well. Lines 8-9 read *dib-bi gab(?) -bi(?) . . . bi bi-šu-'-a*, which has been translated “matters are going badly with me”⁸⁹⁸ or “the things I heard are bad indeed.”⁸⁹⁹

Arad-bel asks Epirtum to send one mana of silver. When asking about the welfare of some other women, he singles out Bazitu, whom he hopes is not upset (*pa-ni ša PN la i-bi-šu-'*, l. 19-20). It is not obvious whether the subsequent phrase, “to/with Shamash-ahi-iddin, my brother,” is part of this expression (as per Thompson) or intended to go with the invocation of the blessing of Nabu and Marduk that follows (Oppenheim).⁹⁰⁰ The letter ends with instructions concerning the cassia which he sent and dates in her care. Though broken at the end, there are indications of his involvement in legal proceedings (*dīnu*), though it is not clear if lawsuits are initiated by or against him.

LB Letter

CT 22 155:11⁹⁰¹ *bi-'-šu-tu*

Bišūtu is a fpl adjective used with *dibbīšu* (“his words”), translated together figuratively as “evil words”⁹⁰² or “evil things” for whomever speaks against Bel-epush with evil words or malicious slander.⁹⁰³

Nabu-hili-ilani intercedes on behalf of Bel-epush to his “brothers” Ugaria, Balatu, Nabu-bel-shume, and Shamash-udammīq. He also calls Bel-epush a “brother” and asks

⁸⁹⁷ The exact relationship is not clear. Whether or not they were biologically related, they at least seem to have lived in the same house. François Martin, *Lettres Néo-Babyloniennes* (Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études. IVe section, Sciences historiques et philologiques 179; Paris: H. Champion, 1909), 36.

⁸⁹⁸ Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*, 39.

⁸⁹⁹ Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia*, 194.

⁹⁰⁰ Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*, 41; Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia*, 194 (text 147).

⁹⁰¹ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:155.

⁹⁰² CAD B *bīšu* 3b, 271.

⁹⁰³ Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*, 125. “Wer auch immer böse Worte gegen ihn spricht.” Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe*, 85.

the four others to do him a favor—to stop the bad words that have been spoken about him (l. 10-11 *mamma dibbīšu bi-'šu-tu idabbubu*).⁹⁰⁴ It is not clear who is responsible for the slander. Oppenheim translates lines 13-15 as “my brothers should silence as best they can anybody who says evil things about him,”⁹⁰⁵ but the strong appeal to his long-term relationship and this special request of them suggests the source may, in fact, be one of them.

LB Letter

CT 22 160:34⁹⁰⁶ *bi-'šu-'*

Bīšu can be understood as a G stative 3mp from the verb *ba'āšu* (CAD) or the verbal adjective *bīšu*, and either way, the usage in connection with *pānišunu* has been translated figuratively as “to be angry.”⁹⁰⁷

Nabu-silim writes the *šatammu* (chief temple administrator) with a request, but he begins by explaining why he does so. The king had appointed Nabu-sharri-utsur (son of Shuma-utsur) over his workmen, but they are not at all pleased with this and therefore will not do the work. In response to this, the king instructed Nabu-silim to ask the *šatammu* to send these men to him, and so he is following the king’s protocol and requesting these four men be sent in fetters (*ina iṣ qātī*) as his responsibility. The letter ends with an appeal. Because a group of workers (*urrāku*, sculpters/stone-masons) vocalized their frustration about not having been paid for two months, Nabu-silim asks the *šatam* to pay them because “they are very angry” (*lu mādu pānišunu bīšu*, l. 32-34). Thompson translates more loosely as “for they are very threatening,” presumably

⁹⁰⁴ In discussing the character of the Babylonians, Pinches highlights the steadfastness in friendship exhibited by such a request. Theophilus G. Pinches, “Notes Upon Some of the Recent Discoveries in the Realm of Assyriology, with Special Reference to the Private Life of the Babylonians,” *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain* 26 (1894): 161ff.

⁹⁰⁵ Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia*, 194 (text 148).

⁹⁰⁶ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:160.

⁹⁰⁷ CAD B *ba'āšu* A 2b, 5. Ebeling translates “sie sind sehr böse!” *Neubabylonische Briefe*, 88.

because *angry* stone-masons would become *threatening* stone-masons.⁹⁰⁸

LB Letter (Private)

CT 22 202:23⁹⁰⁹ *i-ba-'i-š*

Iba'iš or *ibâš* is a G durative 3cs from *ba'āšu*, used figuratively with *panikunu* (“your face”) to convey the sense of agitation and anger.

Rimut-Nabu writes his “brothers” Bel-ibni and Shum-iddina about their “sister,” Hibta. He had not seen her for three or four years, but when he saw her again she took up residence with him (literally “sat down in his chair”). For the last two years, though, Nabu-kishir has been claiming her as his slave, which is not right. He attacks Bel-ibni and Shum-iddina for being afraid of the governor and unwilling to speak to the king, stating his concern that he will lose her. The next sentence, *panikunu ina muḥḥi la iba'iš* (l. 22-23), is variously translated: “you need not be angry on account of this”⁹¹⁰ and “be not troubled about this (literally: may your face not become angry on account of this)!”⁹¹¹ It is not clear why the men addressed in this letter from Rimut-Nabu would be so agitated that he would lose Hibta, but apparently they are blaming him for this mess. He points out that it is his own house that will suffer. The end of the letter presents the proposal to send a replacement slave girl in her place.

LB Letter (Private)

Camb. 217:9⁹¹² *bi-i-šú*

⁹⁰⁸ Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*, 129.

⁹⁰⁹ Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts XXIII*, 23:202.

⁹¹⁰ Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia*, 195.

⁹¹¹ A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Neo-Babylonian Preposition ‘La,’” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1, no. 3 (1942): 371.

⁹¹² J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529-521 v. Chr.)* (Babylonische Texte 8-9; Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1890), 123.

Bīšu is a ms adjective modifying the value of a field, used in a figurative sense and translated “bad.”⁹¹³

A private business record from the Egibi family of Babylon, dated to the third year of Cambyses, documents the sale of a share of Itti-marduk-balatu’s estate to his son, of which a portion is given as a dowry.⁹¹⁴ The letter ends with a statement that they will either win or lose together with respect to the quality of field shared, whether it will prove to be “bad or good (in its yield)” (*zēru bi-i-šú u babbānū*).⁹¹⁵

LB Letter (Private)

Nbn. 17:12⁹¹⁶ *bi-i-šú*

Bīšu is a ms adjective used figuratively to describe a bad quality,⁹¹⁷ here of onions that were sorted out as unsuitable for sale.

In a private business letter from the Iddin-Marduk family, 1,800 onions (or garlic cloves) are documented as having been sold and delivered to Nabu-kušuranni. The good quality of this produce is assured through the 10th of Nisan, noting 100 of the “bad” product was sorted out and discarded by Bel-iddin: 100 *pītu bi-i-šú ina libbi umaššar*, “he leaves there one hundred bad (garlic) bundles.”⁹¹⁸

LB Letter

⁹¹³ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270.

⁹¹⁴ Kohler and Peiser question if the “payment” was actually made or if it was simply a matter of accounting and billing. Kohler and Peiser, *Aus dem Babylonischen Rechtsleben*, 12.

⁹¹⁵ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270.

⁹¹⁶ J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Nabonidus, König von Babylon (555-538 v. Chr.)* (Babylonische Texte 1-4; Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1889), 15.

⁹¹⁷ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270.

⁹¹⁸ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270. Wunsch translates “100 pītu schlechter Qualität hat er aussortiert.” *Die Urkunden des Babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk*, 76.

Dar. 36:17⁹¹⁹ *bi-i-ši*

Bīši is a ms adjective translated figuratively for the “bad” or “spoiled” barley flour product (*takkasû*), though it’s quite possible that the literal sense is applicable, as barley, in particular, is a grain known for its smell when going rancid.

In a text from the Ebabbar archive in Sippar, dated to 520 BCE and dealing with the monthly supply of barley for offerings to the temple prebendaries bakers, there is a mention of “damaged” or “spoiled” product which was paid: *elât 7 GUR ŠE.BAR hibiltu ša takkasû bi-i-ši*, “apart from 7 gur of barley, damages (paid) for spoiled takassû.”⁹²⁰

The rancid goods, *takkasû*, are thought to be cakes or other confection made from first-quality flour.⁹²¹

LB Letter**Dar. 113:14**⁹²² *bi-i-ši*

Bīši is a ms adjective that is translated figuratively for “bad” or “spoiled” food product, in this case *šikari* (KAŠ.ĤI.A, “beer”), but which could have a literal basis.

Found in the Ebbabar archive in Sippar, a monthly statement of barley provided for offerings to the prebendary brewers from the fourth year of Darius I (518 BCE) makes reference to *hibiltu ša šikari* (wr. KAŠ.ĤI.A) *bi-i-ši*. These “damages paid for spoiled beer”⁹²³ provide another example of the adjective *bīšu* used to characterize food products that have been rendered inconsumable due to their stage of decomposition.

LB Letter

⁹¹⁹ J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius, König von Babylon (521-485 v. Chr.)*, Babylonische Texte 10-12 (Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1892), 25.

⁹²⁰ CAD T *takkasû* 2b, 76.

⁹²¹ CAD T *takkasû* 2b, 76.

⁹²² Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius*, 71.

⁹²³ CAD Š Part 2, *šikaru* 1h, 425; CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270.

Dar. 250:2⁹²⁴ *bi-iš*

Bīš appears to be a ms adjective (uniquely found here without a case ending), used similarly as in Dar. 113:14 above to characterize “bad” or “spoiled” *šikaru* (KAŠ.SAG, first-quality beer).⁹²⁵

As with Dar. 113 above, another Sippar commercial text from the Ebabbar archives (dated 513 BCE) documents the supply of barley to make beer offerings, this time to the Chief of the temple brewer prebendaries. Though limited to just a few lines, there are clearly “damages paid for spoiled beer” (*hibiltu ša KAŠ.SAG bi-iš*).⁹²⁶

LB Letter**Dar. 432:3⁹²⁷ *bi-i-ši***

Bīši is a ms adjective translated figuratively or literally for the “bad” or “spoiled” barley flour product (*takkasû*).

Similar to Dar. 36, but in the 16th year of Darius I (506 BCE), another text from the Ebabbar archive in Sippar verifies a supply of barley to prebendary bakers. In doing so, it speaks of 2 gur (360 liters) of barley (2 GUR ŠE.BAR) which was paid as damages for the spoiled barley cakes (*hibiltu ša takkasû bīši*).

This lexical and contextual analysis of almost 200 occurrences the most prominent Akkadian olfactory-based words in 120-some different texts and 14 or more genres establishes the basis for Chapter Four, “Comparison of Akkadian and Hebrew Olfactory Terms.” First, though, an analogous assessment of the Hebrew olfactory-based lexemes is necessary.

⁹²⁴ Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius*, 161.

⁹²⁵ CAD B *bīšu* 2, 270.

⁹²⁶ CAD Š Part 2 *šikaru* 1h, 425.

⁹²⁷ Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius*, 307.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF HEBREW OLFACTORY TERMS

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Hebrew writing, like the Akkadian literature already surveyed, contains a clustering of olfactory-related terms including verbs, nouns, and adjectives of both positive and negative nuance. While the Akkadian textual corpus is massive by comparison and poses a significantly greater challenge to access for research, the Hebrew has a far more manageable scope and has been the subject of considerable scholarly inquiry and publication.⁹²⁸ For the purposes of this study, a grammatical and contextual analysis of 49 individual lexical references is provided for the most prominent Hebrew olfactory words: *בָּאֵשׁ* (“to stink”), *בְּאֵשׁ* (“stench”), *רִיחַ* (“to smell”), and *רִיחַ* (“smell”). As with the Akkadian, this portion of the study does not examine the generic word for incense, the verb from which it derives, or various incense substances themselves, nor does it include an individual analysis of the 43 occasions *רִיחַ נְיִיחָה* (“pleasing/soothing aroma”) is used as a technical expression with respect to ritual sacrifices,⁹²⁹ though this information is taken into consideration in the summary and evaluation of olfaction in the ANE.

Hebrew texts could be organized according to the same schema used for the Akkadian references, the three-fold overarching framework of *The Context of Scripture*. However, all the references come from the canonical Hebrew Bible, so, technically

⁹²⁸ Because of the quantity, diversity, and mystery of Akkadian genre, a more thorough introduction to each genre will be provided compared to the more familiar and accessible Hebrew.

⁹²⁹ Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18, 25, 41; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; 26:31; Numbers 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24; 18:17; 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36; Ezekiel 6:13, 19; 20:28, 41. P. Jenson, and J. P. J. Olivier, *NIDOTTE* 3:1071.

speaking, only the first category applies.⁹³⁰ Insisting upon this three-fold structure and subdivisions according to “Divine Focus,” “Royal Focus,” and “Individual Focus” based on the concept of life setting (“Sitz im Leben”) is not necessary. For the purposes of comparison, these rubrics will be considered, but the Hebrew books are sequenced in the canonical order of the Leningrad Codex (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*). This seems preferable to imposing an artificial and foreign structure upon a work that already demonstrates a tripartite internal organization with Torah (“Law”), *Nevi'im* (“Prophets”), and *Ketuvim* (“Writings”).

Dating the biblical texts has been a quagmire for modern scholars, as presuppositions and assumptions always influence the conclusions derived. As stated in the introduction, this dissertation takes a synchronic approach, so it does not delve into redaction criticism for the Hebrew works any more than it does the Akkadian, both of which produce texts evidencing a significant prehistory. Generally speaking, the Hebrew Bible is thought to have reached its canonical form in the post-exilic period, the two centuries that the Jews in Judah and elsewhere were under Persian rule (approximately 538-334 BCE), with some possible editing as late as the Hellenistic period. The Judean exile in c. 587 BCE is thought to have been the precipitating stimulus to the consolidation of Israelite written works.

Some mention of scholarly opinions regarding dating is provided for each reference, though no concerted effort is made to identify the dates or historical authors of various books, largely because there is often little or conflicting evidence. The anonymity of authorship seems, in fact, to have been intentional. Whether all of the

⁹³⁰ “Canonical” is used for an authoritative text with a fixed number and sequence of compositions grouped accordingly. Hallo, “Ancient Near Eastern Texts,” in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. Hallo and Younger), 1:xxvi. For justification of his definition of “canonical,” see Hallo, “The Concept of Canonicity.”

finished form comes from the ascribed author and given time period or most of it with some portions added later, or if it has been heavily redacted over a significant amount of time, the objective dating for both Akkadian and Hebrew is based on terminus ad quem and not on hypothetical reconstructions. That said, in making some comparisons between Akkadian and Hebrew, more generally accepted pre-exilic dates for certain texts *will* be taken into account.

Like the Akkadian, the Hebrew has difficulties with unclear, overlapping, or intersecting genres. The Hebrew Bible is known as the Tanakh, an acronym derived from its three parts, already mentioned above: Torah (“Law”), Nevi’im (“Prophets”), and Ketuvim (“Writings”). Each of these categories includes multiple books that have prose and/or poetic form. There is nothing comparable in the Akkadian texts to the biblical “books,” which are considered to be the result of codifying efforts during Persian and possibly Hellenistic periods (5th-2nd centuries BCE). In biblical studies, because each book is treated as a complete textual unit, genres are often associated with whole books of the Bible (for example, Psalms, and Proverbs). However, as a composite, each book may be internally composed of a variety of styles, forms, and structures and thus bear the characteristics of more than one genre.⁹³¹

To illustrate this problem, consider the book of Deuteronomy, which has two main collections of legal or quasi-legal material (5:6-21 and chapters 12-26), and self-identifies itself as “law” (Deuteronomy 4:44-45). As a whole, though, the book is not a

⁹³¹ For example, Merrill illustrates the variety and diversity of subgenres in 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles: accusation, admonition, battle report, birth report, boast, building activities, chronicle or chronistic material, commission, death report, dedicatory statement, dirge, dream epiphanies, eulogy, farewell speech, hymn of praise, indictment speech, itinerary, juridical parable, king (or administrative) lists, letter, military exploits, oath, official report, oracle, oracle fulfillment, oracular inquiry, parable, parenesis, petition, praise speech, prayer of dedication, prophecy of punishment, prophecy of salvation/judgment, prophetic revelation, proverb, regnal resume, ritual report, roster, royal narrative, symbolic actions, taunt, theophany, throne conspiracy, vision report. Eugene H. Merrill, “History,” in *Cracking the Old Testament Codes* (ed. D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr.; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 92–8.

formal law collection despite the abundance of legislative prescriptions. Postured as a valedictory address from Moses to the Israelites prior to his death, the exhortations and admonitory speeches provide strong affinities to ANE didactic wisdom literature.

However, this too does not effectively characterize the book.⁹³² Parallels with suzerain-vassal treaties such as the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon suggest an ANE covenant form, more specifically fealty/loyalty oaths, but scholars question the extent of this influence. None of these labels is satisfactory.

There is no agreement on the broad genres of the Bible, much less which books or passages belong to which genre. However, despite differences of opinion within the community of Bible scholars, the majority acknowledges that the concept of genre and subgenre (more narrowly defined compositional categories within a larger genre) can be useful in the study of the Bible as a guide to the tone and interpretation of the text.

Some of the more common genre labels include:

- Prophecy: collections of the oracles or words of God spoken to the people through human intermediaries (prophets) and the symbolic actions they perform at God's direction for the people's benefit. This includes the major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as well as the twelve minor prophets. It does not usually encompass the works of the "former prophets" in Samuel and Kings. Subgenres include the oracles of salvation, announcements of judgment, and apocalyptic.
- Psalms (Songs, Odes): poetic lyrics of songs or hymns addressed to God and intended for communal worship and/or individual prayer. Genre labels are often given based on the original social setting of the psalms, whether regular temple worship such as pilgrimages and feasts, special royal occasions like coronation liturgies,

⁹³² See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University, 1995), 62–5.

special occasions of distress (communal or individual), or special occasions of deliverance (vow fulfillment).

- **Wisdom literature:** various types of writings designed to teach or ask questions about nature, reality, virtue, and/or divinity based on patterns of observation and experience. This broad literary category, common in the ANE, includes proverbs (generalized sayings and aphorisms containing advice on how to live well), poetic compositions that either celebrate aspects of human experience, such as love poetry (Song of Songs) or speculate upon the meaning of life in a more esoteric fashion (Ecclesiastes), and other types of stories that tackle questions of theodicy (Job).
- **Law (legal texts):** covenant, law, and ritual legislation are included in this general rubric. Whole books evidence this genre (such as Leviticus), as do significant portions of books like Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- **Historical narrative:** the books of the Torah and former prophets are more difficult to designate because they mix a variety of subgenres into a composite form. “Narrative” has been used both as a genre label and as a means of describing genres.⁹³³ Though it is written in narrative form, “history” or “historical literature” is thought to be distinguished in that its focus is recordkeeping not storytelling, and it is national vs. familial or tribal in its emphasis. However, this dichotomy proves inadequate to describe biblical texts. “Historiography” is a term applied to how history is written in the Bible, but the term “historiosophy” may be a more fitting description, as it highlights the “why” of history writing more than just the “what” (history) or “how” (historiography). Historiosophy involves a culling of certain historical events for didactic purposes.

⁹³³ As a genre, the term “narrative” has been used to refer to the use of story as a distinct and vivid form of communication utilizing features such as scene/setting, plot, point of view, characterization, dialogue, and other stylistic and rhetorical devices.

For the purposes of this study, Hebrew texts will be labeled according to these overarching genres (historical narrative, law, prophecy, psalms, wisdom literature) with proposed subgenres given in parentheses. All Hebrew textual references come from the BHS Hebrew Old Testament (4th ed), while English translations are rendered in the New American Standard Version (1995).

TORAH

Genesis

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Genesis 8:21 נָחַח

נָחַח is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms verb (נָחַח, Hi. “to smell”) used figuratively for God’s perception of the רִיחַ תְּנוּחָה (“soothing aroma”) of Noah’s sacrifice.

Historical Narrative (Family History)

Genesis 27:27 נָחַח

נָחַח is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms verb (נָחַח, Hi. “to smell”) used literally by the elderly father Isaac for his discernment of the aroma of his son Esau’s garments.

Historical Narrative (Family History)

Genesis 27:27 אֶתְרוּחָם

אֶתְרוּחָם is a ms noun (“smell”) in the accusative case used literally in construct with בְּגָדָיו (“his [Esau’s] garments”) for their smell as perceived by Isaac.

Historical Narrative (Family History)

Genesis 27:27 רִיחַ

רִיחַ is a ms noun (“smell”) used literally in construct with בְּנִי (“my son”) as part of a direct quote for the smell of Jacob as distinguished by Isaac.

Historical Narrative (Family History)

Genesis 27:27 כְּרִיחַ

כְּרִיחַ is a ms noun רִיחַ (“smell”) with the כִּי- preposition used literally in construct with יְתֵנָּה (“the field which YHWH has blessed”) as part of direct quote for the smell of Jacob.

Historical Narrative (Family History)

Genesis 34:30 לְהַבְאִישָׁנִי

לְהַבְאִישָׁנִי is a Hiphil infinitive construct from the verb בָּאֵשׁ with the לְ- particle preposition and 1cs suffix pronoun, translated figuratively as “making me odious” and used in a dialogue as a direct quote in reference to the tribal leader Jacob’s “smell” or reputation as perceived by the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and Perizzites.

The book of Genesis addresses the beginnings of the universe and the origins of humankind, the nation of Israel, and its divine-human relationship. Biblical inferences suggest Moses was the author (or at least the source) of the content of Genesis. For almost 1,800 years, almost no one in either rabbinic or ecclesiastical circles questioned Mosaic authorship or the unity of Genesis. During the last two centuries, a new critical consensus gradually emerged which deemed the book a compilation of sources. While there are varied positions and distinct nuances within them, the general sense is that small oral narratives were assembled into larger complexes, which later were written down as sources with a series of redactions happening at critical points or junctures in the history of Israel.

In content, the book has two main divisions: chapters 1-11 are considered “primeval history” and 12-50 are “patriarchal history.” The ten-fold *tôlēdôt* (תולדות) structure serves as an internal structuring device to bring some continuity to the text: “these are the *tôlēdôt* (stories/histories” or “genealogies/narratives”) of . . .”⁹³⁴ The use of this formula gives the impression of a title or colophon introducing a new unit, though the content within is not consistent.

The book addresses themes of creation, blessing, family, relationship, and national history, to name some of the more prominent ones. While Genesis contains historical information given in a chronological framework and prominent a narrative style, it is not historical narrative in the modern sense. Genres suggested for portions of the book include cosmogonies, foundational myths and legends,⁹³⁵ annals, family narratives

⁹³⁴ Genesis 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1/9, 37:2.

⁹³⁵ As discussed in the Akkadian introduction, mythology functions to explain how the world works and how it came to work that way. The designation “foundational myths and legends” suggests stories about the origins of the world, the first generations of humans, or the early years of a nation that provide a foundational worldview upon which a people can their communal and individual lives.

(also called founders' or ancestors' narratives), sagas, stories, and genealogies. Six uses of olfactory terms (בָּאֵשׁ, רִיחַ, רִיחַ) occur in this book, one in the primeval narratives and the rest in the patriarchal narratives. Four of these remaining five are clustered in the account of Isaac's blessing in Genesis 27.

Genesis 6-9 tells the well-known story of Noah. By the tenth generation, humanity had grown so depraved that God intervened with a catastrophic flood, sparing Noah, his family, and pairs of living creatures. After describing in a sequenced fashion the onset of the waters and various stages of their receding, God gives the directive for Noah, his family, and the creatures to exit the ark. In 8:20-22, Noah responds of his own initiative by building an altar and offering sacrifices of every clean animal and bird:

Genesis 8:21 נִרְחַח יְהוָה אֶת־רִיחַ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־לְבוֹ לֹא־אֶסַּף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּעִבּוֹר הָאָדָם כִּי נֶגַד לֵב הָאָדָם כִּעַ מִנְעֻרָו וְלֹא־אֶסַּף עוֹד לְהַכּוֹת אֶת־פְּלִיחֵי בְּאֶשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי:

Genesis 8:21 And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

The metaphor of "smelling" the "soothing aroma" (not *seeing* the sacrifice, *tasting* the "food," or *hearing* Noah) conveys in anthropomorphic language God's favorable reception of the offering. The use of *rēah hannîḥōah* ("soothing aroma/pleasing odor") is similar to the *rēah nîḥōah* phrase that is used 17 times in Leviticus and 18 times in Numbers in a technical sense connected with ritual sacrifices. Here it may also serve an additional function as a word play with the main character, Noah, whose name is thought to derive from the same verb, נָחַ, "to rest." In this way, the "One who gives rest/relief" lives up to his name.

Whether Noah's action served as an expression of gratitude for safe deliverance or functioned in some expiatory manner (restoring harmony between God and humanity), the immediate response attributed to God seems to be related in a cause and effect manner. However, the author deliberately points out that God's vow to never again curse the earth because of man is spoken "to himself" (אֶל-לְבָבוֹ) and not "to Noah." Some commentators have used this nuance to draw a distinction between ANE magical manipulation of deity and Israelite propitiatory appeasement to assuage divine wrath.

Later in Genesis 27, another use of the verb בָּרַךְ appears in a much-loved patriarchal narrative laced with intrigue and suspense as Jacob, who already stole Esau's birthright (25:29-34), maneuvers at his mother's behest to usurp his brother's blessing. As the story plays out, Isaac, who at this time is well advanced in years, takes the initiative to secure his family's future by directing Esau, his firstborn, to hunt for game and prepare his favorite meal. This would provide the proper context for a delivery of the ritual blessing to his son, an event that pronounces destiny and transfers leadership.

Rebekah, meanwhile, overhears this dialogue and creates a ruse by which Jacob, her son, can appropriate the blessing rightfully due Esau. Jacob objects to the plan because he expects his father may want to touch him (an important part of giving the blessing), and his relative lack of hair compared to Esau would give him away and result in a curse. Rebekah disregards his objection and urges him to take action. Later, after preparing the dish, she addresses this concern by clothing his arms and neck with the goatskins. At this point there has been no mention of concern about odor or smell.

When Jacob enters with the delicious meal, we might assume its aroma permeated the room. He speaks to his father who immediately questions whether it is Esau or Jacob. Jacob lies about his identity, claiming to be Esau who has returned as commanded with the food to receive the blessing. Isaac's skepticism becomes more

obvious by his question, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?” Jacob’s terse reply, “The LORD your God put it in my path,” suggests his cognizance that his father is suspicious of his voice (which in fact is the case as per 27:22). Isaac proceeds to pursue his uncertainty with the senses he has remaining at his command. Deprived of his eyesight (explicitly mentioned at the beginning of this story in 27:1) and perhaps expecting some form of deceit from Jacob, Isaac summons touch, taste, and ultimately smell to discern the identity of his son.

First he asks his son to come closer so he can feel him. Because the hands were hairy like Esau, Isaac asks again for a disclosure of identity, to which Jacob simply replies with one word, “I (am)” (אני). The sense of taste factors next as Isaac calls for the wild game, which on three occasions (v. 4, 9, 14) is said to be of a special recipe favored by Isaac, a distinctive of Esau’s well-known culinary skill (25:28). This being compatible, Isaac finally calls his son close to him for a kiss, which, because of olfactory discernment, is his ultimate confirmation:

Genesis 27:27 וַיֵּשֶׁל וַיִּשְׁקֶלְלוּ וַיִּרְחַח אֶת־רוּחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיִּבְרַכְהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רְאֵה כִּי־חַיֵּי בְנֵי כְרִיִם שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכְבוּ יְהוָה:

Genesis 27:27 So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed."

The odor of Esau’s clothes on Jacob (a part of Rebekah’s well-thought out plan, 27:15) provides the final “proof” for Isaac of his son’s identity and paves the way for the mistaken pronouncement of a national blessing upon his second born son. The precise nature of that smell is not explicit, though it is compared to “the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed” (כְּרוּחַ שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכְבוּ יְהוָה). Rabbinic commentators speculated the unpleasant aroma of Esau’s garments of skin was miraculously transformed or that the garments were perfumed with spices, as in Song 4:11 where they are compared to

Lebanon.⁹³⁶ More will be said later about how this passage elucidates the literary and physiological role of smell. From a literary perspective, the use of the imperative רִא (See) (“See”) may be significant in the literary “play” of this text, highlight the sense that is utterly absent in this story and doing so through a word play with רִיחַ בְּנֵי (the smell of my son”).

Later in Genesis, as part of the Jacob story, comes a narrative dealing with the issue of Israel’s interrelationship with “outsiders,” especially with respect to marriage (33:18-34:31). After accounting for Jacob’s family settling in the Shechem area, the narrator tells of Shechem’s sexual experience with Dinah and his heartfelt request to make her his wife. Sperling summarizes the history of Jewish and Christian interpretation concerning whether or not Dinah was “raped” in the traditional sense of the term, concluding that Shechem did in fact assert sexual dominance over her, and she was not consenting or else she would not have been spared by her brothers.⁹³⁷ In cases of unlawful sexual intercourse with a non-married/non-engaged woman, ANE casuistic law preserved the honor of the victimized woman and “remedied” the offense with marriage and a penalty to properly recompense the implicated family. Because of this tradition, forced sexual encounter could be used as means of instigating a marriage arrangement that may not have been initially desired by the woman’s family. Greengus demonstrates how Hamor and Shechem’s offer of conciliation conformed to this widely accepted practice of settlement.⁹³⁸ That said, the outrage of the brothers is explained by

⁹³⁶ Martin I. Lockshin, *Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis: An Annotated Translation* (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 155–6.

⁹³⁷ David S. Sperling, “Dinah, ‘Innah, and Related Matters,” in *Mishneh Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy and Its Cultural Environment in Honor of Jeffrey H. Tigay* (ed. Nili Sacher Fox, David A. Glatt-Gilad, and Michael J. Williams; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 73–93.

⁹³⁸ Samuel Greengus, *Laws in the Bible and in Early Rabbinic Collections: The Legal Legacy of the Ancient Near East* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 63–6.

their indignation and personal offense that they were strong-armed into compliance with a marriage that was not acceptable to them. Alternately, the strong family reaction may have been precipitated because they were not privy to offer consent. By having intercourse with Dinah without following protocol, Shechem acted as if Dinah had no family to marry her, thus treating her like a prostitute (only prostitutes had an independent sexuality). This dishonor and shame prompted their desire for impunity.

When Hamor's family fulfills the terms of male circumcision, the stage is set for Simeon and Levi to slaughter the men of the city and the rest of the brothers to plunder it. These precipitating events prompt the response of Jacob in verse 30:

Genesis 34:30 וַיֹּאמֶר וַיִּעַקֵּב אֶל־שִׁמְעוֹן וְאֶל־לֵוִי עֲכָרְתֶּם אִתִּי לְהַבְאִישְׁנִי בְיֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ בְּכַנְעֲנִי וּבְפְרִזִּי וְאֲנִי מְתִי מְסָפָר וְנֹאֲסָפוּ עָלַי וְהִכּוּנִי וְנִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי:

Genesis 34:30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me, by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I shall be destroyed, I and my household."

Jacob's reaction to the news of what happened is interesting. To begin, he only addresses Simeon and Levi. Whether or not their massacre was more infuriating than the ensuing pillaging of the city by the rest of the brothers, it nonetheless instigated a complete a betrayal of the agreement they had with Shechem, Hamor, and the city. They broke the terms of the deal with their reckless, retributive behavior. This is not stated as Jacob's concern, though. His explicit criticism is not deceptive or bloodthirsty vengeance taken by the sibling duo, it is fear of punitive action by local inhabitants upon Jacob himself, with his household mentioned almost as an afterthought (v. 30).

Reading Genesis canonically, we find a later castigation of Simeon and Levi's actions when, on his deathbed, Jacob curses the two brothers for their anger and wrath (Genesis 49:5-7). Here, though, the ethical concerns are overshadowed by the immediate risk. The survival of Jacob's family, a minority group in a foreign land, is now

jeopardized. This position of vulnerability is not new for Jacob, as he had lived in fear of Esau's 400 men (32:7-8). Drastically outnumbered by the Canaanites and Perizzites, Jacob fears for his life.

“You have brought trouble on me” (עָבַרְתָּם) has the literal sense of “stirring up” or “disturbing” the waters. Figuratively, the word conveys the sense of causing serious problems and is used in other direct quotes such as Joshua 6:18, 7:25 and 1 Chronicles 2:7 where it describes the negative ramifications of violating the ban when raiding Jericho, Judges 11:35 where Jephthah's vow results in his only daughter being dedicated as an offering (עוֹלָה) to the Lord, 1 Samuel 14:29 where Jonathan decries his father's prohibitive policies, and 1 Kings 18:17-18 where Ahab accuses Elijah of being a “troubler” of Israel and Elijah hammers back the same charge.

The expression “making me odious to the inhabitants of the land” is an infinitive clause expanding on Jacob's characterization of what has happened. The “inhabitants of the land” (בְּיֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ) are here said to be the Canaanites and Perizzites. References to these two groups appear together with various combinations of the Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Girgashites in other texts,⁹³⁹ though the conflict between Abram's and Lot's herdsmen in Genesis 13:7 is the only other biblical reference where just those two names appear. After their father's outburst, the two sons respond with the rhetorical question: “Should he treat our sister like a whore?” (the “he” being Shechem), though the narrator leaves this question hanging with no response on the part of Jacob.

Exodus

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 5:21 הַבְּאִשְׁתִּים

⁹³⁹ Exodus 3:8, 17; 33:2; 34:11; Deuteronomy 20:17; Joshua 3:10; 9:1; 11:3; 12:8; 24:11; Nehemiah 9:8.

הַבְּאֲשָׁתָם is a Hiphil perfect 2mpl verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) translated figuratively “you have made stink” and spoken in direct speech by the Israelite foremen to Moses and Aaron with reference to the Israelites as perceived by Pharaoh and his servants.

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 5:21 אֶת־רִיחֵנוּ

אֶת־רִיחֵנוּ is the ms noun רִיחַ with the אֶת particle direct object marker and a 1cp suffix pronoun (“our smell”) used figuratively for the reputation of the Israelites “in the eyes of” (בְּעֵינָיו) Pharaoh and his servants.

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 7:18 וַיִּבְאֵשׁ

וַיִּבְאֵשׁ is a Qal perfect 3ms verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) used literally by God in an address to Moses for the smell of the Nile river (presumably to the Egyptians and Israelites) after the fish in it die.

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 7:21 וַיִּבְאֵשׁ

וַיִּבְאֵשׁ is Qal imperfect 3ms verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) used literally for the smell of the Nile river after the fish in it die.

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 8:10 וַתִּבְאֵשׁ

וַתִּבְאֵשׁ is a Qal imperfect 3fs verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) used literally for the smell of the land as a result of the heaps of dead frogs.

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 16:20 וַיִּבְאֵשׁ

וַיִּבְאֵשׁ is a Qal imperfect 3ms verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) used literally for the smell of the rotting “bread” (manna).

Historical Narrative (Foundational myth/legend)

Exodus 16:24 הַבְּאִישׁ

הַבְּאִישׁ is a Hiphil perfect 3ms verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) with the לֹא negator translated literally as “it did not stink.”

Historical Narrative (Ritual Legislation)

Exodus 30:38 לְהָרִיחַ

לְהָרִיחַ is a Hiphil infinitive construct verbal form (רִיחַ, “to smell”) followed by the preposition and 3fs suffix pronoun (בָּהּ) used literally for the holy incense banned for public use.

Eight applications of three olfactory terms (בָּאֵשׁ, רִיחַ, רִיחַ) occur in Exodus, the second book of the Pentateuch. Side-stepping the question of the historical backdrop of the book and its proposed 13th century dating, the current scholarly consensus is that book reached its present, final form during the 6th century exile or soon thereafter. Like

Genesis, Exodus is not a sequential narrative, though it does provide an episodic account of a formative period in Israel's history. The label "historiosophy" applies better than "historiography," as it culls from certain historical events for didactic purposes.

Themes of liberation, law, covenant, and presence thread the book together.

Chapters 1-15:21 are based in Egypt and its environs where the Israelites are oppressed and then delivered from their bondage. This central theme of redemption has influenced biblical literature, Israelite culture and religion, and even ethical/social consciousness to the present day. Exodus 15:22-18:27 spotlight the Israelite people en route to freedom, and chapters 19-40 zoom in on the Sinai experience where God reveals His law through Moses to the people.

Chapter 5 is an introduction to the narrative of the plagues. As new leaders for the Israelite people, Moses and Aaron attempt a diplomatic approach with Pharaoh, but this plan backfires and the oppression intensifies as Pharaoh orders his taskmasters to deliver the news that the Israelites must continue to deliver their daily quota of bricks, only now they will have to gather their own straw versus being supplied with it. As the Israelites feel their situation deteriorating, the foremen attempt an appeal to Pharaoh himself, but this only results in a degrading reaffirmation of their plight. Moses and Aaron, anxiously waiting for news, hear this from the foremen:

Exodus 5:21 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם יְרֵא יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֲשֶׁר הִבְאֵשְׁתֶּם אֹתֵיכֶם בְּעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי עַבְדָּיו לְחַתְּחֹרֵב בְּיָדָם

Exodus 5:21 And they said to them, "May the LORD look upon you and judge *you*, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh's sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Several features of their retort stand out. First, the use of the oath "May the LORD look upon you and judge you!" highlights their lack of faith in these two, as they

formally call on God’s judgment for what has happened.⁹⁴⁰ Moses and Aaron have lost credibility and the explicit reason is given. The charge is not that they, like Pharaoh, are uncaring, foolish, or abusive. The foremen do not attack Moses’ and Aaron’s initiative, they complain about its consequence—it has caused the Hebrew supervisors and slaves they represent (“us”) to become loathsome to Pharaoh. Considering their relative weakness and inferiority, this is a serious predicament.

Second, the metaphor is “mixed” in that they are said to stink in the “eyes” of Pharaoh, not “nostrils” or “nose,” which may indicate the terms have transcended their literal connotation to be figurative for disgusting, repulsive, vile, or contemptible. However, Avrahami argues this is a case of linguistic synaesthesia (describing something experienced with one sense through words from the semantic field of another sense).⁹⁴¹ The link between sight and odor, she argues, is found not in the metaphor but in the idea of moral judgment where bad smell is a moral attribute and the eyes are more the common locus for making moral judgment.⁹⁴² In this way, the two senses are linked associatively through the mixed metaphor based in two equally compelling idioms: “to smell” indicates moral behavior and “in the sight of” indicates judgment.

Third, the inclusion of Pharaoh’s servants in this indictment is noteworthy. The same phrase is used elsewhere in Genesis and Exodus,⁹⁴³ where it includes important officials acting on Pharaoh’s behalf not the common slaves such as the Hebrews.

⁹⁴⁰ Genesis 16:15 and 1 Samuel 24:12 demonstrate a similar use of the oath used in a context when the offended party, instead of attempting personal retaliation, calls on God to arbitrate the injustice.

⁹⁴¹ Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 59.

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*, 61.

⁹⁴³ Genesis 41:37, 45:16; Exodus 7:10, 20, 8:20, 9:20.

Becoming odious to Pharaoh (an individual) *and* his servants (collective) is an altogether perilous situation, as the taskmasters have the immediate opportunity to shed blood.

As with Genesis 34:30, where Jacob fears the retaliation of the Canaanites and Perizzites, the Israelite foremen identify the ultimate implication of being this loathsome to a more numerous and powerful group—“it puts a sword in their hand to kill” (5:21). In other words, this is a matter of life and death. Moses does not slough off this most serious allegation, but in a continuation of sharp, brief exchanges, he accuses God of not only failing to deliver but intensifying their plight. “Why have you brought harm/trouble/evil (הַרְעַתָּה) upon this people,” he asks (5:22).

As the narrative continues, there is a three-fold use of relevant terms in connection with the ten disasters or “plagues” that come as a result of Pharaoh’s intransigence. In this struggle for power and control, the text highlights deliberate and purposeful actions of God designed for a specific purpose—to judge Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods and, ultimately, to coerce the release of the Israelites.

This first judgment or “plague” assaults the lifeblood or “artery” of Egypt, the Nile River, which was also seen as both divine and a divinity in Egypt.⁹⁴⁴ God tells Moses to strike the river with his staff and it will be turned to blood. This has been thought to reflect an extreme version of the annual Nile inundation whereby melting snow and summer rains from the highlands wash red sediment from upstream, causing the ruddy discoloration of the waters.⁹⁴⁵ There is an unfortunate result here, though. The narrator relays what God instructed Moses and what actually happened in 7:18 and 7:21:

⁹⁴⁴ Propp points out the image of a land bleeding from its main artery was especially disturbing for Israelite readers because of ritual defilement. William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (vol. 2, 25 vols.; The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 325.

⁹⁴⁵ In describing the calamitous conditions of the land, the Egyptian literary work “The Admonitions of Ipuwer” references the non-drinkable state of the Nile: “Why, really, the River is blood. If one drinks of it, one rejects (it) as human and thirsts for water.” John A. Wilson, “Egyptian Oracles and Prophecies,” in *Ancient*

Exodus 7:18 וַתִּדְבַר אֱשֶׁר־בַּיָּאֵר תָּמוּת וּבָאֵשׁ הַיָּאֵר וְנִלְאִי מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁתּוֹת מַיִם מִן־הַיָּאֵר:

Exodus 7:18 "And the fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul; and the Egyptians will find difficulty in drinking water from the Nile.""

Exodus 7:21 וַתִּדְבַר אֱשֶׁר־בַּיָּאֵר מֵתוֹ וַיִּבָּאֵשׁ הַיָּאֵר וְלֹא־יָלְדוּ מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁתּוֹת מַיִם מִן־הַיָּאֵר וַיְהִי הַדָּם בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

Exodus 7:21 And the fish that *were* in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt.

The Nile River teemed with fish, an important ingredient in the popular diet of Egyptians. For it to turn to “blood” and result in a loss of fish, even temporarily, is a significant shock to the economy. The text does not just say the fish will die, though, it says they will die and river will stink and then Egyptians find difficulty drinking water. This is the deeper blow. In an arid climate such as Egypt, water is life, and the Nile is the water source for Egyptians. To be unable to drink the water is to cause life to shrivel up and invite death. Moreover, whoever controls the Nile has power over life. For God to strike at the river first is to render a verdict on his sovereignty and supremacy, and to do so with olfactory language is noteworthy. Considering the Egyptian perception of the deification of the Nile, this is also a direct theological assault.

Explicit mention is given to the odor of the river. This, we presume, is due to the dead and rotting fish, which, when decomposing, give off trimethylamine, an odorant considered especially potent and noxious. It is important to point out that the narrator was not required to reference the smell to make his account flow; he could have simply stated the fish will die and as a result, the Egyptians had difficulty drinking the water. By adding the smell of rotting fish, he adds a layer of sensory depth that, as we will see, can even trigger a visceral response on the part of the reader.

Seven days of chaos ensue, to the extent that the Egyptians have to dig around the Nile for drinkable water. There is a sense that they are now scrambling for water like the Israelites were scrambling for straw. Revenge is being enacted, though this plague ends in a stalemate.

The second plague involves frogs. Moses is instructed to have Aaron stretch his staff over all the running or standing bodies of water to cause frogs to multiply (8:1). Pharaoh's magicians mimic the same thing, causing an even greater quantity to the extent that they invade people's homes and even their cooking bowls. The invasiveness and inescapability of these small amphibians prompts Pharaoh to ask for their removal. Moses and Aaron comply with the request and the next day the frogs throughout the houses, courtyards, and fields of Egypt die. This instigates a cleanup procedure:

ויצברו אתם חמרים חמרים ותבאש הארץ: Exodus 8:10

Exodus 8:14 So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul.

While it is a subtle nuance, there is a distinction between saying the piles of dead frogs stank and saying the dead piles of frogs made *the land* stink. This literal reference builds upon Exodus 7:18 and 21, where the Nile River smelled foul due to dead fish. Now the effect has expanded to the whole land reeking because of the piles of decomposing frogs. What was localized has now effectively permeated Egypt. The smell of death has crossed all boundaries. By end of this episode, Pharaoh is strategically and psychologically weakened while Moses and Aaron are strengthened. That said, the battle ensues until its final consummation in the death of the firstborn throughout Egypt, including Pharaoh's household.

Later, six weeks after the Exodus, the Israelites are trekking through the wilderness with provisions exhausted and no natural food supply. Hunger and fear of death drive the Israelites to grumble against Moses and Aaron, reminiscing in an

idealized manner of their conditions in Egypt. God responds without any prompting from Moses by promising daily bread from heaven, though this is subject to restrictions which serve as a “test” (אֲנִסְנוּ, 16:14) for the Israelites to see whether they will follow his instructions.

Moses and Aaron relay this information to the people in a somewhat irked manner, having been the brunt of their harsh accusations. They indicate quail will be provided in the evening and a dew in the morning, which, when evaporated, would leave behind a bread-like substance (called “manna,” the Hebrew word being an etymology of “What is it?”). Specific instructions indicate each family should gather an omer, only what needed for the day, and they should not keep any of it overnight.

Partial obedience follows, as Exodus 16:20 highlights their failure in complying fully with the instructions:

Exodus 16:20 וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּתְרוּ אַנְשִׁים מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר וַיִּרְם תוֹלְעִים וַיִּבְאֵשׁ וַיִּקְצַף עֲלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה:

Exodus 16:20 But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them.

The literal description of the appearance and smell of the rotting manna is graphic and visceral, and reinforces the rhetorical punch of the text—make note, readers, disobeying God is really bad! Yet again, the narrator could have simply indicated the manna was in a deteriorating or non-consumable condition. Instead he details its condition with the senses: visually, it bred maggots, the larva of insects (presumably flies), and moreover, it gave off a foul smell. The narrator’s immediate description of Moses’ anger in response connects this physical stench with emotional anger. Implicitly, the former seems to be a cue for the latter. Here it’s quite literal, in other instances it’s figurative. As we will see later, there is some physiological basis for this.

Later that week, on the sixth day, the Israelites were commanded to collect enough for two days, which would provide what was needed for the Sabbath.

Reluctance can be assumed, as the last time they kept manna overnight it was rotting with worms and stench. Thankfully this time, the narrator indicates the Israelites follow the instructions and avoid the previous consequences.

Exodus 16:24 וַיִּנְחֻוּ אֹתוֹ עַד-הַבֹּקֶר כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה וְלֹא הִבְאִישׁ וְרָמַח לֹא-הָיְתָה בּוֹ:

Exodus 16:24 So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul, nor was there any worm in it.

The Tabernacle pericope (Exodus 25:1-31:18) has seven speeches given by YHWH to Moses on Mt. Sinai concerning how to build and operate a suitable place for YHWH to dwell in the midst of Israel (25:8). Construction of the furniture, frame and curtains, horned altar, courtyard, lamp, and priestly vestments is described in detail in chapters 25-28. Technical procedures for the ordination, consecration, and authorization of the priests are outlined in chapter 29. The incense altar receives special attention in chapter 30 along with the preparation and ritual use of anointing oil to consecrate priests, articles of temple furniture, and utensils for divine service (30:22-33). A specific recipe is given for the sacred anointing oil (two parts liquid myrrh, one part fragrant cinnamon, one part fragrant cane, and two parts cassia in an olive oil base). It is said to be the “work of a perfumer,” a technical expert in the field, and it is available only to the priests. Excommunication is the consequence of replication for common use (30:32-3).

The priestly instructions continue with another recipe list, this time for the incense that is to be burned twice daily on the incense altar in the Tabernacle in front of the veil which shields the Ark (Exodus 30:1-10). The fragrant blend contains equal parts of stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense and is beaten fine. Like

the anointing oil, the incense is said to be “a perfume, the work of a perfumer” (v. 35, רִקְחָה, רִקְחָה מְעֵשָׂה) just like the anointing oil (v. 25, רִקְחָה מִרְקֻחַת מְעֵשָׂה רִקְחָה).⁹⁴⁶ Similarly, both are said to be outlawed for common use.

Exodus 30:38 אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה כְמוֹהָ לְהָרִיחַ בָּהּ וְנִכְרַת מֵעַמּוּי:

Exodus 30:38 "Whoever shall make *any* like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people."

In *Incense in Ancient Israel*, Nielsen argues the priestly source (P) deliberately limited the ritual uses of incense, the number of priests allowed to burn it, and the number of legitimate incense materials because incense rituals were common among Canaanite cults and in the popular religion of the region. This warning, he argues, is designed to create distance between legitimate cultic use and all others.⁹⁴⁷ Whether or not the prohibition was a tactic of the priests to preserve religious purity, the warning against using the recipe for private purposes had to be prompted by widespread use in secular life or at least that potential.

The consequence for violating this command is to be “cut off” (כָּרַת) from the people. This formulaic idiom, called an “extermination formula,” is used as a judgment with a number of distinguishing religious features including the Israelite who refuses to be circumcised, breaks Sabbath or feast regulations, consumes sacrificial fat/blood, transgresses sexual or cleanness ordinances, commits idolatry, or despises the words/commands of YHWH.⁹⁴⁸

⁹⁴⁶ The only difference between the two is the additional noun מִרְקֻחַת (“ointment-mixture”) used with the anointing oil. The omission of this liquid base in Exodus 30:35 suggests a dry aromatic compound. For this reason, the NASB use of “perfume” and “perfumer” in these passages may be misleading, as the terms originally denoted any substance capable of giving off an aroma but have now come to presume a liquid base in common language.

⁹⁴⁷ Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 87–8.

⁹⁴⁸ G. F. Hasel, “כָּרַת *kārat*, כְּרִיתוּת *k^rrutôt*, כְּרִיתוּת *k^rritūt*,” *TDOT* 7:347–8.

Leviticus

Law (Ritual Legislation)

Leviticus 26:31 אָרִיחַ

אָרִיחַ is a Hiphil impf 1cs verb (רִיחַ, Hi. “to smell”) with the לֹא negator translated “I will not smell” in a figurative sense with respect to God’s assessment of the Israelite “soothing aromas” (בְּרִיחַ נִיחֻחַכֶּם).

The book of Leviticus includes some narrative and references to narrative events, but it does not focus on history. Rather, it contains instructions pertaining to the religious life of the Israelite community (primarily, the worship of a holy God and the purity of the people) as specified in the Sinai treaty, purportedly given prior to settlement in Canaan. Authorship is traditionally attributed to Moses and dated, as per Leviticus 27:34 and Numbers 1:1, to the first month of the second year after exiting Egypt when Israelites gathered at Mt. Sinai. Biblical scholars today think Leviticus came to its final edition during post-exilic times (likely in the sixth or fifth century BCE) at the hands of unnamed priestly writers. While there is disagreement among critical scholars with respect to the history and development of the priestly writings, the consensus is that certain institutions, concepts, and even writings contained within the book are very ancient and most certainly pre-exilic.

Leviticus deals extensively with Israel’s sacrificial system. Chapters 1-7 contain instructions concerning the five types of sacrifices (whole burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, guilt offering) for the people as a whole and then again for the priests specifically. Chapters 11-16 contain ritual purity regulations, and chapters 17-27 establish priestly instructions for the people. A wide range of topics is addressed here: tabernacle furniture, calendar days, sacrifices and offerings, the Nazirites, the Levites, priests, and the people as a whole.

The 26th chapter contains a well known and much quoted series of blessings and curses which serve as rewards or punishments based on Israel's corollary obedience or disobedience. This so-called "epilogue" to the Holiness Code is carefully structured with six blessings for obedience (vv. 3-13) and six curses for disobedience (vv. 14-39). In escalating fashion which will culminate in exile and captivity, the second to last curse (vv. 30-1) describes God's destruction of his people along with their pagan idols (גלולים): "I will place your corpses atop the corpses of your fetishes" (v. 30). Verse 31 details the destruction of cities and cultic worship:

Leviticus 26:31 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־עֲרֵיכֶם חֲרָבָה וְהִשְׁמוֹתִי אֶת־מִקְדְּשֵׁיכֶם וְלֹא אֲרִיחַ בָּרִיחַ בְּיַחְזְקֵיכֶם:

Leviticus 26:31 'I will lay waste your cities as well, and will make your sanctuaries desolate; and I will not smell your soothing aromas.'

Does God refuse to "smell" the sacrifices they *continue* to offer up? Or has he determined to reject a superficial ritualistic devotion because of their obstinate refusal to listen and respond to divine correction? Or has the destruction of their cities rendered impossible any ongoing sacrificial system? Or are the people no longer even alive to offer them? The immediate context suggests their lifeless human bodies are stacked atop the lifeless bodies of their idols and entire cities (which would include cultic centers) are destroyed (v. 30-31), though the larger context indicates there is a living remnant that is scattered into the land of their enemies (v. 33, 36).

Some ambiguity is present and that may have been intended. Rather than a logical and progressive ordering of disciplinary action, the flow of the text with its heaping of negative images and descriptions produces a gut-wrenching response: "no, please, no!" Interestingly, this attention-getting rhetoric includes an olfactory appeal. God declares His refusal to enjoy the pleasing aroma of Israelite sacrifices, whether for lack of opportunity or as an assessment of their relative worth.

Deuteronomy

Historical Narrative (Admonitory Speech)

Deuteronomy 4:28 רִיחֵן

רִיחֵן is a Hiphil impf 3mp verb (רִיחַ, Hi. “to smell”) with a paragogic nun, and it is translated “[they] do not smell” in a figurative sense for false gods that lack olfactory ability (presumably for the sacrifices and offerings given them).

The book of Deuteronomy, ascribed to Moses in 1:1, is the fifth book of Hebrew Bible and capstone of the Pentateuch. It culminates a narrative description of the earliest origins of humanity in patriarchal history with the Israelites on the plains of Moab poised for the conquest of Canaan.⁹⁴⁹ The book is loosely divided into the “law code” of chapters 12-26 sandwiched between the “framework” of chapters 1-11 and 27-34. Scholars have demonstrated how the overall stylistic and theological consistency does not conceal varied origins and constituent parts, as evidenced by the two introductions, two different kinds of blessings and curses, and other appendixes.⁹⁵⁰

As stated in the introduction, despite the significant portion of legal material and suzerain-vassal treaty structure, there is no single satisfactory genre designation for this unique combination of law book and historical narrative. There is also no consensus concerning its dating, though it is generally assumed that final edits crystalizing the deuteronomistic literature occurred in the exilic or post-exilic period. Component parts must have originated at various times, with much or at least some of it connected to the Josianic reform of the seventh century, whether the long term product of those reforms or the prompting cause. The authors remain anonymous, though they are part of a

⁹⁴⁹ The distinctive style and specific expressions of the book have been used to trace the literary history of the Pentateuch. Many scholars consider the book or most of it to have been part of an independent work later joined to other writings called the deuteronomistic history (Joshua-2 Kings, the former prophets) before being affixed to its present position in the Hebrew canon.

⁹⁵⁰ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 5:9.

strong nationalistic and Yahwistic faith movement that spanned centuries and whose consistent purpose led to passionate expression.

As part of the (first) introduction of 1:1-4:40, in describing the exile, specific reference is made to the gods of carved wood or chiseled stone that lack sensorial ability:

Deuteronomy 4:28
 וְעַבְדִּתֶם-עִשָׂם אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם עֵץ וְאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִרְאוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלֹא יֵאָכְלוּ וְלֹא יִרְחוּ:

Deuteronomy 4:28 "And there you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

This attack on foreign gods/idols for their inability to see, hear, eat, and smell (anthropomorphic activities presumed commonplace for deity) is similar to Psalm 115:4-7 (see below), though it differs in several respects.⁹⁵¹ First, the object of scorn in this passage is “gods, the work of the hands of man” (אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם, 4:28) not “idols of silver and gold, the work of the hands of man” (עַצְבֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם, Psalm 115:6). Both highlight the human craftsmanship of the images though they use different nouns (gods vs. idols). Second, Deuteronomy’s litany of sensory handicaps includes sight, hearing, taste, and smell, whereas Psalm 115 has three auditory, two tactile, one visual, one olfactory, and no gustatory references. In both cases, the source or object that is not smelled by the gods is unspecified, though it is safe to assume it references ritual sacrifices/offerings. The context of Deuteronomy presents the exiled Israelite remnant’s worship of gods that do not smell as a demoralizing consequence for covenant transgression, whereas in Psalm 115, it is an insult directed back at the mocking foreign nations. Both passages use the derisive taunt of olfactory inability in a castigating

⁹⁵¹ Avrahami argues this is not an anthropomorphism but rather a sign of his power and authority. Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 63.

manner, though in one, the Israelites use it against others and in the other, God applies it in reference to exiled Israelites.

NEVI'IM

Judges

Historical Narrative (Annal)

Judges 16:9 בְּקִרְיָחוֹ

בְּקִרְיָחוֹ is a Hiphil infinitive construct verb (קִרְיָחַ, “to smell”) with a 3ms suffix pronoun (translated “it’s smelling”) used figuratively for a thin or weak string/cord snapping due to its “smelling” (that is, “touching” or being in close proximity to) fire.

The book of Judges tracks the turbulent transition from the leadership of Moses in the wilderness and Joshua in the initial conquest of Canaan to the united monarchy through a series of narratives of rulers (“judges”) who stepped up to lead in times of military urgency. Scholars suggest separate tales from local clan/tribal history were assembled together through several occasions of collecting, writing, and editing to form this book, with the final redaction taking place after the exile. Modern historical-critical scholarship sees this evolution in light of proposals for the growth of the larger Deuteronomistic history (Deuteronomy and Joshua-2 Kings). The historicity is debated, as might be expected, though sections like the Song of Deborah and Barak in Judges 5 are thought to be some of the earliest written portions of the Hebrew Bible. The designation “annal” has been applied to Judges as a semi-historical narrative account of select events in the nation's life, focusing especially upon political and military exploits of its leaders.

Within the Samson cycle of chapters 13-16, a single olfactory reference occurs in the story of Delilah seeking to coax the secret of Samson’s strength. For a price she determines to discover how he can be tied up and subdued. Playing her, Samson first

suggests that being tied with seven fresh thongs/bowstrings that were not dried would make him weak. She tests him, but he breaks the cords as easily as a strand of fiber snaps when it “smells” fire:

Judges 16:9 והאזב ישב לה בחדר ותאמר אליו פלשתים עליך שמשון וינתק את היתרים כאשר ינתק פתילה הנערת בהריתו אש ולא נודע כחו:

Judges 16:9 Now she had *men* lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.

The “seven fresh cords” first mentioned in vs. 8 (שבָּעָה יִתְרִים לְחַיִּים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִחַרְבוּ) are thought to be fresh, moist sinews from an animal which, when died, would contract and hold fast.⁹⁵² The same product is used for bowstrings (Job 30:11; Psalm 11:2; Haggai 3:9) and tent cords (Job 4:21). Boling, however, argues the weaker, physically inferior form may have been intended (not it’s more durable dried state) to indicate his strength was purportedly subject to magic.⁹⁵³ Whether the cords were considered strong or weak, the point of the metaphor is to highlight the effortless with which the “string of tow/tinder” (פְּתִיל־הַנְּעֻרָה)⁹⁵⁴ snapped when “smelling” the fire. The use of the verb רִיחַ is uniquely applied here, as it seems to indicate close intimate contact with or proximity to something—a spatial nuance versus an olfactory one.

⁹⁵² M. V. Van Pelt and W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “יִתְרִי,” *NIDOTTE* 2:574.

⁹⁵³ Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 6a; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1975), 249. He references lines from “The Soldiers’ Oath”: in a series of symbolic rituals involving yeast, wax and mutton fat, malt and malt loaf, women’s’ clothing, an arrow, fire, etc., an official throws sinews and salt into a pan and says “just as these sinews split into fragments on the hearth—whoever breaks these oaths . . . let these oaths seize him! Let him split into fragments like the sinews, let him be scattered like the salt!” Albrecht Goetze, “The Soldiers’ Oath,” in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. James B. Pritchard; 3d, with supplement.; Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1974), 353.

⁹⁵⁴ The root נָעַר occurs only two times in the nominative form, here and in Isaiah 1:31. It is best-translated “tow” in both contexts, a highly flammable material shaken from flax. Van Pelt and Kaiser, Jr., “נָעַר,” *NIDOTTE* 3:124.

Delilah tries to coerce him again to reveal the trick to make him weak. His answer this time is to use new ropes that have never been used. Even thicker cords do not work, though the narrator does not use the olfactory simile about “smelling” fire and instead indicates he sloughs the ropes off his arms like they were small threads. In her third attempt, Samson suggests weaving the seven braids of his head with a loom and tightening them with a pin. Once again there is no success—he just pulls the pin. Continued prodding proves a successful strategy for Delilah, as she eventually discovers the Nazirite vow and how his strength was connected to his unshaven head. The Philistines capitalize on this information, gouging his eyes and binding him with bronze shackles, which culminate in his suicidal revenge upon the Philistines.

1 and 2 Samuel

Historical Narrative (Annal)

1 Samuel 13:4 נִבְאֵשׁ

נִבְאֵשׁ is a Niphal perfect 3ms verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) with the ו particle conjunction וְ particle conjunction, and with “Israel” as the subject, the phrase is translated figuratively as “and moreover, Israel has become odious” (to the Philistines).

Historical Narrative (Annal)

1 Samuel 26:19 יָרַח

יָרַח is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms verb (רִיַח, “to smell”) used with a jussive sense and translated figuratively “let him smell/accept” by David for God’s acceptance of his offering (מִנְחָה).

Historical Narrative (Annal)

1 Samuel 27:12 הִבְאֵשׁ

הִבְאֵשׁ is a Hiphil infinitive absolute used figuratively for emphasis with a perfect form of בָּאֵשׁ (הִבְאֵשׁ, see below).

Historical Narrative (Annal)

1 Samuel 27:12 הִבְאִישׁ

הִבְאִישׁ is a Hiphil perfect 3ms from va;B' (“to stink”) translated figuratively as “to make odious” for the smell of David to the Israelites.

Historical Narrative (Annal)

2 Samuel 10:6 נִבְאֵשׁוּ

נִבְאָשׁוּ is a Niphal perfect 3cpl verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) translated figuratively as “had become odious” or “made themselves stink” with respect to the sons of Ammon’s reputation to King David.

Historical Narrative (Annal)

2 Samuel 16:21 נִבְאָשׁוּתָּ

נִבְאָשׁוּתָּ is a Niphal perfect 2ms verb (בָּאֵשׁ, “to stink”) translated figuratively “you have made yourself odious” for Absalom to David.

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are two volumes of a single book thought to be part of a deuteronomistic history extending from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings. The author is unknown, and the book was apparently written and edited in stages beginning no sooner than the late 10th century, as suggested by the use of obsolete linguistic terms and comments that date portions to the early period of Rehoboam’s reign.⁹⁵⁵ The early Iron Age, c. 1200-1000 BCE, is the historical backdrop of the book, as it begins with the history of Israel and their encounters with the Philistines (“Sea Peoples”) who established city-states in southern Palestine c. 1200 BCE.

1 Samuel is a basic series of narrative episodes with three extended character emphases: Samuel (1-8), Saul (9-15), and Saul/David (16-31). Overall, the book highlights the establishment of the monarchy in Israel and, more, specifically, the preparation of David as king. 2 Samuel chronicles David’s rise to the throne. Taken together, 1 and 2 Samuel have six olfactory verbs occurring in narrative (1x רִיחַ, 5x בָּאֵשׁ), five of which have a distinctly similar rendering and nuance.

Chapter 13 continues a description of the reign of Saul in a crucial time for the fledgling nation in light of the Philistine threat. A scaled-down Israelite army is divided into two groups, with Saul commanding 2,000 at Michmash and the hill country of Bethel and his son Jonathan over 1,000 at Gibeah of Benjamin. Jonathan successfully attacks a garrison of Philistines at Geba, and the narrator sets up a contrast in reaction. Both

⁹⁵⁵ 1 Samuel 27:6, for example.

the Philistines and the Israelites hear about this situation, but it does not launch a celebration in Israel. Verse 4 explains:

1 Samuel 13:4 וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמְעוּ לְאֹמֶר הַכֹּהֵן שְׂאוּל אֶת־נְצִיב פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְנָסִיבֵאשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפְלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּצְעֲקוּ הָעָם אַחֲרַי שְׂאוּל הַגִּלְגָּל:

1 Samuel 13:4 And all Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal.

News of the Israelite strike on the Philistine prefect/garrison (נְצִיב) is deleterious to the Philistines. Like a foul smell in their nostrils, they react in a swift and extreme manner, one that has severe implications for the Israelites. Verse 5 indicates the Philistines assembled for war at Michmash with 3,000 chariots,⁹⁵⁶ 6,000 horsemen, and an abundance of people “like the sand on the seashore.” Verse 6 describes the Israelites’ reaction: “When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.” Outnumbered and outmatched, verse 7 indicates some ran away, crossing the Jordan to escape to Gad and Gilead, while the troops who remained with Saul in Gilgal “trembled” (תָּרְדוּ) with fear. “To become odious” to this dominant group, the Philistines, is nothing less than a death-sentence.

Later in 1 Samuel, after a period of Saul chasing the upstart David in the wilderness regions, chapter 26 relays the last encounter between these two before David leaves the territory of Israel to serve the Philistines. Like the incident at a cave near En-gedi in chapter 24, David has an opportunity at the hill of Hachilah to slay Saul once and for all. Instead, he spares Saul’s life. Having crept down to the Saul’s camp with Abishai, who wanted him to take the king’s life, David instead snatches Saul’s spear and water jar while the soldiers surrounding him are in a deep sleep. David crosses the

⁹⁵⁶ LXX^L and Syriac, whereas the MT and LXX^B have 30,000.

valley and rebukes Abner, Saul's army commander, for not guarding the king and then asks Saul why he is hunting him. Without waiting for an answer, David offers a way out of the predicament.

1 Samuel 26:19 ועתה ישמענא ארני המלך את דברי עבדו אסיהנה הסיתה בי ירת מנחה ואם בני האדם ארורים הם לפני יהוה כירגשוני היום מהסתפח בנחלת יהוה לאמר לך עבד אלהים אחרים:

1 Samuel 26:19 "Now therefore, please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant. If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering; but if it is men, cursed are they before the LORD, for they have driven me out today that I should have no attachment with the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'"

In an urgent appeal prefaced with a formal petition, common to administrative letters of the ANE ("Please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant"), David suggests two possible sources for Saul's antagonism: the LORD or men. If it is the LORD, he says, then "let him smell an offering" (ירח מנחה). A *minchah/minkhah* is normally used as a gift, present, or tribute given among men, though here it is probably used in the sense of a grain or animal offering given to God (as in Genesis 4:3-4), though this is the only instance of the verb ריח ("to smell") used with the term in the Tanakh. While not a common expression, to offer a gift to deity, whether or not a literal aroma characterized it, could pacify or placate his anger. In contrast to this expressed hope of appeasement (if Saul's rage against David had divine origin) is the desire for men to be "cursed before the LORD" (if they are responsible for Saul's hatred of him). Interesting, David makes no mention of Saul himself being the source of his own animosity, which may explain some of his reluctance to retaliate.

Saul's contrite response and peace pledge is not sufficient for David, who anticipates ongoing struggle, so he crosses over into the land of the Philistines, where he seeks refuge with Achish of Gath. His assignment to Ziklag suggests he may have offered to pacify enemies of Philistine Gath in exchange for being given a place to settle. While no clear explanation is given for how David gained the trust of Achish, chapter 27

explains how he sustained it. His raids upon the Geshurites, Girzites, and Amalekites are played off as against the Negev of Judah, the Negev of the Jerahmeelites, and the Negev of the Kenites. By killing every living person, David eliminates the threat of being discovered in his ruse. This ploy is swallowed by Achish.

1 Samuel 27:12 וַיֵּאמֶן אַכִּישׁ בְּדָוִד לֵאמֹר הַבְּאֵשׁ הַבְּאִישׁ בְּעַמּוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיָה לִי לְעֶבֶד עוֹלָם:

1 Samuel 27:12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever."

The expression "he has surely made himself odious among his people Israel"

(הַבְּאֵשׁ הַבְּאִישׁ בְּעַמּוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל) is used in a similar manner as in 1 Samuel 13:4 (see above)

where the narrator uses it to characterize Israel's vulnerability before the Philistines.

Here it conveys the same sense of a weaker party being reviled by a stronger opposition group, though the object of the antipathy is an individual (David) not a group (all Israel).

It is the only instance of the Hiphil infinitive absolute form preceding the finite verb בָּאֵשׁ,

and it comes from the mouth of the Philistine Achish as a direct quote. By providing

inside knowledge of the trickery involved in David's subterfuge, the omniscient narrator

sets up the perfect plot tension as Achish requests David's participation in a military campaign against Israel in 1 Samuel 28:1-2.

Later in the narrative, after Saul's death is official and David is king of a secure and powerful Israelite kingdom, 2 Samuel 10:1-19 accounts the first two of three conflicts with a coalition of Ammonite and Aramean parties. The skirmish between the army of Israel, led by Joab, and the Ammonites and their Aramean mercenaries is precipitated by a good will gesture on David's part. When Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, dies, David seeks to show kindness (חֶסֶד) to the succeeding son, Hanun, by sending envoys to express his condolences. This political gesture motivated by a desire to honor prior commitments is met with suspicion by the son's advisors, who suspect chicanery on

David's part. The narrator is not explicit, but one wonders if he intended the reader to recall David's conniving with Achish of Gath. Presuming ill will versus honorable intention, Hanun not only refuses to accept David's act, he sends a peremptory message to David by treating David's messengers shamefully. Half of their beards are shaved off and the lower portion of their garments is cut off at the hip to expose them. Upon their return to Israel, David has them remain at Jericho until beards grow back, as this was a sign of great humiliation.

Verse 6 indicates Hanun's actions stimulated a fierce reaction:

2 Samuel 10:6 וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן כִּי נִבְאֲשׁוּ בְדוֹד וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ אֶת־אֲרָם בֵּית־רְחוֹב וְאֶת־אֲרָם צוּבָא עֲשָׂרִים אֶלֶף רְגִלִי וְאֶת־מֶלֶךְ מַעַכָּה אֶלֶף אִישׁ וְאִישׁ טוֹב שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר אֶלֶף אִישׁ:

2 Samuel 10:6 Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men.

Hanun's handling of David's men functioned in all practical terms an act of war, for it produced a vehement reaction on the part of David and ultimately led to a military conflict in which the Israelite army led by Joab defeated the Ammonites. The use of the Niphal of בָּאֵשׁ in the sense of "to make oneself stink" is unique to Samuel (1 Samuel 13:4; 2 Samuel 10:6; 16:21), it is always figurative, and it always involves an individual or group of people (here, the sons of Ammon) initiating actions that cause them to become noxious to a dominant individual or group in a manner that provokes violent response. The immediate hiring of Aramean mercenaries illustrates the inevitable consequence of becoming odious to someone—the king of Ammon provoked war and he knew it.

After reporting victories against a widened coalition of Aramean kingdoms in 10:15-19, the scene shifts to David at the palace with the Israelite army off battling the Ammonites. If these narratives are intended to be linked contextually for literary purposes, David's adultery with Bathsheba and disposition of Uriah her husband is a

pretext to the deterioration of David's family, culminating in Absalom's rebellion in 15:13-16:14. As David retreats from Jerusalem being pelted with stones and curses, Absalom proudly enters the city. Immediately he takes counsel from his trusted advisor Ahithophel, who encourages a strategic move to consolidate his support:

2 Samuel 16:21 וַיֹּאמֶר אַחִיתֹּפֶל אֶל-אַבְשָׁלֹם בּוֹא אֶל-פִּלְגֵשֵׁי אָבִיךָ אֲשֶׁר הֵנִיחַ לְשֹׁמֵר הַבַּיִת וְשָׁמַע כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי-נִבְאֲשָׁתָה אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְחָזְקוּ יָדַי כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אִתְּךָ:

2 Samuel 16:21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened."

The use of the Niphal of בָּאֵשׁ, as seen previously in Samuel, involves self-initiated decisions to act in a way that produces an instinctive and extreme reaction on the part of the opposition. In 1 Samuel 13:4, the Israelites raid a Philistine outpost. In 2 Samuel 10:6, Hanun shaves and strips David's envoys. Now, in 2 Samuel 16:21, Absalom openly engages in sexual relations with his father's ten concubines left behind at the palace. If, as Greengus notes, the early Israelite taboo against a son taking his father's wife/wives was relaxed after the father's death, then this act of offense was more than a symbolic seizing of David's prerogatives as king, it essentially made the bold claim that it was as if David was no longer living and without relevance.⁹⁵⁷ Ahithophel framed this act as a means of forcing wavering subjects to rally support one way or another by precluding any hope of reconciliation between the two. Such a defiant act was inevitably going to induce a full-fledged battle to the death between the two. Note, this is another case of literary synesthesia where a bad odor is perceived by hearing.⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁵⁷ Greengus, *Laws in the Bible*, 18–19.

⁹⁵⁸ Avraami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 104.

Isaiah

Prophecy (Song/Parable)

Isaiah 5:2 בְּאֲשִׁים

בְּאֲשִׁים is a mpl noun (from בָּאֵשׁ) translated “stinking [ones]” or “worthless [ones]” used either literally or figuratively for grapes that are inedible.

Prophecy (Song/Parable)

Isaiah 5:4 בְּאֲשִׁים

בְּאֲשִׁים is a mpl noun (from בָּאֵשׁ) translated “stinking” or “worthless” used either literally or figuratively for grapes that are inedible.

Prophecy (Announcement of Salvation)

Isaiah 11:3 וַתְּרִיחוּ

וַתְּרִיחוּ is a Hiphil infinitive construct verb (רָיַח, “to smell”) with a 3ms suffix pronoun (“his”), it is translated metaphorically as “and his smelling” (a reference to the coming ruler), and it is modified by “in/with/by the fear of the LORD” (בְּיִרְאַת יְהוָה).

Prophecy (Announcement of Judgment)

Isaiah 34:3 בְּאֲשִׁים

בְּאֲשִׁים is a ms noun (vaoB.) with a 3mpl suffix pronoun (“their”) translated “their stench” and used literally for the smell of corpses (וּפְגִרֵיהֶם) either decomposing or possibly burning.

Prophecy

Isaiah 50:2 תִּבְאֵשׁ

תִּבְאֵשׁ is a Qal impf 3fs verb from the root בָּאֵשׁ (“to have a bad smell, stink”) translated literally as “stinks” with respect to the odor of dead fish in dry river or sea beds.⁹⁵⁹

The Book of Isaiah begins with a superscription which is unique from the other biblical prophetic books, as it includes a clustering of four components: 1) a genre identification (חִזִּוִן), 2) an association with an individual and his experience (בְּרֵאמוֹן אִשֶּׁר חָזָה), 3) a specification of the subject group (עַל־יְהוּדָה וְיִירוּשָׁלַם “concerning Judah and Jerusalem”), and 4) a historical context via the reigns of Israelite kings (בְּיָמֵי עֲזַחְיָהוּ יוֹתָם אֲחָז וְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה “during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah”).

⁹⁵⁹ If the Masoretic Text (MT) of Isaiah 50:2 is correct. It is possible that תִּבְאֵשׁ should be read תִּבְשׂ (from יָבַשׁ, “to be dry, dried up, withered”). This variant reading has the support of the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah and the LXX. F. D. James, “A Critical Examination of the Text of Isaiah Based on the Dead Sea Scrolls of Isaiah (DSIa), the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the Isaiah Texts of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius.” Ph.D. diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1959, 162–3.

On this basis, from the first century CE to the modern age, all 66 chapters to follow were attributed to a single author by the name of Isaiah who lived and worked in the second half of the 8th century BCE. Since the 19th century, however, biblical scholarship has persuasively argued the non-homogenous collection of discrete units comes from at least three “Isaiahs” who are responsible for chapters 1-39, 40-55, and 56-66. Whether or not there was an original, historical document produced by a single prophet, the canonical form is thought to be the result of a series of editorial productions including a redaction in the 8th century, another during the time of Josiah in the 7th century, an exilic edition, and a final, post-exilic form.⁹⁶⁰

More recent interpretation in the latter decades of the 20th century has shifted the pendulum back to focus on the book as a whole in its canonical form. This does not invalidate the evidence for different authorship, dates, and circumstances, nor does it discourage identification of individual units of varying length and their collection into major blocks of material. However, it does question the relative significance of the book’s developmental history or our ability to determine if and how much of the material can be related to the life/work of a historical figure in a given historical rubric. With respect to olfactory references under evaluation, three terms are used a total of five times in two of three collections (chapters 1-39 and 40-55).

Within a series of introductory messages of condemnation, pleading, and future restoration (ch 1-12), Isaiah 5, with its sudden shift to first person singular and a new genre (song),⁹⁶¹ introduces a parable/allegory of a vineyard which metaphorically

⁹⁶⁰ R. E. Clements, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” *Interpretation* 36, no. 2 (1982): 117–29.

⁹⁶¹ אָשִׁיבָה נָא לִידֵי שִׁבְתִּי הַזֶּה, “Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved.” Isaiah 5:1.

portrays Israel's coming destruction. Although the Lord planted a choice vine, the vineyard was a colossal disappointment, as stated in verses 2 and 4.

Isaiah 5:2 וַיִּעְזְבֵהוּ וַיִּסְקַלְהוּ וַיִּשְׁעֵהוּ שָׂרֵק וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּל בְּתוֹכוֹ וְגַם-יִקְבַּע חֶצֶב בּוֹ וַיִּקְוֶה לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בְּאֲשִׁים:

Isaiah 5:2 And He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it, And hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones.

Isaiah 5:4 מַה-לַּעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד לְכַרְמִי וְלֹא עָשִׂיתִי בּוֹ מִדָּוַע קִנִּיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בְּאֲשִׁים:

Isaiah 5:4 "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?

The translation of בְּאֲשִׁים as “worthless ones” or “wild grapes,” used only here in the Hebrew Bible, comes from the contrast with עֲנָבִים (“grapes”), as in “good” or “edible” grapes, the anticipated fruit of God’s labors in and for it. Because the point of the analogy is to express a totally unexpected and frustrating return on the vineyard owner’s investment, perhaps there was some intentionality in selecting this rare form instead of other more common options (for example, modifying the plural noun “grapes” with the adjective רָעוּת, “bad, evil”)—the olfactory resonance (“stinking”) taps into a sensory nuance that adds a layer of disgust to disappointment.⁹⁶² In the end, this parable indicts the Israelites for producing bloodshed and a cry instead of justice and righteousness (v. 7).

Isaiah 11:1-9 is a prophetic proclamation or announcement of salvation through the coming reign of a “shoot/branch” from the “stump/stock of Jesse.” This future reign of peace is manifested in the sociopolitical order by means of birth or ascension of a new, ideal king from the line of David (v. 1-5) and in the order of creation by establishing

⁹⁶² “Sour rot” is the name given for a bunch rot disease that spreads rapidly through a cluster of grapes. It smells distinctly of vinegar because of acetic acid bacteria. Annemiek Schilder, “Botrytis Bunch Rot of Grape (Botrytis Cinerea),” n.d., n.p. [cited 27 June 2014]. Online: <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/grapeipm/bunchrot.htm>.

peace and tranquility among all creatures, including predators and prey (v. 6-9). The juxtaposition of these two realms connects justice, mercy, and peace in human society with harmony in the natural order.

Various suggestions have been given for the context and fulfillment of this prophecy, including the historical prophet Isaiah predicting an inauguration of a Davidic king in the 8th century, the vision of an “Isaiah” school for a king in the unspecified future who would embody the Davidic royal ideal, or post-exilic aspirations for a return to the Davidic monarchy. No consensus on dating is apparent.

In describing the credentials of the ideal ruler, verse 2 identifies three pairs of gifts. The first pair, wisdom and understanding, suggest a practical wisdom that enables him to rightly discern and deal with political and judicial matters. The second set of terms, counsel and might, refers to diplomatic and military authority. The third pair, knowledge and the fear of the LORD, adds a new dimension—that of religious devotion to the LORD. These qualities for the ideal ruler are followed by a description of his administrative activities.

Isaiah 11:3 וְהִרְיֵחוּ בִּירְאַת יְהוָה וְלֹא יִשְׁפֹּט עֵינָיו וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִים:

Isaiah 11:3 And he will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;

Translators have struggled with the first clause, as the MT offers no help from textual variants, leading some to suggest emendations or a dittographic error.⁹⁶³ For those who accept the text as it stands, the literal reading, “And his smelling [is] in/with the fear of YHWH,” is inexplicable, so a derived meaning is provided along the lines of

⁹⁶³ Unterman proposes וְהִרְיֵחוּ בִּירְאַת יְהוָה (“he will smell in/with the fear of the LORD”) in verse 3 is the result of a series of copyist errors including a scribal dittography related to the use of רִיחַ in the previous verse: רִיחַ דַּעַת וְיִרְאָה (“the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD”) and another copyist’s addition of a yud to coordinate this now anomalous form. Jeremiah Unterman, “The (Non)Sense of Smell in Isaiah 11.3,” *Hebrew Studies* 33 (1992): 17–23.

“And his delight is in the fear of YHWH.” In his article, “The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11.3,” Ritchie uses a Talmudic passage (*b. Sanh.* 93b) and Ibn Ezra quote⁹⁶⁴ as evidence that early and medieval Jewish commentators accepted a literal sense of the verb. He goes on to suggest the readings of the LXX (ἐμπλήσει “shall fill him”) and Targum (ויקרביניה, “will approach him”) reflect a sensorial shift that has been identified in Greek thought after Plato. He argues the problem is not exegetical, it is hermeneutical. This “olfactory avoidance syndrome” is a result of our modern ocularcentric worldview. His theory will be considered more carefully later. At this time, the text has credence as it stands.

If the first clause does in fact suggest this future ruler will “smell” in the fear of the LORD, the next two phrases provide the antithesis. By stating “he will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears,” the text sets up an intentional contrast between sensory modalities used for discernment: sight and hearing are rendered inadequate in comparison to smelling. The use of smelling as a means of discernment actually fits the context better than a derived meaning, such as “delight in,” because of this sensory contrast. With more metaphorical language involving facial features coming in verse 4 (striking the earth with the rod of his mouth and slaying the wicked with the breath of his lips), we are inclined to understand “smell” metaphorically.

Highlighting the modality of olfactoception (smelling) over against ophthalmoception (seeing) and audioception (hearing) could indicate a generally accepted worldview among the ancient Israelites in which the use of smell functions as a means of discernment, or it could demonstrate the same generally accepted bias

⁹⁶⁴ “The ear is sometimes deceived in hearing sounds, which are only imaginary; the eye, too, sees things in motion, which in reality are at rest; the sense of smell alone is not deceived. He will properly investigate the question before him ‘by his piety’; he will not judge according to what he seems to see or to hear, because the testimony of the witnesses might be false.” M. Friedländer, ed., *Ibn Ezra on Isaiah* (trans. M. Friedländer; Spring Valley, NY: Philipp Feldheim, 1873), 60.

towards sight and hearing as the most accurate senses that we have today. Either way, recent social science and literary studies add a new measure of understanding on how smell functions as a means of discernment and indicator of intangible or spiritual qualities. For now, suffice it to say that Isaiah 11:3 shows this coming, utopic ruler will have special enablements to judge deeper than what is perceived on the surface, and this will ensure the poor and needy have full protection under the law.

Isaiah 34-35 contrasts the future of Edom and Israel, with Edom being overthrown and YHWH returning to Zion. Based on aspects of literary style, theology, and overall historical outlook, this unit is thought to have gone through a late stage of redaction in the Second Temple period. It might derive from a historical period such as the time of the Babylonian exile, when Edom could easily take advantage of its neighbor Judah. In Isaiah, a long list of nations is judged, but this eschatological prophecy of judgment focuses attention on Edom. The basic content is a series of graphic scenes of destruction.

Verses 1-4 of chapter 34 summon all the nations of the earth to witness and experience the fury and wrath of the Lord. Before targeting Edom (v. 5-17), a widespread destruction is levied by God against not only the armies of the nations but the heavens and stars as well. No reason is given for such a decimation, which intensifies the sense of unbridled rage as opposed to calculated disciplinary action. The image of verse 3 is of a vast army that has been slaughtered:

Isaiah 34:3 וַחֲלָלִיתֶם יִשְׁלָכוּ וּפְגָרֵיהֶם יַעֲלֶה בְּאֲשָׁם וְנִמְסוּ הָרִים מִדָּמָם:

Isaiah 34:3 So their slain will be thrown out, And their corpses will give off their stench, And the mountains will be drenched with their blood.

The nature and scale of this grim post-slaughter scene is not unlike that which is depicted elsewhere the prophets. For example, Nahum 3:3 says people trip over the

massive number of slain. Here, as in Joel 2:20 (below), the sense of smell is utilized in reference to the corpses of victims. To add insult to injury, so to speak, no burial is provided the dead, causing their stench to fill the land.

Biblical narratives most often describe conventional burial in a family tomb or, in the case of Joseph in Egypt, via embalming. Cremation was not a Hebrew practice, though it is evident in extreme circumstances such as when the decapitated bodies of Saul and his sons are taken from the wall in Beth Shean and burned (1 Sam 31:12-13). The word used in Isaiah 34:3 for “corpse” is *פֶּגֶר*, which is used more often in a context of military conflict where there is an attacker than with those who died by natural means, such as while wandering in the desert. Conventional treatment for “corpses” could include abandonment *in situ* for the birds and animals to devour (1 Samuel 17:46) or relocation to an alternate location, such as a cistern (Jeremiah 41:9). In some cases, the bodies of the slain may have been burnt. Jeremiah 31:40 references “the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes,” and Isaiah 66:24 associates corpses not only with the decomposition process but also with burning fire. The use of the verb “to go up” to describe the smell lends credibility to the idea that the stench of the bodies derives from their incineration, though the natural assumption is that the noxious odor is the result of putrefying flesh alone. More explicit associations with animal sacrifice, as in verse 6 (the slaughter in Edom being a “sacrifice”),⁹⁶⁵ would provide even more support for the idea that the unburied corpses were burned.

Isaiah 50:1-3 is a constituent unit of prophecy that falls within a significantly larger composition focused on the Suffering Servant and Israel’s restoration, though the parameters of this collection have been debated without consensus. In verse 1, two

⁹⁶⁵ Human slaughter is characterized in the sense of cultic, ritual sacrifice in 2 Kings 23:20, Jeremiah 46:10, Ezekiel 39:17-20). The association is aided by the similarity of sound between the two words *שָׁחַת* (“to slaughter”) and *זָבַח* (“to sacrifice”).

questions are framed by a father speaking to his children: where is the divorce certificate indicating why he sent their mother away, and to which creditor did he sell his children into indentured service? Both questions imply serious accusations made by the Judeans against YHWH: first, that the LORD sent their mother away because he divorced her, and second, that he sold them into indentured service because he owed a debt he could not pay. His answer immediately given is decisive—their sin was the reason for the separation and slavery, not a divorce or indebtedness.

Another set of questions follow in verse 2, this time using the language of calling to address the issue of God's power:

Isaiah 50:2
 אֲחֲרַיב יָם אֲשֵׁים נְהַרוֹת מִדְבָּר חֲבָאֵשׁ דָּנְתֶם מֵאֵין מִים וְתָמַח בְּצִמְאָא:
 מְרוּעַ בָּאֲחִי וְאֵין אִישׁ קָרָאֲתִי וְאֵין עֹנֶה הַקְצוֹר קִצְרָה נְדִי מִפְדוּת וְאִם־אֵין־בִּי כֹחַ לְהַצִּיל הֵן בְּנִשְׁרָתִי

Isaiah 50:2 "Why was there no man when I came? When I called, *why* was there none to answer? Is My hand so short that it cannot ransom? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, I dry up the sea with My rebuke, I make the rivers a wilderness; Their fish stink for lack of water, And die of thirst.

The order given in this outburst is not linear, as the fish are said to stink first and then to die of thirst (vs. to die first and then to smell). The use of poetic language and imagery here and in verse 3 ("I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering") explains the disregard for rational or sequential flow. The point of God's fulmination is to remind the people of His power and authority; the entire natural order is subject to His rebuke.

The olfactory reference does more than just serve as an optional literary embellishment adding detail. Mentioning the pong of the dead fish brings to mind the first plague of the Exodus narrative, in which the Nile is turned to blood, causing dead fish to make the river reek (see Exodus 7:18, 21 above). This divine act is a demonstration of ultimate sovereignty. Lest there be any doubt about His power to

deliver, the reference to foul-smelling fish reminds readers/hearers of redemption history.

Jeremiah

Prophecy (Announcement of Judgment)

Jeremiah 48:11 וְרִיחוֹ

וְרִיחוֹ is a ms noun (“aroma”) with the ו particle conjunction and 3ms suffix pronoun (“his”) used figuratively in reference to the nation of Moab as perceived by the LORD.

The Book of Jeremiah is one of longest books in Hebrew Bible, second only to Psalms. It is set in a period of major geopolitical upheaval in the ANE as Assyria was in decline and Egypt and Babylonia vied for domination of the Fertile Crescent. There are three types of material in the book: prophetic oracles in poetic style, biographical material in narrative form, and prose sayings by the prophet. Scholars question how much of the book belongs to a real historical figure by the name of Jeremiah and how much was a part of a dynamic tradition. On the one hand, the book’s lengthy oracles are specifically contextualized to a historical prophet who functioned during the time period from the reform of Josiah (622 BCE) through the downfall of Judah and exile (587 BCE). Specific reference is made to the prophet Jeremiah dictating oracles to Baruch, his scribe, who wrote them down on a scroll (36:2; 45:1). On the other hand, there is not only internal verification for a long process of oral communication (25:3 says it covered 23 years), but two different textual witnesses (the Masoretic text and the Septuagint) supply external evidence for a lengthy, complex process of formation with oracles being added, interpreted, or moved about. Without date formulas connected to individual oracles, it is difficult to place individual oracles in specific historical periods.

Jeremiah 48 is a long, repetitive poem set in a collection of oracles against the nations (Elam, Philistia, Moab, Kedar). Some verses are identical to prophecies in other

prophetic books (Is. 15-16; Ezek. 25:8-11), suggesting a common stock of material. Thematically, the chapter is held together by the theme of the judgment or destruction (שִׁדְרָה) of Moab, Israel's neighbor and rival to the east. Alongside images of a bloody sword and salting of the land is a poignant word picture derived from the common ANE process of wine-making. Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel generally followed the same process of treading, pressing, fermentation, filtration, filling, and storage, and Transjordan was known for exceptional tableland vineyards.

In describing how Moab has been settled in complacency, seemingly avoiding substantial losses, the prophet declares:

Jeremiah 48:11 שָׁאֵן מוֹאָב מִנְעוּלָיו וְשִׁקְטָהּ הוּא אֶל-שִׁמְרָיו וְלֹא-הוֹרַק מִכֵּלָי אֶל-כֵּלָי וּבְגוּלָהּ לֹא הִלְךְ עַל-פֶּן עֵמֶד טַעְמוֹ בּוֹ וְרִיחוֹ לֹא נִמְרָה:

Jeremiah 48:11 "Moab has been at ease since his youth; He has also been undisturbed on his lees, Neither has he been emptied from vessel to vessel, Nor has he gone into exile. Therefore he retains his flavor, And his aroma has not changed."

Using the analogy of wine that is left undisturbed on its lees/sediment, which causes it to gain in rich flavor and fragrance, the LORD applies the next stage of the vinification process to Moab. Just as wine is racked, straining out the dregs by pouring it into another container when fermentation is nearly complete, the Moabites will be separated from their own land and transferred to a new location through the exile. The taste and smell that remained constant while sitting on its lees will soon change as YHWH will send decanters who not only pour Moab out but also shatter the jars. The people of Moab thought they were secure under the protection of Chemosh, but that false, arrogant self-sufficiency will soon be overturned, says the prophet.

Joel

Prophecy (Oracle of Salvation)

Joel 2:20 בְּאִשׁוֹ

בָּאֲשׁוּ is the ms noun בָּאֲשׁ (“stench”) with a 3ms suffix pronoun (“it’s”) used literally for the smell of the rear portion (וְכַפּוֹ) of the “the northerner” or “the northern army” (וְאֶת־הַצְּפוֹנִי) which has drowned in the sea.

The book of Joel is typically dated between 500 and 350 BCE, with internal evidence pointing to Judean conditions during the Persian period. The book uses thick military imagery to predict a devastating locust plague advancing upon the land of Judah. Whether used in a literal sense for locust hordes or figuratively for the mysterious “northern” foe, God is said to be the instigator and commander of this adversary. The call to repentance seems to be less about avoiding the plague and more about seeking YHWH’s help in the aftermath.

In midst of oracles of salvation (2:18-27), hope is offered that God may reverse what happened with the invaders. Even as the locusts are metaphorically compared to an invincible approaching army, Joel 2:20 says they will be driven from the land like a defeated army where they will be consumed by the Dead Sea on the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west:

Joel 2:20 וְאֶת־הַצְּפוֹנִי אֲרִחִיק מֵעַלְיֶכֶם וְהִדַּחְתִּיו אֶל־אֶרֶץ צָרָה וְשָׂמַמָּה אֶת־כַּפּוֹי אֶל־הַיָּם הַקְּדֹמִי וְכַפּוֹ אֶל־הַיָּם הָאַחֲרֹן
וְעָלָה בָּאֲשׁוּ וְתָעַל צְחָנָתוֹ כִּי הִגְדִּיל לַעֲשׂוֹת:

Joel 2:20 "But I will remove the northern *army* far from you, And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, And its vanguard into the eastern sea, And its rear guard into the western sea. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, for it has done great things."

The phrase וְעָלָה בָּאֲשׁוּ (“its stench will go up”) is paralleled by וְתָעַל צְחָנָתוֹ (“its foul smell will come up”), which follows. The term parallel to בָּאֲשׁוּ (“its smell”), צְחָנָתוֹ, is often translated “its foul smell.” Cognates for this hapax appearing in other Semitic languages suggest the meaning “stinking.”⁹⁶⁶ There is the possibility that the previous clause (בָּאֲשׁוּ) is a later gloss influenced by Isaiah 34:3 (וְעָלָה בָּאֲשָׁם) to explain the rare word.

⁹⁶⁶ P. Jenson, “צְחָנָתוֹ,” *NIDOTTE* 3:796.

The overall sense is that God’s punishment in driving the “army” of locusts into the sea will cause a foul stench to rise, though it is not explicit as to where the smell comes from. Taking the metaphorical comparison to a human army, we may presume a drowned locust army washing ashore would give off the expected reek of physical decomposition. The following phrase, “for [he is] doing great things,” and the verses to follow indicate the fear that characterizes the people’s present experience need not persist in light of God’s promised triumph.

Amos

Prophecy (Oracle of Judgment)

Amos 4:10 באש

באש is a ms noun used literally in construct with מַחֲנֵיכֶם for “the stench of your camp” as perceived by the Israelites for the foul smell presumably arising from either dead bodies or camps burning.

Prophecy (Oracle of Judgment)

Amos 5:21 אָרִיחַ

אָרִיחַ is a Hiphil imperfect 1cs verb (רִיחַ, “to smell” or “to perceive odor”) with the לא negator, used figuratively for God’s perception or acceptance of Israelite solemn assemblies (עֲצֻרָה, עֲצֻרָה).

The prophet Amos is the attributed author of what is thought to be the earliest book of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. The superscription of the book in 1:1 dates it to the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah (783-742 BCE) and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (785-745 BCE), and most scholars agree that most of the book derives from the latter 8th century in Israel.

This message of warning to the northern kingdom of Israel culminates in chapter 4, where condemnation is levied for both social oppression and religious compromise, and a harsh decree is levied: “Therefore, prepare to meet your God!” (4:12-13). In describing a series of successive disasters that YHWH brought upon Israel to stimulate

a return to Him, such as famine (4:6), drought (4:7-8), blight and locust swarms (4:9), and natural disasters (4:11), the fourth in a series of five mentions plagues and war together:

Amos 4:10 שלחתי בקם דבר ברנד ממצרים תרנתי בחרב בחוריקם עם שני סויכם ואעלה באש מחניכם ובאפכם ולא שבתם ערי נאסיהנה:

Amos 4:10 "I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD.

This “plague” or “pestilence” (דבר) “in the manner of Egypt” may be a specific reference to the fifth plague in Exodus 9:3, a fatal epidemic disease which killed livestock. Paired with this disaster is a slaying of young men and horses by sword, causing “the stench of your camp” to “rise in your nostrils.” The exact source of the smell is not clear—is it the abhorrent odor of decomposing carcasses, whether slain by the sword or by pestilence, as one might think, or potentially the reek of a burning camp which more visibly “rises”? The text does not indicate.

The oracles of chapter 5 challenge scholars seeking structure and consistency, but certain themes (such as death and justice) provide some linkage. 5:21-24, part of a direct speech from YHWH, forms an individual unit that spells out what God hates and despises. In it, the LORD rejects the Israelites’ religious or cultic observances, including festivals, assemblies, sacrifices, offerings, and singing, and calls them (back) to justice and righteousness. In denouncing their observances of holy days and sacred gatherings, a host of sensory images are utilized: God will not “look at” (נבט) their sacrifices (5:22) or “listen to” (שמע) their songs/music (5:23). He also refuses to “smell” (ריח) their assemblies:

Amos 5:21 שנאתי מאסתי חניכם ולא אריח בעצרתיהם:

Amos 5:21 "I hate, I reject your festivals, and I do not delight in your solemn assemblies.”

The use of the verb ריח with “assemblies” (עֲצֻרָה, עֲצֻרָה) is striking here, as it is certainly not the usual or expected idiom for these pious gatherings of Israelites. Leviticus 23:37 indicates God prescribed a number of sacred assemblies for the purpose of offering various sacrifices to Him. The precise object that God does not smell could be derived from “your assemblies” to be the animal, grain, and drink sacrifices that were intended to be a “pleasing aroma” (Leviticus 23:18). Interestingly, though, no mention of incense offerings is made here, as one might suspect when using a “smell”-oriented verb. Wellhausen thought it was absent because the prophets did not know about incense offerings at this time, as they didn’t enter Israelite cult until late monarchic times and climaxed in the post-exilic period.⁹⁶⁷ Whether or not incense was a part of Israelite cultic worship at this time in history (not the focus of this dissertation) or if the animal/grain/liquid sacrifices are implied, a literary critical reading might suggest a different explanation. Rather than saying the incense or sacrifices offered to God on these festival days are repulsive to Him, the prophet may be conveying God’s disgust with the people by saying the entire event is detestable to Him. This shifts the focus from a specific expression of cultic ritual to highlight the larger context and motive of the people. To say the whole assembly reeks is a far more sweeping indictment than to say the sacrifices themselves do not smell right to Him.

Hosea

Prophecy (Announcement of Salvation)

Hosea 14:7 ריח

ריח is a ms noun (“fragrance, aroma”) used metaphorically for Israel in comparison to a tree of Lebanon.

⁹⁶⁷ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1886), 63ff.

The Book of Hosea, one of “the Twelve,” is a prophetic compilation perhaps best known for its marriage metaphor. The superscription, thought to have been added later, attributes authorship to Hosea son of Beerī and situates the book between 750-724 BCE, the last years of Jeroboam II up to just before the fall of Israel to the Assyrians in 721 BCE. This period of political turmoil, social inequity, and religious compromise is also addressed by the 8th century prophets Amos, Micah, and Isaiah. As expected, scholars debate which portions originate with the prophet Hosea and which were the result of an extensive traditioning process. The critical stages of formation are typically identified as an 8th-7th collection of original oracles, 7th century deuteronomistic redaction during the time of Josiah, and 6th century deuteronomistic redaction during the Babylonian exile.

The overarching rhetorical strategy of the book is to employ vivid metaphors based not in political or economic terms (king/servant, lord/vassal) but in familial relationships (marriage and parenting). Chapters 1-3 describe the covenant between God and Israel through the tragic marriage of Hosea to an unfaithful wife, Gomer, and the births of three children. Israel’s idolatrous worship of foreign gods is compared to adultery in marriage, and then chapters 4-11 contain oracles against Israel’s politics and cult, concluding with the parent/child metaphor. Chapters 12-14 hit both themes of repentance/return and forgiveness/mercy. The barren land that was formerly devastated blooms with lush fertility in the final chapter to symbolize the reunion of wife and husband.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶⁸ Hosea describes sowing YHWH’s wife, Israel, like a seed into the land in 2:25, and later, when urging repentance, the prophet uses imagery of the seed growing in the land (6:1-3, 10:12). In chapter 14, the successful results of sowing Israel (YHWH’s wife) are celebrated. Gale Yee, “The Book of Hosea: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature, Daniel, The Twelve Prophets*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 7, 12 vols., The New Interpreter’s Bible (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 294.

After indicting the nation in Hosea 11:12-13:16 and calling Israel to repent/return in 14:1-3, a description of God's blessing comes in vv. 4-8. The LORD promises to heal their waywardness, love them freely, and nourish them as a plantation to lush fruitfulness. In a series of botanical metaphors, both the LORD and Israel are compared to plants or trees. Like dew upon Israel causing it to blossom like a lily, the LORD's love and healing will drench the land. Israel is compared to a tree (presumably cedar) of Lebanon with deep roots and young shoots growing. Not surprisingly, an olfactory reference emerges here:

Hosea 14:7 גִּלְבּוֹ וְנִקְוָתָיו וַיְהִי כַצִּיט הַרְדִּי וְרִיחָם לוֹ כַּלְבָּנוֹן:

Hosea 14:6 His shoots will sprout, And his beauty will be like the olive tree, And his fragrance like *the cedars of Lebanon*.

Israel's fragrance is said to be "like Lebanon," and one might assume this is to be a reference to the much-loved smell of the cedars of Lebanon. While Lebanon was well known for its aromatic trees, which included various species such as cedar, cypress, and juniper, and the LORD is said to be a cypress/fir tree (בְּרוֹשׁ) in v. 8, the phrase "cedars of" is not present in the text. The next phrase compares Israel's beauty and splendor to an olive tree not a cedar tree, and it is possible that the "scent of Lebanon" is the scent of wine, which may be suggested by v. 7: זִכְרוֹ כִּי־יִין לְבָנוֹן has been translated "his scent will be like the wine of Lebanon" (ASV, JPS, KJV). Whatever was intended for the smell of Lebanon here, the passage employs a clustering of multiple senses in addition to olfaction, as v. 8 says men will dwell in the shade of this tree (tactile), and Israel will flourish like grain (visual), blossom like a vine (visual), and host fame like wine from Lebanon (presumably gustatory). These sensory similes conclude the book on a positive note of renewed blessing for the wayward but repentant wife, Israel.

KETUVIM

Psalms

Psalm (Individual Lament)

Psalm 38:6 הִבְאִישׁוּ

הִבְאִישׁוּ is a Hiphil perfect 3mp verb from the verb בִּאֵשׁ, translated “grow foul” in reference to the tangible stench of the psalmist’s wounds as perceived by himself, his friends, and his neighbors.

Psalm (Temple Worship)

Psalm 115:6 יִרְיַחוּן

יִרְיַחוּן is a Hiphil impf 3mpl verb (רִיחַ) with a paragogic nun and translated “they cannot smell” with a figurative sense in reference to their idols (עֲצֻבֵיהֶם) inhaling, assumedly, the sacrifices of pagan worshippers.

The book of Psalms is a collection of sacred poetry, songs, and prayers used in ancient Israelite liturgical worship and characterized by unique literary features such as parallelism, repetition, chiasm, structure, and figurative language. Individual psalms have been dated from the time of David to the Maccabean period, with the various collections (such as the Songs of Ascent in chapters 120-34 and Elohistic psalter of chapters 42-83) evolving into the book’s final form with five “books” (1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-50) during the early Persian period to the middle of second century BCE. Concrete historical situations likely birthed many of the psalms, yet identifying and dating those experiences is virtually impossible. Superscriptions attribute possible authorship, though they are often thought to be derived from the memory of the individual.

Genre classifications for psalms based on a form critical approach include hymns, enthronement psalms, communal complaints/laments, royal psalms, individual complaints/laments, and individual thanksgiving psalms.⁹⁶⁹ Additional genres or sub-genres include wisdom/Torah psalms, pilgrimage psalms, entrance liturgies, prophetic exhortations, and psalms of confidence/trust, not to mention the so-called “mixed types.”

⁹⁶⁹ Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1967), 67.

Walter Brueggemann's categorization of "location," "dislocation," and "new location" psalms provides a functional perspective based on Ricoeur's hermeneutic of expression, where our situation/location is always changing between the poles.⁹⁷⁰

Psalm 38, an individual lament or psalm of dislocation, presents an urgent petition to the Lord for deliverance. After a specific and lengthy description of the author's desperate condition comes the appeal to Lord: "Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! (vv. 21-22). The motivation is implicitly for God's compassion and mercy in light of the petitioner's situation. He has many strong, hateful enemies, though he knows he is not just an innocent victim—God is actually the source of his physical suffering as a consequence for his sin. This may explain the thick piling up of sensory imagery with respect to his despairing state. He is pierced by divine arrows and pressed down by the LORD's hand. He feels overwhelmed by guilt, bowed low in mourning. His health is gone, his back is filled with searing pain, his vision is decreasing, and his strength is gone. The physical and emotional devastation manifests in longings, sighings, anguished groans, and a pounding heart. Verse 14 says he is like a deaf man who can't hear and whose mouth cannot reply. Moreover, his suffering makes him prey to enemies who set traps for him and plan his ruin. Within this litany of suffering, verse 5 reads:

Psalm 38:6 הַבְּאִישׁוֹ נִמְקוּ חִבּוּרָתַי מִפְּנֵי אֱוִלָּתִי:

Psalm 38:5 My wounds grow foul *and* fester. Because of my folly,

The psalmist's wounds are said to emit a foul smell (הַבְּאִישׁוֹ) and fester (נִמְקוּ). Both verbs are associated elsewhere with corpses (Isaiah 34:3-4). The physical decomposition he is experiencing is worsened by the social stigma that traumatizes him.

⁹⁷⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 19.

According to verse 12, his “wounds” (נגע) result in friends/companions and neighbors avoiding him. The tangible stench resulting from his festering wounds factors into his social isolation to compound his emotional suffering.

He is not an innocent victim, though, he is responsible for this divine scourging (as in Isaiah 1:6). The phrase “because of my folly” (מפני אונותי) indicates a moral compromise more than an intellectual impairment (as in Psalm 69:6). A similar sense is expressed in verse 4 (“my sin,” חטאתי) and verse 5 (“iniquities,” עוונתי).

Psalm 115, presumably used in ongoing Israelite temple worship, heralds descriptive praise⁹⁷¹ to elucidate the contrast between YHWH, the God who protects and helps Israel, and the useless idols of the pagan nations that do nothing. Pejorative verbs and nouns are often associated with pagan idols,⁹⁷² as are various derogatory associations,⁹⁷³ but the longest and most specific castigations mock pagan idols as being made of gold, silver, wood, and stone by human hands and unable to perform any of the functions that one expects of a deity. This polemic against idolatry has caused this psalm to be associated with a post-exilic origin, though this is hypothetical.

In the opening call to praise, a reference is made to the nations’ taunt (“Where is their God?”). The answer is not only provided (“Our God is in the heavens, he does

⁹⁷¹ Descriptive praise focuses on who God is and what God has done for all the world, while lamenting praise focuses on what God *can* do and declarative praise focuses on what God *is doing* or *just did* in the recent past. Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: Westminster John Knox, 1987).

⁹⁷² Examples include: to provoke (קעס, Deuteronomy 4:25), detestable/abomination (תועבה, Deuteronomy 7:25), to abhor (תעב, Deuteronomy 7:26), to not hear/obey (שמע, Deuteronomy 11:28), rebellion (קרי, 1 Sam. 15:23), horrid thing (מפליצה, 1 Kings 15:13), emptiness, vanity (שוא, Ps 31:7), deception/falsehood (שקר, Jeremiah 10:14), vanity/worthless (הבל, Jeremiah 10:15), to pollute (חלל, Jeremiah 16:18), to be unclean (שםא, Ezekiel 20:7), detestable (שקוי, שקי, Ezekiel 20:7), to prostitute (זנה, Hosea 4:15), to be stubborn (סרה, Hos 4:16).

⁹⁷³ For example, idols are termed *gillûlîm* (Jeremiah 50:2; Ezekiel 22:3-4). Whether by etymology or word association, it has negative associations because of its connection to *gēl* and *gālāl* (“dung”).

whatever he pleases”), but it is done so with a form of retaliatory insult directed towards the idols that, among other things, are sensory deprived:

Psalm 115:6 אָזְנוֹתָם לֵהֵם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֶף לֵהֵם וְלֹא יִרְיִחוּן:

Psalm 115:6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell.

The context of vv. 4-7 includes other sensory references besides olfaction: their idols (עֲצֻבוֹתָם) have mouths that cannot speak (here the mouth is associated not with eating/taste but with speaking), eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear, hands that cannot feel, feet that cannot walk, and throats that cannot make a sound. This is a total of three auditory, two tactile, one visual, and one olfactory reference.

Psalm 135:15-18 has very similar descriptions but replaces “they have noses but cannot smell” with “nor is there breath in their mouths” and omits mention of having hands that cannot feel, feet that cannot walk, and the inability to make sound with their throat. The use of anthropomorphisms to characterize deity appears to be universal in the ANE, though certain portions of the Hebrew Scriptures seem intent on eliminating that language and the conceptions behind it. Interestingly, this chastising statement mocks the other nations’ for *not* smelling versus the idea that a real deity *can or should* smell.

Job

Wisdom Literature

Job 14:9 מִרְיָתָם

מִרְיָתָם is a ms noun (“scent”) with the מִן particle preposition used in construct with water (מִיָּם) to figuratively convey nearness and contact.

Wisdom Literature

Job 39:25 יָרִיחָם

ריח is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms of the verb ריח ("to smell") translated literally as "smells" in reference to the warhorse detecting (and being attracted to) battle.

The book of Job is a dialogue on divine justice set within a narrative framework. It starts with simple prose story (1:1-2:13), but when a debate is sparked between the character Job and his "friends" at the beginning of chapter 3, a sophisticated poetry containing rare words and striking images ensues. The simple prose style resumes in the conclusion of 42:7-17.

The book is identified with wisdom literature because it is concerned with an individual's proper moral and religious conduct as it relates to personal and communal well being. Like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the book does not rely upon Israelite religious traditions as much as the international conventions, styles, and language of wisdom literature. As a book, Job represents both the conventional wisdom of proverbs and the skeptical wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

Some clues to the book's intellectual context and social class perspectives can be derived from the language, which is full of rare words, archaic forms, mythological allusions, and rhetorical devices from wisdom, prophetic, and legal contexts. The author(s) of the book clearly had a remarkable command of Israel's religious literature and the traditions of her neighbors. This, we assume, would represent the intellectual background expected of a scribal class.

Based on the irregular and inconsistent cycles of speeches, scholars suggest the book grew in stages with dates ranging from the tenth to the second century BCE. A majority position falls between the seventh and fifth centuries BCE, though the linguistic ambiguity and lack of historical references renders this subjective.

Job 14, sometimes regarded as an independent poem, emphasizes human misery and the brevity of human life. This finale of Job's third speech in the first cycle

includes an extended address to God. The fact that there is no extended address to God after this suggests the onset of despair, as Job languishes in his vulnerability to death. Two striking images related to natural phenomena drive this home. First, the image of a tree in vv. 7-9 highlights the predicament of human vulnerability.

Whereas dying trees can be renewed by cutting them off close to the ground so new shoots can sprout from the stump, there is no corresponding hope for a man who does not revive when cut down. To further the image, vv. 8-9 indicate that old, dry roots can revive when coming into contact with water. The proxemic relationship of roots to water is uniquely conveyed through olfactory language:

Job 14:9 מריח מים ופרח ועשה קציר כמור־נמע:

Job 14:9 At the scent of water it will flourish And put forth sprigs like a plant.

In contrast to the stump of a dying tree, which can be revived by “smelling” water, there is no equivalent regeneration when a man breathes his last, for the afterlife offers no viable existence. In this passage, the hope for a tree and its roots only highlights the despair for humanity. This gloom is followed up by the image of the irreversible (not seasonal) vanishing of water that reinforces the inexorability of death.

Another olfactory reference occurs in chapter 39 of the book, which is part of the climax in which God speaks to Job from the whirlwind and, as a result, Job stops debating (38:1-42:6). This so-called “disputation speech” utilizes hymnic descriptions to change Job’s mind and cause him to withdraw his charge. In the first of God’s speeches, rather than answering Job’s questions about the nature of justice, a barrage of questions based in cosmology, meteorology, and zoology make him aware of his limitations. Within this rebuke, Job 38:39-39:30 references five pairs of wild animals: the lions and ravens, mountain goats and deer, the onager and wild ox, the ostrich and war horse, and the hawk and vulture. While the horse seems to be an anomaly because

it is a domesticated animal (in contrast to the others which are characteristic of uninhabited wilderness regions), the point of the description is to highlight what cannot be the product of human training—an unrestrained eagerness to charge into battle without fear.

A variety of sensory images are heralded in depicting the creature’s wild lust for war. The creature is said to have a flowing (“thundering”) mane, and at the sound of the trumpet to leap like a locust and charge into the fray where quivers rattle and weapons flash. The sounds of proud snorting and pawing of the ground join with a “laughing” at fear. Verse 25 adds an olfactory reference to the mix:

Job 39:25 בְּרִי שִׁפְרוֹ יֹאמֵר הָאֵחַ וּמִרְחֹק יִרְיֵחַ מִלְחָמָה רַעַם שָׁרִים וְתְרוּעָה:

Job 39:25 "As often as the trumpet *sounds* he says, 'Aha!' And he scents the battle from afar, And thunder of the captains, and the war cry.

Horses, like most animals, have an acute sense of smell by which they detect what is going on around them. References to the sense of smell in equids often pertains to helping them find mating partners or a food source.⁹⁷⁴ However, in contrast to a survival mechanism, the warhorse is said to be attracted to the smell of battle from afar.

Proverbs

Wisdom Literature (Proverb)

Proverbs 13:5 יִבְאִישׁ

יִבְאִישׁ is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms from the verb בָּאֵשׁ (“to stink”) used figuratively for the “wicked one” (רָשָׁע) who loves falsehood.

The book of Proverbs, along with Job and Qohelet/Ecclesiastes, is identified with “wisdom literature,” an umbrella genre that represents some of the most ancient

⁹⁷⁴ Jeremiah 2:24 indicates the way wild asses pant or sniff the wind in time of heat to locate mating partners. Jeremiah 14:6 suggests they utilize the olfactory sense to search for food or water.

literature of the ANE.⁹⁷⁵ Proverbs is not a unified whole; rather, it is an eclectic “collection of collections,” presumably compiled over several centuries and including material thought to derive from the early monarchy (10:1-22:16, the “Solomonic Collection”).⁹⁷⁶ The strong didactic tone of the book manifests in several different genres: wisdom poem, instruction, and proverb (short, mostly two-line pithy sayings).

Traditionally, because of his wisdom, the book has been attributed to Solomon, but clearly the book draws on and repackages a pre-existing corpus of wisdom. Unfortunately, the nature of the material makes it hard to date. Form critics discuss the social settings for Israel’s wisdom literature, looking for the origin of this literary form in specific arenas of public life. As a collection of traditional or folk wisdom gathered from diverse spheres, proverbs are thought to have played a role in home education as part of a moral agenda. Scholars point out this influence of tribal tradition, though noting the role of government, as professional scribes were always conscripted under royal sponsorship.

The book of Proverbs does not rail against idolatry or emphasize formal aspects of institutional religion such as sacrifice, covenant, or the Law of Moses, nor does it address international relations. There is a practical, individualistic view of theology in

⁹⁷⁵ For demonstration of the strong affinities of Proverbs with Egyptian “instructions” and other ANE wisdom literature, such as the correspondences in the Amenemope material (Middle Kingdom, 500 years or more before Proverbs) to Proverbs 22:17-24:22, see Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (2 vols., 1st ed.; The Anchor Bible 18A-B; New York: Doubleday, 2000); Harold C. Washington, *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope and the Hebrew Proverbs* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 142; Atlanta: Scholars, 1994); Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford Theological Monographs; New York: Clarendon, 1994); Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings* (3 vols.; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1973). Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 52; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1983).

⁹⁷⁶ Divisions for various collections are based primarily on introductory incipits: the wisdom poem (1-9), proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16), sayings of Amenemope (22:17-24:22), sayings of the wise (24:23-34), sayings of Solomon copied by Hezekiah’s men (25-29), and several appendices including the words of Agur and Lemuel, and the virtuous woman (30-31).

that the voice of experience has identified direction consequences for ones actions. There is nothing direct about God’s blessings or a messianic future. The motivation derives from common sense and logic not an external authority. In this sense, the book represents a tradition that stands in tension with prophetic theology.

One reference to what appears to be a form of the verb **בָּאֵשׁ** appears in the book of proverbs. It follows a cluster of proverbs linked with catchwords such as **נָפֵשׁ** (“desire,” “craving,” “life”) in 13:2, 3, 4 and **פֶּה** (“mouth” or “lips”) in 13:2, 3. Verse 2 taps into gustatory and auditory imagery when it says the mouth produces “fruit” (speech) that nourishes others. Because speech bears good or bad fruit, verse 3 emphasizes the need to control the mouth as the organ of speech. Verse 4 follows up on the idea of desire when it speaks of the sluggard’s craving being disappointed, whereas those who work hard are satisfied. Verse 5 returns to topic of speech with a classic antithetical couplet involving the righteous and the wicked:

Proverbs 13:5
דְּבַר־שֶׁקֶר יִשְׂנֵא צְדִיק וְרָשָׁע וּבְאִישׁ וַיִּתְפַּיֵר:

Proverbs 13:5 A righteous man hates falsehood, But a wicked man acts disgustingly and shamefully.

The first line speaks to an emotion that characterizes the righteous—hating a deceitful word (see also Proverbs 8:13 and Psalm 119:163). The second half addresses a consequence that, we assume, is the result of the opposite—loving a deceitful word. If translated literally, the wicked man is said to “stink” and be ashamed. The former verb is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms, and some scholars may propose it is a byform of the root **בוש** (“to be ashamed”), translating it accordingly as a synonym with **וַיִּתְפַּיֵר**, “to be or bring disgrace.” However, a figuratively based translation based on the form as it stands, from the verb **בָּאֵשׁ**, is more likely, as associations of bad smell and lies are quite common.

More debatable is the sense of this pair of Hiphil verbs (וּבְאִישׁ וַיִּחַפְּרוּ), which can be rendered ingressive (“become...”) or causal (“cause...”). Is the proverb suggesting the wicked become odious and disgraceful by their love of false words, or is it saying the wicked cause a stench and disgrace upon others by loving falsehood? Both are legitimate options here.

Song of Songs

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 1:3 לְרִיחַ

לְרִיחַ is a ms noun with the ל particle preposition, and it is translated literally “for fragrance/aroma” in the verbless sentence “your oils are good,” spoken by the maiden for her lover.

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 1:12 כִּיחֹו

כִּיחֹו is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”) with the ms suffix pronoun (“its”) used literally for the permeating scent of the maiden, “my nard” (נָרְדִי), as perceived by the king.

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 2:13 רִיחַ

רִיחַ is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”), the object of “they give” (נָתַנוּ), literally referencing the blossoming vines of spring.

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 4:10 וְרִיחַ

וְרִיחַ is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”) with the ו particle conjunction used literally in construct with “your oils” (שְׁמֵנֶיךָ) for the bride’s pleasing scent that surpasses all spices (מִכָּל-בְּשָׂמִים).

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 4:11 וְרִיחַ

וְרִיחַ is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”) with the ו particle used literally in construct with “your garments” (שְׁלֵמֶיךָ) and followed by a comparison to the smell of Lebanon.

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 4:11 כְּרִיחַ

כְּרִיחַ is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”) with the כ particle preposition (“like”) used figuratively in construct with “Lebanon” (לְבָנוֹן).

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 7:9 וְרִיחַ

ריח is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”) with the ו particle used literally in construct with “your breath” (אפך) and followed by a comparison to apples (פתפוחים).

Love Poetry

Song of Songs 7:14 ריח

ריח is a ms noun (“fragrance/aroma”) as the object of “they give” (נתנו) used literally for the scent of mandrakes (תהודאים).

The Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon) is a poetic book that deals with romantic love between a man and woman. As such it evidences striking parallels with Sumerian and Egyptian love poetry (specifically that of the New Kingdom, c. 1567-1085 BCE).⁹⁷⁷ These compilations of love songs reflect a common ANE literary tradition, yet each culture retains its own individual way of handling it.⁹⁷⁸ Among scholars who conclude the Song of Songs is essentially ancient Near Eastern love poetry, a sometimes sharp division exists between two groups—those who treat it as a random collection of love lyrics and those who see it as a structurally integrated work.

The superscription in 1:1 identifies it with the Solomonic period, though scholars suggest this was a scribal attempt to place it in the stream of wisdom tradition by associating it with the wisest king in Israel’s history. The language seems to reflect a mix of early and late materials, as archaic grammatical and linguistic forms suggest early periods of Israel’s history, while Aramaisms and Neohebraisms, Persian/Greek linguistic elements, Greek customs/attitudes, and parallels to Greek poetry could be as late as the third century.

⁹⁷⁷ Wilfred G. E. Watson, “Some Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Song of Songs,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (1995): 253–71; Adolf Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians; Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, From the Third and Second Millennia B. C.* (trans. Aylward M. Blackman; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1927); John Bradley White, *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry* (vol. 38; Society of Biblical Literature; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978); Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1985).

⁹⁷⁸ For instance, while all are dramatic in varying degrees, the Egyptian utilizes monologues, while the Sumerian and Hebrew evidence dialogue/exchange between lovers.

There is the solid possibility of female authorship, as women wrote poems and especially love poetry in Egypt. Whether male or female, it is striking that the feminine point of view is so forcibly and carefully presented. Cast as private, journal-like reflections of a female, Song of Songs is the only biblical book with a female voice dominating throughout, which provides a unique perspective on the private world of Hebrew women and the attitudes/values that shaped lives of the people of Israel. Class origins are conspicuous in various references to the accouterments of privileged.

The book makes no mention of God and has no allusions to Israel's sacred traditions (such as covenant and historical deliverance). Politics and religion seem to play little role here. This, coupled with the elaboration on the erotic while critiquing prevailing cultural norms, caused the book's canonicity to be debated. Historically, the book was interpreted allegorically for God's love for Israel. Modern research relates the origins/background of the Songs to the sacral sexual rites of the ANE fertility cults (where the issues of life and death of crucial concern). Today, most scholars interpret the book as a collection or anthology of love lyrics that capture the joys and sorrows of intimate relationships and sensual love. With vocabulary and expressions that are sometimes obscure, provocative exchanges between an anonymous female protagonist and her shepherd suitor embody themes of personal relationships, love thwarted, sexual passion, and the female body.

In Song of Songs, lovers exchange words in the context of a pastoral garden setting, where sensory imagery explodes. All the human senses are tantalized, including sight (1:10-11, 15-16; 2:14, 17; 3:6-10; 4:1-7; 5:10-15; 6:4-7, 13; 7:1-8), hearing (2:8, 14; 5:16; 6:9), taste (2:3; 4:10-11; 5:1; 8:2), touch (2:17; 5:5, 16; 7:9), and not the least, smell. Olfaction features prominently in the descriptions of both the maiden and her

mate from the beginning to the end. The first explicit reference comes from the mouth of the female:

Song of Solomon 1:3 לְרִיחַ שְׁמֵנֶיךָ טוֹבִים שֶׁמֶן תּוֹרַק שְׁמֵךְ עַל־פִּי עֲלֵמוֹת אֲהַבֶּנּוּ:

Song of Solomon 1:3 “Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, Your name is *like* purified oil; Therefore the maidens love you.

The literal scent of the lover’s oils, presumably an olive oil base perfumed with aromatic ingredients, inspires the metaphor of the lover’s name functioning as a powerful aphrodisiac to other maidens. Like the smell of his oils that fills the air and pleases those who inhale it, the lover’s reputation invokes the admiration of other young women.

Shortly later, in returning the man’s compliments, the female mentions fragrance again, this time for her own aroma derived from nard, her perfume:

Song of Solomon 1:12 עַד־שֶׁהִמְלִיךְ בְּמִסְבּוֹ נִרְדִּי נָתַן רִיחִי:

Song of Solomon 1:12 "While the king was at his table, My perfume gave forth its fragrance.

The next verse references a sachet of myrrh lying between her breasts, but this is not cited for its aroma, but rather as a simile for her lover’s proximity. It is unclear whether the reference to the “king” reclining at his “couch” is a fantasy of the future, reminiscing of the past, or description of the present, but in any case she compares him to a bouquet of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En-gedi, another imported aromatic. The man uses a visual simile for her eyes, and this is immediately followed by her description of their context: their “bed” is the grass under beams of cedar and fir trees (vv. 16-17), well-known for their aromatic quality. Explicit olfactory words are not used in these references, though.

Later, the woman hears her lover call her to come away with him in the spring. Amidst descriptions of newborn animals (2:9), spring rains (v. 11), the sight of colorful

flowers (v. 12), and the sound of birds singing/doves cooing (v. 12), and the taste of figs (v. 13) is the smell of blossoming vines:

התאנה הנשמה פניה והגפנים סמדר נתנו ריח קומי (לכי) גלדן כענתי יפתי ולכילדך: Song of Solomon 2:13

Song of Solomon 2:13 'The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines in blossom have given forth *their* fragrance. Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, And come along!'

Later, in chapter 4, after the young women of Jerusalem describe Solomon's carriage coming up from the wilderness like a cloud of myrrh and frankincense smoke (3:6), the man makes an olfactory reference for the first time:

מהיפו ריחך אחתי כלה מהטבו ריחך מנין וריח שקנך מפל־ב־שמים: Song of Solomon 4:10

Song of Solomon 4:10 "How beautiful is your love, my sister, *my* bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than all *kinds* of spices!

This praise of the woman's love more than wine and the fragrance of her perfume more than spice comes right after his *wasf* (Arabic for "description") in 4:1-7 highlighting her form and flawless appearance (visual). There is a shift from fauna to flora metaphors in vv. 9-15, including the scents and tastes of many orchard fruits and spices: wine and spice (v. 10), nectar, honey, and milk (v. 11), pomegranates and henna (v. 13), and myrrh and aloes (v. 14). The scent of her clothes are compared to the cedars of Lebanon in v. 11:

נפת הטפנה שפתוחך כלה רבש וחלב תחת לשונך וריח שלוחך כריח לבנון: Song of Solomon 4:11

Song of Solomon 4:11 "Your lips, *my* bride, drip honey; Honey and milk are under your tongue, And the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Song of Songs 7:1-9 presents a final seduction scene where the man yearns for his maiden and praises her bodily charms with playful, evocative descriptions that stir the senses. Beginning from the bottom and moving up, he "climbs" her body to clutch her breasts, inhaling the fragrance of her breath:

Song of Solomon 7:9-10
 וְחִפָּךְ פִּינּוֹן הַטּוֹב הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדֶי לְמִישְׁרִים דוֹבֵב שְׁפִתַי יִשְׁנִים:
 וְהָיִיתִי כְּתֵמַר אֶעֱלֶה בְּתֵמַר אֶחֱזֶה בְּסִנְסֵנִי וְהָיִיתִי כְּשִׁיבָה כְּאֶשְׁכֵּלֹת הַנֶּפֶס וְרִיחַ אִפְךָ כְּתַפְּחוּתִים:

Song of Solomon 7:8-9 “I said, ‘I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruit stalks.’ Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, And the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine! It goes *down* smoothly for my beloved, Flowing gently *through* the lips of those who fall asleep.”

The scent of her breath is likened to apples, an aroma which goes down smoothly over lips and teeth like a choice wine. In response, the woman openly beckons him to come away with her to spend the night in the fields where vines have budded, blossoms have opened, and pomegranates are in bloom. There, she will give him her love:

Song of Solomon 7:14
 הַדְּוִדָּאִים נִתְּנוּ לְרִיחַ וְעַל-פֶּתְחֵינוּ כְּלִי-מַגָּדִים חֲדָשִׁים גַּם-יִשְׁנִים הוֹדִי צִפְנֹתַי לְךָ:

Song of Solomon 7:13 “The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice *fruits*, Both new and old, Which I have saved up for you, my beloved.

The literal aroma of mandrakes, a well-recognized aphrodisiac (Gen. 30:14-16), permeate the air and set the stage for a figurative comparison of her stored up “fruits” that she offers her lover.

Ecclesiastes

Wisdom Literature (Proverb)

Ecclesiastes 10:1 יִבְאִישׁ

יִבְאִישׁ is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms of the verb בָּאֵשׁ (“to stink”) used literally for dead flies in a perfumer’s ointment.

The book of Ecclesiastes is also referred to as Qohelet (קְהֵלֶת) after the term used in 1:1 to identify its author (typically translated “the Preacher” or “the Teacher”).

Scholars have suggested this term implies a congregational setting of believers, perhaps the early synagogue. Based on language and textual evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, it cannot be dated any later than the mid-second century BCE. The

superscription attributes it to Solomon, though scholars have not accepted this date for a host of reasons.

Ecclesiastes is considered a wisdom book along with Job and Proverbs because it seeks to make sense of life based on observation and experience, though it presents a more speculative and darker perspective. A strongly secular perspective permeates the book, which presents a tension and dialectic with conventional theology. Overall, there is no clear organizational structure to the book or driving plot line. Rather, it presents itself as a compilation of philosophical/theological ideas about life.

The balance of poetry and prose is debated in the book without consensus. Overall, the book has been labeled a royal pseudo-autobiography, instructions, and reflection. Various sub-genres have been ascribed to portions of the book, including autobiographical narrative, rhetorical questions, parable, curses and blessings, and proverbs.

Bracketed by two prose passages (9:13-16 and 10:5-7), Ecclesiastes 10:1-4 seems to be an assemblage of popular wisdom or proverbs set amidst a miscellaneous collection contrasting wisdom with foolishness and kings with commoners. The parable of 9:13-16 about a poor but wise man who saves a small city from the siege of powerful king demonstrates that wisdom is better than strength yet at the same time, it is not always well received. Ecclesiastes 9:17-10:1 argues for the superiority of wisdom over folly, though it acknowledges folly often prevails because “one sinner destroys much good.” To illustrate the point, 10:1 provides an idiomatic expression of popular wisdom:

Ecclesiastes 10:1 זְבוּבֵי מוֹת יִבְאֵי וְיִבֵּיעַ שֶׁמֶן רוּחַח יִקַּר מִחֶכְמָה מִסְכּוּד סְכָלוֹת מֵעֵט:

Ecclesiastes 10:1 Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom *and* honor.

Due to textual issues, many emendations have been proposed for 10:1, but there is agreement about the point—just as little, worthless insects can ruin a valuable ointment, a little folly can overrule or ruin wisdom and honor. The much-quoted English adage “fly in the ointment” has been used in this sense for centuries to point out a drawback, particularly one that was not initially apparent.

Ancient Israel had professional perfumers (see Exodus 30:25, 35; 37:29) whom we might imagine invested great care in gathering together precious oils and aromatic ingredients to be weighed/measured and skillfully blended together. If, however, in a momentary lapse of attention or judgment several small flies are mixed into the confection, what would have been a pleasant smelling and valuable ointment is fundamentally compromised. Here, the literal sense of smell as the basis of value for perfumery is used to reinforce the idea that a miniscule defect can spoil something large and important. In this case, it is a little bit of folly that ruins much good.

The wise/foolish antithesis continues in 10:2-3, with some suggestion of the social class of the author(s) being evident in 10:4, which highlights conventional wisdom to not leave your post (מקום) if you offend your ruler (המושל) but rather to stay calm.

1 Chronicles

Historical Narrative (Annal)

1 Chronicles 19:6 התבאשו

התבאשו is a Hithpael perfect 3cpl form of the verb באש (“to stink”) translated reflexively “they made themselves odious” for the Sons of Ammon in relation to David.

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are a decidedly postexilic work of anonymous authorship describing the pre-exilic period. Rendered together as one book, Chronicles is thought to be part of a composite document with Ezra-Nehemiah, though recently this understanding has been challenged. Based on narrative emphases and technical

references, a late Persian date is suggested (450-332 BCE), with suggested dates ranging from the late fifth century to the mid-third BCE. Textual criticism plays a key role in analysis, as the book frequently quotes, rephrases, and reinterprets older biblical writings, especially 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings. These earlier sources were put through a hermeneutical filter to stimulate spiritual commitment to a unique set of theological principles.⁹⁷⁹

1 Chronicles 18:1-20:8 addresses how David turned the tide and ushered in a new dynastic order where those who had subjugated the Israelites under the reign of the former king, Saul, are now themselves subdued. 1 Chronicles 19:1-20:3 draws directly from and follows closely 2 Samuel 10:1-11:1 in describing three instances of military victories. David's affair with Bathsheba and murder plot of Uriah is strikingly absent in 1 Chronicles, as might be expected from a work elevating the person of David and advocating the permanent nature of the Davidic dynasty.

In describing a new Ammonite king's provocation of David, one olfactory reference occurs in this book as a direct parallel to 2 Samuel 10:6 (see above):

1 Chronicles 19:6 וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן כִּי הִתְבַּאֲשׂוּ עִם־הַגִּיד וַיִּשְׁלַח חָנוּן וּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶלֶף כַּפְר־זָכָה לְשָׂכֵר לָהֶם מִן־אָרָם נְהָלִים וּמִן־אָרָם מַעְכָּה וּמִצּוֹבָה הַרְבֵּב וּפְרָשִׁים:

1 Chronicles 19:6 When the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah, and from Zobah.

There are several noteworthy differences between the narrative of 2 Samuel 10:6 and 1 Chronicles 19:6. First, the Niphal verb form is used for בָּאֵשׁ in 2 Samuel 10 with

⁹⁷⁹ Chronicles uniquely adds an extended prolegomena to Israel's nationhood that begins with Adam and culminates in David. It traces the history of Judah from the exile to Cyrus' decree to return, the last datable event of book (539 BCE). Absent are references to the patriarchal promise, the Exodus, the covenant at Sinai and other elective and redemptive events. The conquest and settlement are ignored, and Saul receives only cursory mention. The theological emphases of the book include the exile and restoration, a new dispensation, the permanent nature of the Davidic dynasty, and an inclusive Israel.

the preposition and proper noun “David” following (נבאשו בדוד) whereas the Hithpael is used here with the עם preposition particle (התבאשו עם־דוד). Both can convey the same sense, though. Second, the 1 Chronicles passage includes Hanun with the sons of Ammon and adds the amount paid (אלף ככר־כסף, “1,000 talents of silver”). Third, 1 Chronicles provides a more generic description of the mercenaries hired, perhaps substituting “Mesopotamia” in place of “Beth-Rehob” and dropping “men of Tob” because the late reader would be unfamiliar with those Aramean states.

Having surveyed these Hebrew lexical references to באש (“to stink”), באש (“stench”), ריח (“to smell”), and ריח (“smell”) in context through a linguistic and literary lens, it is time to make some observations about the way olfactory language is handled in both the Akkadian and Hebrew texts at our disposal. From this core of information we can integrate the findings of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to explore the relative importance of the sense and its functional application in the ancient Near East.

CHAPTER 4: COMPARISON OF AKKADIAN AND HEBREW OLFACTORY TERMS

Having lexically and contextually analyzed approximately 200 Akkadian and 50 Hebrew references to targeted olfactory words, this summary of findings and comparison between the two languages sets up the interdisciplinary exploration of the significance and function of smell in the ANE which follows in chapters 5-7.

SUMMARY OF AKKADIAN OLFACTORY WORDS

The most prevalent olfactory-related terms in Akkadian texts, as might be expected, pertain to incense or incense offering in general. The Akkadian verb *qatāru*, said of smoke and fog, is translated “to rise,” but in the D stem, it means “to cause to smoke,” “to make an incense offering,” “to cense,” or “to fumigate.”⁹⁸⁰ The noun *qutrīnu* / *qutrēnu* / *qutrinnu* (“censor, incense”) is derived from the verb and has extensive use throughout various genres and periods.⁹⁸¹ Other less common words related to incense or incense offerings include *zību* (a homonymous word that usually means “food offering” but can also refer to incense), *muššaku* (incense used for libanomancy), *maqtaru* (“censer, incense burner”), *nignakku* (“censer, incense burner”), and *maksūtu* (a stand used to hold incense).

Substances whose wood or sap could be used as incense in Syria and Mesopotamia include *asu* (myrtle), *baluḥḥu* (galbanum), *bīnu* (tamarisk), *burašu* (pine, cypress or Phoenician juniper), *budulḥu* (bdellium), *erīnu* (cedar), *kanaktu* (aromatic tree, perhaps frankincense), *kukru* (terebinth), *labanatu* (frankincense), *ladnu* (ladanum),

⁹⁸⁰ CAD Q *qatāru*, 166-8. The verb *šilūtu* (from *šelū* II which means “to kindle”) can, on occasion, mean incense offering.

⁹⁸¹ CAD Q *qutrīnu*, 323-6.

lardu (nard), *murru* (myrrh), *qanû t̄ābu* (aromatic reed, calamus odoratus), *peršadduḥu* (balsam or opobalsum?), *riqqu* (aromatic plant), *šurmenu* (cypress or Persian oak?), *upuntu* (meal).⁹⁸² Though botanical identifications are not known or clear, additional plants or ingredients with aromatic properties variously appearing in lexical lists, medical instructions, and perfume recipes include *mitru*, *nāsu*, *puruḥlibni*, *qunnabu*, *sappandu*, *siḥūru*, *sikkil*, *šupuḥru*, *šumlalû*, *t̄uru*, *zibītu*, and *ziqqu*. *Ḥibištu* refers to the cuttings of plants, especially aromatic and resinous plants, often used in ceremonial occasions (such as foundation deposits) and perfume mixtures.⁹⁸³

Aside from explicit terminology related to incense or aromatic substances, the most prevalent term found in Akkadian literature appears to be *erīšu / erēšu / irīšu* (Sumerian, *ir*, *ereš*), a noun often translated “smell, scent, fragrance.” It is evidenced at least 63 times in ten different genres. Nine of these instances occur in hymns/prayers for the aroma of botanical substances, whether in ritual offerings to gods or as commonly used building materials (either found in the wild or used in the construction of a king’s palace). NA/NB royal inscriptions evidence a similar use of the term in connection with the “scent” or “fragrance” of cedar, cypress, or juniper doors of the palace/temple, the forests from which they come, or the aromatic anointing oils used to anoint the various features of the temple.⁹⁸⁴ A unique clustering is found in an omen text that makes at least 25 comparisons for the smell of a house. Elsewhere, the term is variously used in at least six more genre types for the smell of incense, anointing oil,

⁹⁸² Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 27.

⁹⁸³ On at least one occasion, the word is used in a derived manner for “fragrance”: KAR 158 ii 33 (incipit of a song) *luzmur ḥi-bi-iš-[ta-ki(?)]* let me sing of your fragrance. CAD H *ḥibištu* 4 181.

⁹⁸⁴ The rare word, *sammūtu*, is used on at least two occasions in construct with “cedar” and thought to indicate “fragrance”: KAR 158 r. ii 21 (*sa-am-mu-ut erēni rāmka bēlu*, your love, O lord, is like the fragrance of the cedar), Gilg. VI 13 (*ana bītini ina sa-am-mat* (var. *-ma-ti*) *erēni erba*, enter our house amidst fragrance of cedar), and perhaps RAcc. 77:38, though CAD reads “red cakes” from *sāmu* adjective usage a-8'. CAD S *sammūtu*, 120; AHW. *sammūtu*, 1019.

food, teeth, a slave's master, and the fruit of the land. The word has a wide application, generally referring to positive smells (as reflected in the translation "fragrance" or "aroma"). It is often used in conjunction with the adjective *ṭābu* ("good, pleasing") or the verb *ṭābu / ṭiābu* (to be/become good or pleasing). In one omen, the smell of flooding waters of a river are said to be "not good."

Bīšu / bi'iltu (Sumerian, ḫab, ḫul), a ms adjective translated "malodorous, bad, or evil," shows up at least 57 times in six different genres. Fifteen of those applications come from the lexical texts where there is evidence that the lexeme is descriptive of the literal stench of various substances.⁹⁸⁵ Proxemic location to related words indicates the word was understood to have a strongly negative and figurative sense. The word is used once in an omen for beer, once in a medical text for blood, and once in a legend for "bad news" (a genitival construction with *awātu*, "word/matter"). The vast majority of the references (33) occur in NA/NB/LB letters. Most of these are figurative usages for provocative or offensive actions, words (*dibbī*), rumors (*amāt*), or situations (i.e. chains/imprisonment, business trip). It is used less often in the literal or figurative sense of "bad" quality dates, pomegranates, fish, cattle, feast, field, onions, barley flour product, or beer. The six LB royal inscription references demonstrate an abstracted, nominalized sense for "evil" in the land (contrasted with *babbanū*, "good"), an expression that is not evidenced like this in any earlier period.

Ba'āšu / be'ēšu / be'āšu, the verb translated "to smell bad or be of a bad quality," was found 35 times in five different genres. A figurative use of the verb is prevalent in the letters, where most of the twenty-some references either are paired with *panū* in the sense of "to look bad" or "to be angry" or utilize the D form (*bu'ušu*) to convey "to cause to smell bad, to besmirch" (in the sense of tarnishing or damaging someone else's

⁹⁸⁵ 14 times in the ms form and only once in the fs (*bīšati*).

reputation). Medical texts employ the verb four times for the literal smell of patient's head/ears. The literal sense of the term is also found in wisdom sayings for the smell of streets because of pigs and in a treaty for the smell of urine. This verb is *always* used for foul smells, whether figurative or literal.

The verb *eṣēnu* (Sumerian, ir.si.im, ur₅) has the broadest representation among genre types with 33 usages in 10 different genres. It is translated simply “to smell” (as in “to perceive a positive or negative smell), “to smell/make smell” in the D stem (as in “to have or give off an odor/aroma”), “to provide or to cause an odor/aroma” in the Š stem. Lexical texts reference the term three times, once in a cluster of verbs associated with the nose. Akkadian myths (Descent of Ishtar, Enuma Elish, Erra) exclusively use this verb, and all six instances appear in various unique forms (*līṣinū*, *niṣinu*, *tēṣinā*, *ē tāṣinā* / *ē tēṣinā*, *a iṣṣinā*, *lišēṣṣin* / *lišēṣin*), almost always in reference to gods enjoying the aroma of incense offerings. Another six occurrences in hymns/prayers characterize the perception of the pleasing aromas of incense and banquet food. The six occurrences in the omens and commentaries pertain to incense, dust, well water, plagues, and a flooding river, which is explicitly described in negative terms, thus confirming this word is employed for both positive aromas *and* negative odors. A prophetic oracle uses the verb twice for Ishtar as a metaphorical animal sniffing out enemies of the king. Four references in incantations cover a wide spectrum of objects, including the smell of rats/evil spirits, some unknown fragrance in a ritual prescription, the smell of food deprived to a prison inmate, and incense as perceived by a divine image in an opening of the mouth ceremony. One medical text mentions the smell of urine, and the smell of cattle/herds is referenced in love lyrics. *Eṣēnu* is used in Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian letters to include the smell of a person's master (positive), oil not fit to smell (literal), and abusive words not fit to smell (figurative). The three references in the

Gilgamesh Epic (twice for pleasing aromatics, once for the plant of immortality) illustrate the use of the verb alongside the olfactory nouns *erīšu* and *nipšu*.

Nipšu, translated “smell” or “snort/breathing,” is a ms noun used eight times in four different genres. It appears twice in lexical texts, once with *za’u* and *armannu*, both aromatic resins, and once with *armannu* and *zu’tu*, a term which means “sweat” or perhaps the resin derived from odiferous trees. In contrast to a pleasing aroma, a medical text uses the term in construct with “sickness” (*simmu*), love lyrics reference the “smell” of flatulence, cattle/herds, and a female lover’s armpit, and a treaty compares the smell of a person to the reek of urine. Based on both lexical texts and other applications, the word demonstrates a neutrality that allows it to be applied to positive or negative smells, though more often as foul not fragrant.

The ms noun translated “stench,” *bu’šu* (Sumerian, ḫab), is significantly less common (five times). The two references in omens are unclear, once because of damage to the text and once as a result of ambiguous rendering. However, an omen commentary suggests *bu’šu* references the stench of the land due to plagues/epidemics. It is found twice in lexical texts where its placement alongside *bīšu* in a list of varied meanings for the Sumerian word ḫab (Aa I/2 178) suggests both a literal and metaphorical sense of the term.

Additionally, there is a related term with olfactory resonance that was not individually analyzed in context. The noun *būšānu* / *bu’šānu* refers to the well-documented disease affecting mouth, nose, and skin, and it seems to have been named in relation to the verb *ba’āšu* because it produced an extremely foul smell. On the basis of the stark description of the symptoms in Kocher BAM 29 and parallels, the references to the secretion from the ravaged nostrils, and the repeated mention of mouth and nose

of the patient, the CAD suggests this is a type or stage of leprosy.⁹⁸⁶ Wilson, however, in writing on leprosy in ancient Mesopotamia, argues that *būšānu* was the disease of scurvy, a deficiency disease that rots the gums, producing an abhorrent breath.⁹⁸⁷ Either way, to be infected with *būšānu* meant suffering for both the victim and those nearby.

SUMMARY OF HEBREW OLFACTORY WORDS

In the Hebrew Bible, the most extensive (used 60 times) olfactory-related term is the generic word for incense, קטרת, which could refer to the incense material itself, the incense offering, or the smoke/odor it produces. The verb קטר in the Piel normally refers to the burning of incense (almost exclusively in the context of idol worship), but in the Hiphil it more often refers to the burning of offerings.⁹⁸⁸ The connection between the incense-related word and these priestly activities is thought to derive from the perception that these offerings (with their pungent odor) were deemed a sweet-smelling aroma to the LORD because of their representative effect.⁹⁸⁹ The majority of references to קטרת in the Hebrew Bible pertain to the incense altar or the special incense that was to be burnt

⁹⁸⁶ CAD B *būšānu* 1, 350.

⁹⁸⁷ Wilson, "Leprosy in Ancient Mesopotamia."

⁹⁸⁸ Leviticus 1:9, the burnt offering; 2:2, 9; 5:12, the grain offering; 3:5, the peace offering; 4:10, the sin offering; and 7:5, the guilt offering.

⁹⁸⁹ The one case of the noun קטרת being used for non-incense related offering comes from Psalm 66:15.

upon it.⁹⁹⁰ Multiple references suggest the offering of incense in hand-held censors was a relatively common practice.⁹⁹¹ More will be said about this in the next chapter.

Another common Hebrew word that involves the olfactory sense is the noun **בִּשְׁם** (30 times), which can designate the balsam shrub, balsam oil, and perfume. This nominative is assumed to be derived from the root **בִּשְׁם**, which has Aramaic and Akkadian cognates (“to be sweet” and “be pleasant” accordingly).⁹⁹² **בִּשְׁם** usually refers to the spice but, when used with a particular spice, means “sweet.” There are other terms for perfuming ingredients which occur in the Hebrew Bible, often in connection with incense, such as **סַב** “spice” (15 times), and **לְבוֹנָה / לְבוֹנָה** “frankincense” (22 times). The names of aromatic substances include **מוֹר**, **מוֹר** (myrrh), **צָרִי / צָרִי / צָרִי** (*šōri*, storax?), **קִנְיָה** (aromatic reed/cane), **נְכָאֵת** (tragacanth gum?), **לֹט** (*lōt*), **נֶרְד** (nard), **קִנְמוֹן** (cinnamon), **קִצְיָעָה** (type of cinnamon, cassia?), **נָטָף** (*nāṭāp*), **שְׁחֵלֶת** (*šēhēlet*), **חֶלְבָּנָה** (galbanum), **אַהֲלוֹת** (aloes).⁹⁹³ Many of the names of incense spices are uncertain linguistically and botanically because they derive from non-semitic origin.

The Hebrew root **רוּחַ** is the proposed stem for the derivative nouns **רוּחַ**, “wind, breath, mind, spirit” (378 times), and **רִיחַ**, “scent, smell, fragrance, aroma, odor” (58 times), as well as for the verb **רָיַח**, “to breath/perceive an odor, to smell” (11 times), which

⁹⁹⁰ The use of incense as a protective screen for Aaron when he entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Numbers 16:12, 13) and to stop the plague (Numbers 16:46, 47) demonstrate a special application in the cult. This smell-related ritual plays a crucial role in distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate cultic leadership. A prophetic castigation for the incorrect use of incense appears in Isaiah 1:13 and Ezekiel 16:18; 23:41. A clear instance of incense being used in the figurative sense occurs in Psalm 141:2 (prayer as incense), and the application of incense for a non-religious usage (personal fragrance) is found in Proverbs 27:9.

⁹⁹¹ Leviticus 10:1 (Nadab and Abihu’s censors of incense and “strange fire”), Numbers 16:7, 17, 18, 35, 40 (Korah’s rebellion), and Ezekiel 8:11 (70 elders with censors of incense).

⁹⁹² E. S. Kalland, “בִּשְׁם,” *TWOT* 1:290.

⁹⁹³ Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 61–7.

occurs only as a denominative verb in the Hiphil.⁹⁹⁴ Some suggest the root רוּחַ indicates “to breath or blow” on the basis of West Semitic cognates and should not to be confused with the verb רָחַב “to be wide/spacious” occurring in the Qal,⁹⁹⁵ while others argue for one root on the basis of other Semitic roots with the same range.⁹⁹⁶ It has been suggested that רוּחַ may function onomatopoeically, imitating the sound of excited breathing/whistling wind, while the verb רָחַח and substantive רִיחַ appear to indicate a specialization with respect to breathing/blowing—that of sensory perception.⁹⁹⁷ The possibility exists that רוּחַ, a difficult term to translate because of its semantic breadth, may carry an olfactory dimension in some instances.

Of the 58 occurrences of the noun רִיחַ, 43 appear as part of the technical cultic expression רִיחַ נִיחַח, which highlights the divine response (almost always YHWH) in accepting a ritual sacrifice/offering (אֲשָׁה, אֶזְבֵּכָה, עֹלָה) that is offered by fire, whether animal or grain or both.⁹⁹⁸ Translations opt for “soothing odor” or “pleasing aroma” with respect to how they understand the burnt offering and its רִיחַ נִיחַח.⁹⁹⁹ Of the 43 instances, all but

⁹⁹⁴ F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, “רוּחַ,” *BDB* 925-6.

⁹⁹⁵ J. B. Payne, “רָחַב,” *TWOT* 2:836.

⁹⁹⁶ P. Jenson, and J. P. J. Olivier, “רוּחַ,” *NIDOTTE* 3:1070.

⁹⁹⁷ R. Albertz, and C. Westermann, “רוּחַ *rûah* spirit,” *TLOT* 3:1202.

⁹⁹⁸ Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18, 25, 41; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; 26:31; Numbers 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24; 18:17; 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36; Ezekiel 6:13; 16:19; 20:28, 41. P. Jenson, and J. P. J. Olivier, *NIDOTTE* 3:1071.

⁹⁹⁹ For example, the debate in Genesis 8:21 (where God smells Noah’s sacrifices after the flood), centers on whether the focus is on propitiation (the smoke of the burnt offering calming or removing God’s anger) or thanksgiving (the sacrifice an expression of thanks for God’s salvation). Wenham’s suggestion that both aspects can factor into the expression and need not be mutually exclusive does justice to the diverse range of associations that can be associated with the sacrificial system and its role in the relationship between God and the offerer. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (vol. 1, 2 vols.; Word Biblical Commentary 1; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 189.

four¹⁰⁰⁰ come from the reputedly exilic/post-exilic texts of Leviticus (17 references), Numbers (18 references), and Ezekiel (4 references). The expression *ריח ניחח* is usually applied in ritual legislation for daily, monthly, or annual festival sacrifices, but it is also found in legal/narrative accounts describing priestly dedicatory ceremonies (Exodus 29:18, 29:25, 41; Leviticus 8:21, 28). The book of Ezekiel uniquely applies the phrase in two ways: 1) in relation to the despicable Israelite worship of idols/images (*צלם*)¹⁰⁰¹, and 2) in relation to the Israelites *themselves* as being a pleasing offering to the LORD upon their return to the land.¹⁰⁰²

In addition to the cultic use, *ריח* is used seven times in the Song of Songs for the literal and sensual fragrances (1:3 and 4:10 for oils; 1:12 for perfume; 4:11 for garments; 2:13 and 7:14 for vegetation/fruit; 7:9 for breath) and once in Hosea 14:7 for the “smell” of Lebanon. Twice in Genesis 27:27, *ריח* is used literally for a distinctive odor (the smell of Jacob’s garments and the fields/outdoors). The term appears in Exodus 5:21 as part of the stock expression *הבאשתם את ריחנו*, “you have caused our smell to stink” (see *באש* below), and in Jeremiah 48:11 as *וריחו לא נגמר*, “and his smell has not changed,” which speaks of Moab’s unaltered position and parallels the idea with a taste-related phrase (“his taste remains in him”). Job 14:9 applies the term metaphorically, probably to indicate closeness or contact, in stating the roots of a tree will again blossom at the “smell” of water.¹⁰⁰³ The majority of these references demonstrate a figurative application for a positive smell.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18, 25, 41. Genesis, as a J source, is thought to date to the united monarchy, whereas Exodus is dated to the exilic period.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ezekiel 6:13, 16:19, 20:28.

¹⁰⁰² Ezekiel 20:41: *בריח ניחח ארצה אחכם*

¹⁰⁰³ A less likely suggestion is that Job 14:19 illustrates the life-giving power scents, as the withered tree derives new powers of growth from the literal scent of water. G. Delling, “הבוסח,” *TDNT* 5:494.

The eleven usages of the verb ריח demonstrate the adaptability of the term for literal and figurative functions. In Genesis 27:27 there is an emphasis on the relative reliability of the fundamental human senses of sight, touch, and smell, as Jacob uses the smell of the fields from Esau's clothing to trick his father. The illegitimate replication of the anointing oil to use as perfume or for aromatic purposes carries severe penalty in Exodus 30:38. The inability of idols to smell is mockingly emphasized on two occasions (Deuteronomy 4:28; Psalm 115:6), indicating smell was deemed a positive characteristic of Israel's deity. The LORD's willingness or refusal to "smell" sacrifices is commonly interpreted as indicative of his acceptance or rejection of the offering (Genesis 8:21; Leviticus 26:31; 1 Samuel 26:19; Isaiah 11:3; Amos 5:21). ריח can assume clear figurative connotations, such as Judges 16:9 where it is used in an expression to indicate closeness/contact ("as a cord of tow snaps when it smells fire") and Job 39:25 where it indicates a manner of perception (the war horse "smells battle from afar").

The Hebrew verb באש, translated "to stink" or "to have a bad smell" in the Qal, occurs 18 times both literally and metaphorically, and always with a negative sense (compared to ריח which is used for positive or neutral aromas).¹⁰⁰⁴ Exodus 7:18, 21, 8:10 and Isaiah 50:2 refer to the actual physical stench resulting from the first two Egyptian plagues (the Nile and its surroundings are said to stink because of the death of fish, and the land reeks as a result of the piles of dead frogs). Exodus 16:20 and 24 speak of the stench or lack thereof with respect to the manna in the wilderness. When the command to leave none of it overnight during the week was disobeyed, the manna bred maggots and stunk, but when the command to leave some overnight for the Sabbath was obeyed,

¹⁰⁰⁴ The Semitic root *b's* also possesses a semantic range which includes both a literal and figurative connotation that is negative. See, for instance, the Akkadian *ba'aššu*, "to smell bad, be of a bad quality."

the manna did not become infested and reek. In Ecclesiastes 10:1, the corrupting character of folly is compared to the way dead flies make sweet perfume stink, and stinking wounds are said to be the result of sin in Psalm 38:6.

In addition to its literal meaning (“to stink”), שָׂאֵשׁ functions figuratively to convey heightened offense between people, usually the consequence of some shocking, insulting, or reprehensible deed. The verb is used in this particular idiom eight times (Genesis 34:30; Exodus 5:21; 1 Samuel 13:4; 2x in 27:12; 2 Samuel 10:6; 16:21; 1 Chronicles 19:6), four times in the Hiphil (“to cause to stink,” “to become odious”), three times in the Niphal (“to make oneself odious,” “to become odious”), and once in the Hithpael (“to make oneself odious”). It is always followed by a preposition (usually בְּ but also עִם and אֶת) and can be used by/for both individual persons or groups of people. Tsevat favors the translation “to provoke, challenge,” arguing the four-fold use of the verb in Samuel and occurrence in Exodus 5:21 indicate political challenge, especially insubordination. Whether or not the verb should be situated in the field of government and politics (see next chapter), retaining the olfactory sense in translation adds directness and heightened offensiveness to the idiom such that the instigating behavior deliberately provokes an extreme reaction.¹⁰⁰⁵

It should be noted that the similarity of the roots שָׂאֵשׁ and בּוֹשׁ (“to be ashamed”) leads to confusion, and some scholars argue several of these verses are mistakenly translated. For example, the literal translation of וַיִּרְשַׁע יְבֹאֵשׁ וַיִּחְפֹּר in Proverbs 13:5 would be “the wicked person stinks and is ashamed,” although English translations render “acts shamefully” or “acts disgustingly” for יְבֹאֵשׁ on one of two bases: they either opt to interpret the verb figuratively instead of translating literally, or they follow the emendation

¹⁰⁰⁵ Matitياهو Tsevat, “Marriage and Monarchical Legitimacy in Ugarit and Israel,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 3 (1958): 272–3.

offered by *BHS* to נָבִישׁ, which yields the normal word for shame (בוש) and matches the case of Proverbs 19:26 (with vAB and הַפָּר, “to cause disgrace,” also parallel).¹⁰⁰⁶ In Isaiah 30:5 the MT preserves הַבְּאִישׁ, although the Masoretes read הַבוּשׁ, from בוש. The editors of the *BHS* provide the “correct” form, הַבְּאִישׁ and note that no manuscripts reflect the Qere.

The nominal form בְּאִישׁ occurs three times, is usually translated “stench,” and refers to the foul odor of decomposing bodies (Isaiah 34:3; Amos 4:10; Joel 2:20).¹⁰⁰⁷ The nominative plural בְּאִשִּׁים occurs twice in Isaiah 5:2-4 to indicate useless grapes with respect to their scent (a metaphor for the character of Israel). The feminine nominative בְּאִשָּׁה (“stinking thing”) is found only in Job 31:40 and describes the stinking or noxious weed that would replace barley if Job was not innocent (parallel to הַחִיָּה, “briar”).¹⁰⁰⁸

There may be additional olfactory terms in Hebrew, such as Job 19:17 which utilizes two verbs that signify a loathsome or repulsive nuance, most likely capturing an olfactory resonance to make their impact. The verse reads רִיחִי זָרָה לְאִשְׁתִּי וְחַנְתִּי לְבִנִי בְטָנִי, and can be literally translated “my breath is offensive to my wife, and I am loathsome to the sons of my womb.”¹⁰⁰⁹ The major lexical sources usually identify three homonymic verbal

¹⁰⁰⁶ The LXX translation ἀσεβῆς δὲ αἰσχύνεται καὶ οὐχ ἔξει παρησίαν (“but the wicked person is ashamed and has no confidence”) can be assessed on the same basis.

¹⁰⁰⁷ The הַצְּפוֹנִי (“northerner”) whose stench rises from the sea in Joel 2:20 is usually taken by commentators to refer to the locust hordes, although some include in the reference an allusion to the mysterious foe from the north that functions as an instrument of God’s wrath. Elizabeth Achtemeier, “The Book of Joel: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature, Daniel, The Twelve Prophets* (ed. Leander E. Keck; vol. 7, 12 vols.; The New Interpreter’s Bible; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 323.

¹⁰⁰⁸ The term בְּאִשָּׁה has been identified as stinkweed. D. J. A. Clines, ed., *DCH* 2:89.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Newsome suggests the initial phrase functions as a word play which allows it to be read “my breath is repulsive” and “my spirit is alien,” thus capturing the way revulsion can function as a symbol of alienation between two persons. “The Book of Job,” in *1 & 2 Maccabees, Introduction to Hebrew Poetry, Job, Psalms* (ed. Leander E. Keck; vol. 6, 12 vols.; The New Interpreter’s Bible; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 476-7. Clines prefers to translate with “my life,” altering the expression from a physical sense (“my breath/odor”) to a metaphor conveying the repugnant nature of his continued existence. *Job 1-20* (vol. 17; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1989), 448.

roots for זור / זיר, (“to be a stranger,” “to be loathsome,” and “to press down and out”), although they categorize the root in Job 19:17 differently. While זור in Job 19:17 may derive from the meaning “be strange” and thus take a semantic nuance “be abhorrent,” the existence of Arabic cognates with the semantic field of “to stink” suggests a distinct root that communicates the olfactory dimension.¹⁰¹⁰ The hapax legomena חגן, a word paired with זור, also communicates the loathsome nature of Job to his family.¹⁰¹¹ If the relationship to Syriac and Arabic cognates is correct, then this verb conveys the physical notion of “to stink” in a figurative sense.¹⁰¹² The meaning “to become foul/stink” is deduced for the Hiphil of זנה in Isaiah 19:6, a verse which vividly portrays Egyptian judgment by means of the stench resulting from the rotting vegetation in the Nile and its channels, on the basis of an Arabic cognate. The anomalous form זנהאזנה is explained as a scribal confusion or combination of the Hebrew Hiphil and Aramaic Aphel stems creating a double causative formation (1Qis^a reads the ordinary Hiphil זנה).¹⁰¹³

AKKADIAN AND HEBREW COMPARISON

Having attempted to understand Akkadian and Hebrew olfactory terminology in its own context as accurately as possible, some cross-cultural comparisons can be made. The basic root קטר occurs with closely associated meanings in a number of Semitic languages (including Akkadian, Hebrew, Ugaritic, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Syriac),

¹⁰¹⁰ M. A. Grisanti, and P. Jenson, “זור,” *NIDOTTE* 1:1092-3.

¹⁰¹¹ Newsome suggests another pun is at play here, as the context of the verse demands a “be loathsome” nuance and yet the unvocalized form is the same as “to seek favor” (והנתה). *New Interpreter’s Bible* 4:476.

¹⁰¹² P. Jenson, “חגן,” *NIDOTTE* 2:206.

¹⁰¹³ E. H. Merrill, “זנה,” *NIDOTTE* 1:1126. Waltke and O’Connor also suggest an elative variant root. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 445.

and the use of incense in cultic worship has a long, well-known history. The Akkadian noun *qutrīnu* / *qutrēnu* / *qutrinnu* is used in a similar fashion to the Hebrew term קִטְרָה for incense, an incense offering, or the smoke of incense, though in Akkadian the noun is also used for “censer” (along with *maqṭaru* and *nignakku*), whereas Hebrew only utilizes the specific word מִקְרָה for censer. Both Akkadian and Hebrew use the D/Piel form of the verbal root *qtr* to communicate the action of burning incense or making an incense offering. Interestingly, most of the Hebrew references in the Piel refer to incense offerings in the context of idol worship, whereas the Hiphil uses it with respect to burning other forms of offerings. While incense offerings were employed both in Israel and Mesopotamia, Israelite religious use was more limited. More will be said about incense in the next chapter.

Both Akkadian and Hebrew utilize, with frequency, generic nouns for “smell” (Akk. *erīšu* and less often, *nipšu*, Heb. רִיחַ). Contextual analysis indicates both languages use the generic words for smell or smelling, sometimes in conjunction with pertinent descriptors making clear the positive nuance. The majority of Hebrew references to רִיחַ are found as part of the idiomatic expression רִיחַ נְיָחַח (“soothing aroma, pleasing odor”) used in cultic contexts almost always with respect to God’s acceptance of an offering (animal or grain, sometimes including wine libation, but *never* incense). Perhaps this is evidence of an intentional rejection on the part of the Israelites for the religious expression of Mesopotamians. Outside of this technical use, it is employed literally for pleasing, sensual fragrances and other distinctive smells. Akkadian, likewise, uses the term variously for conspicuous aromas, and when used with respect to incense or aromatic trees/wood, it often appears before the adjective *ṭābu* or verb *ṭābu* / *ṭiābu* in the stock expression (*irišu ṭābu*, *irišū ṭābūtu*) which is translated “fragrance,” “scent,” or

“pleasing aroma.” Both Akkadian and Hebrew demonstrate limited figurative use of the term for another person or group, and Hebrew alone uses the term to indicate spatial proximity to something.

Like the nouns, both Israelites and Mesopotamians used verbs for the act of discerning smell, and they are attested throughout various periods and genres. While the Akkadian *eṣēnu* and Hebrew רָיַח are both translated “to smell” or “to perceive an odor,” the Hebrew is limited to the Hiphil form (perceiving smell) while the Akkadian texts provide examples of the D stem (having or giving off a particular odor or aroma) and the Š stem (providing or causing a smell to be produced).

Akkadian and Hebrew both have specific lexemes designating negative smell. The less-common nouns *bu’šū* and בָּאֵשׁ convey the idea of “odor” or “stench” (in contrast to the neutral nouns for “smell,” *erīšū*, *nipšū*, and רִיחַ). With both literal and figurative meanings attested, the Akkadian verb *ba’āšū / be’ēšū / be’āšū* and Hebrew verb בָּאֵשׁ are translated “to stink” or “to have a bad smell” in the G/Qal stem. Akkadian uses the D stem to communicate “to cause to smell bad” (literally and metaphorically), while Hebrew relies on the Hiphil to convey “to emit an odor or cause to stink” and the Niphal and Hithpael to express “to become or make oneself odious.” In Akkadian only, *ba’āšū / be’ēšū / be’āšū* is used idiomatically with *panū* in the sense of “to look bad” or “to be angry.” Unlike Hebrew, Akkadian employs with frequency an adjective, *bīšū / bi’iltu*, in the literal sense of “malodorous” and figurative sense as “bad” or “evil” (Hebrew engages the word רָע (“bad, evil”) for this purpose). Additionally, Akkadian medical texts frequently reference a skin disease with olfactory import (*būšānu*), but there is no known equivalent in biblical Hebrew.

To recap, both Akkadian and Hebrew have a similar lexicon for olfactory language. In both languages, the middle weak stem *b's* is specifically reserved for the perception and production of foul smells, though these words seem to be more developed in Akkadian than Hebrew. The more comprehensive Akkadian lemmas *erīšu*, *nipšu*, and *eṣēnu* and Hebrew ריח and ריח denote the act of smelling or smells (both positive and negative). The lexicon for negative smell is more advanced and utilized than positive scents.

Ideally, for more accurate contextual analysis, the same genres in both ANE literatures would be compared and contrasted. That said, similar functions may be performed by different genres in different cultures, so cross-genre comparisons are not out of place. A line up of genres utilizing explicit olfactory terminology in both languages demonstrates both similarities and differences.

First off, both Akkadian and Hebrew hymns highlight divine olfactoception. An Akkadian psalm highlights the deities' attributes, including their ability to smell incense (KAR 105 11), while an Israelite psalm explicitly mocks foreign nations' worship of idols, which are sensorially deprived in every manner, including the ability to smell (Psalm 115:6).¹⁰¹⁴ There are no biblical texts comparable to Akkadian incantations, medical texts, or divination/omens, which make a number of olfactory-based comparisons, though Israelite ritual texts demonstrate a well-developed religious science that includes the use of aroma in cultic ceremonies and temple worship.

Where the Hebrew Scriptures have many olfactory references in prophetic texts, often in reference to God's wrath bringing death and destruction, Akkadian has only one—a prophetic oracle which metaphorically compares the goddess Ishtar (lady of

¹⁰¹⁴ While there is no concrete evidence, this diatribe is thought to be a post-exilic reaction to Babylonian captivity. A similar reference comes from the admonitory speech of Deuteronomy 4:28.

Arbela) to a lion cub or puppy that sniffs out Esarhaddon's enemies (SAA 9 2.3 ii 10', 20'). This bears striking similarity to Isaiah 11:3, a verse which indicates God's anointed one will discern and make judgments based on his sense of smell.

Akkadian and Israelite love poems/lyrics utilize olfactory references, though the Hebrew focuses on positive references and Akkadian the negative. Many Akkadian royal inscriptions, however, refer to the same pleasing fragrances to describe their palaces/temples that Song of Songs uses to characterize the lovers' delight in one another (for example, imported spices or aromatic materials from Lebanon). Akkadian wisdom literature includes a negative comparison to the pig, which makes streets stink, while biblical wisdom literature says dead flies make ointment/perfume stink (Ecclesiastes 10:1). Proverbs 13:5 uses olfactory language figuratively for the wicked man.

Hebrew has no one-to-one comparison to Akkadian myths, epics, and legends, but the Pentateuchal historical narratives include one olfactory reference in a foundational myth/legend and a number of them in family history texts. The most well-known comparison is the Gilgamesh account of the flood in comparison to the biblical version in Genesis 8. Akkadian letters exhibit an extensive figurative and idiomatic use of olfaction to designate severe offense, usually politically charged, and this bears striking resemblance to almost identical references in Hebrew historical narratives and annals.

Attempting to derive theories about the relative importance and function of the sense of smell diachronically in Mesopotamian and ancient Israelite time periods based on notable shifts in the use of terminology is fundamentally problematic. The majority of Akkadian literary texts possessed today have been recovered thanks to 1st millennium libraries, where they may have been archived from much earlier times. Even if every

single clay tablet *could* be dated, the content may have been passed down through scribal transcription over centuries, being adapted and developed accordingly. Meanwhile, the Hebrew Scriptures underwent a more uncertain process, involving both oral and scribal participation, so the post-exilic date of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures is not an accurate reflection of the origin of its constituent parts. Dating any ancient text, with the exception of certain genres such as royal inscriptions or letters, is notoriously difficult, and even when assigned to a given era based on certain features such as content and language/dialect, it can be difficult if not impossible to narrow that down within what could be a several hundred year time frame. We only possess a fraction of the texts that must have existed, and even if we possessed every last one, it would not necessarily be an accurate reflection of cultural values and behaviors. Therefore, any hypotheses about olfaction in the ANE overall is impacted by the uneven distribution and recovery of ancient sources, especially outside of Mesopotamia.

Though reluctant to offer any theories about diachronic shifts with respect to cultural perceptions and use of olfaction in Mesopotamia and Israel, if the lexical evidence derived from this study of prominent Akkadian and Hebrew terms is put through a temporal filter, some trends with respect to the use of olfactory language can be noted. These observations are not objective, as they make some presuppositions with respect to dating, nor are they altogether arbitrary, as the presuppositions are based on historic and modern scholarship.

In Mesopotamia, aside from the lexical lists, which are among some of the oldest tablets unearthed, the earliest Akkadian documents with olfactory references discovered are royal and private letters dating to Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian periods. These correspondences employ three references to *eṣēnu*, one instance of *ba'āšu*, and one of *erīšu*. NA, NB, and LB letters drastically outnumber these early specimens, so it is

noteworthy and perhaps significant that the verb *eṣēnu* is completely absent in them, and *erīšu* only occurs only twice.¹⁰¹⁵ Whether it is an Assyrian king writing about a military conflict, a royal official in Ninevah describing internal political turmoil, or a Babylonian businessman in NB/LB Uruk enumerating agricultural concerns, 97% of the olfactory references are to various forms of *bīšu* or *ba'āšu*, the vast majority of which are figurative not literal. Other olfactory words were known to be in operation at these early periods because lexical lists produced by Babylonian schools prior to the 12th century attest fifteen instances of *bīšu*, five of *erīšu*, three of *eṣēnu*, and two each of *ba'āšu*, *bu'šu*, and *nipšu*.

This first millennium Akkadian epistolary correspondence demonstrates a preponderance of negative, olfactory-based idiomatic expressions pertaining to social and/or political standing between individuals or parties. Though no Israelite epistolary archives have been unearthed from this time for comparison, different genres can reflect similar socio-political spheres. The same type of negative, olfactory-based idiomatic expressions is evidenced in Hebrew texts, clustering in the patriarchal accounts of Genesis, the exodus account, and the early monarchic period (1-2 Samuel). According to the general dating of the biblical chronology, this would roughly scatter them throughout the second millennium down to the turn of the century. However, if proposal of a 10th century date for the J source of Genesis and portions of the Samuel narratives is correct, though this is increasingly dismissed, there would evidence that figurative use of foul smell peaks in a similar period of history in both Mesopotamia and Israel. International correspondence would be the obvious channel of transmission, as interaction between these geo-political entities no doubt led to influence. If and how

¹⁰¹⁵ ABL 456:11, a text not listed in CAD E *erīšu* A, 280-1.

there was conscious imitation or borrowing is difficult to determine. Of course a common cultural heritage can explain the similar use of technical idioms.¹⁰¹⁶

After the OA/OB letters, the next oldest Akkadian documents with olfactory references come from the MB period—a bilingual historical hymn with *iriše* and a fragmentary military narrative with *bišim*. If olfactory representation of the second millennium period is broadened to include the Gilgamesh epic,¹⁰¹⁷ the Descent of Ishtar,¹⁰¹⁸ Enuma Elish,¹⁰¹⁹ the Erra Myth,¹⁰²⁰ and incantation/medical texts,¹⁰²¹ all deemed to originate prior to the first millennium, there are seventeen more uses of *ešēnu*, eight of *erīšu*, two of *bīšu*, four of *ba'āšu* and two of *nipšu*. When comparing these totals to first millennium representation, there are several noteworthy trends. There are more than twice the number of references to *ešēnu* in the second millennium compared to the first. With the exception of an omen text that skews the results by reusing *erīšu* 25 times in one setting, there are roughly the same number of “hits” for this term in both second and first millenniums, as with *nipšu* and *bu'šu*. Meanwhile, there are less than half the references to *bīšu* and one-fourth of *ba'āšu* in these two periods. Based solely on the use of lexical terms in the texts we possess, there appears to be an historical

¹⁰¹⁶ These types of idiomatic expressions were, presumably, part of a common stock of poetic and mythical formulae, metaphors, similes, and other sentiments that had permeated society.

¹⁰¹⁷ The standard version dates to the mid-9th century (Assurbanipal), but its origins date to Sumerian periods.

¹⁰¹⁸ The Descent of Ishtar is an Akkadian version of an originally Sumerian poem.

¹⁰¹⁹ The LB Enuma Elish has debatable origins, perhaps going as far back as the time of Hammurabi when Babylon was on the rise (18th century), to the Kassite period (16th-13th centuries), or to the time of Nebuchadnezzar (1125-1104 BCE).

¹⁰²⁰ The Erra Myth is an 8th century document, though it is thought to have older elements dating to the Middle Babylonian period.

¹⁰²¹ Many incantations come from the scribes of Assurbanipal, but they are thought to date to the early second millennium.

decrease in the usage of the general terms for smelling and increase in the specialized use of language for “bad smells” applied figuratively.

Additionally, if texts with a “divine” focus (myths, hymns and prayers, omens, oracles, incantations/rituals, queries, cultic calendars, medical texts, religious commentaries) are distinguished from texts with a “royal” focus or “monumental/archival” form (lexical texts, epics/legends, treaties, wisdom literature, inscriptions, and letters), there is disproportionate use of lexemes. 91% of the references to *ba'āšu* and 96% of *bīšu* come from the latter, while 70% of the references to *erīšu* and 76% of *eṣēnu* come from the former. One proposal for these results is that a “religious” community was more interested in neutral/positive and literal applications of the olfactory sense in language versus a non-religious or popular inclination towards terminology that is more negative and figurative. Of course the content of the texts may influence this more than socio-political position.

In Hebrew, if scholars’ suppositions with dating have accurately positioned Hebrew sources into Israelite historical periods from pre-monarchic through post-exilic times, then a similar style of observation can be employed.¹⁰²² The problem, though, is that relatively few biblical texts having olfactory references are located in the second millennium. Only Judges is thought to use early Iron Age (late second millennium) materials. Factoring in historical narratives from the united monarchy at the turn of the millennium (c. 1020-980 BCE) yields a slightly better comparison between second and first millenniums, with 15% of the olfactory references in the former and 85% in the

¹⁰²² When the historical backdrop of the texts is taken at face value for dating, there are no obvious trends with terminology.

latter.¹⁰²³ This seems mildly out of proportion to the size of actual textual record, but not worth noting.

The verb שָׂחַ is more often used in historical narratives (72%) than prophecy, law, wisdom literature, and love lyrics combined, but this might be expected. In Akkadian, 77% of the references to the comparable verb, *ba'āšū*, come from NA/NB/LB letters. This draws attention to the correspondence between Hebrew historical narrative and Akkadian archival letters. More prominent from a historical perspective is the predominant use of שָׂחַ in two post-exilic genres, law (35x) and love lyrics (7x). Together, these instances account for 78% of all the references. They cluster into two categories: the positive aroma of offerings smelled by deity and the pleasing fragrance perceived by human lovers. In terms of distinctively negative smell-related terms (שָׂחַ, שָׂחַ), the obvious shift toward a more figurative and idiomatic usage is not reflected in the texts as it is in Akkadian.

Having explored both the common heritage and separate features of olfactory words, the remaining chapters will delve into why and how olfactics were significant to Mesopotamians and Israelites of the ANE.

¹⁰²³ More specifically, the post-exilic period has the majority of the olfactory references (54%) compared to pre-monarchic (1%), united monarchy (14%), divided monarchy (13%), and exilic (17%).

CHAPTER 5: THE FUNCTION OF OLFACTION IN RELIGIOUS RITUAL

INTRODUCTION

As already emphasized, smell is not only physiological, it is cultural, and as such it serves various cultural functions in a given society. Modern scientific, medical, therapeutic, psychological, sociological, anthropological, and literary research helps illuminate the role of smell across cultures and in literature. Bringing that body of research to bear on the function of olfaction in the ANE, the natural starting point is the role of scents and perceptions of them in ANE religious ritual.

James Watts, in “Ritual Rhetoric in Ancient Near Eastern Texts,” recapitulates a helpful working definition of ritual as that which draws attention to and makes intentional otherwise ordinary practices.¹⁰²⁴ A ritual is created when certain acts (potentially normal, everyday ones) are focused on and formalized with prescription. Often religious, not all rituals involve deities or spirits, nor do they necessarily involve odors or olfactory symbolism. That said, sociologists and anthropologists have demonstrated how often olfactory codes are translated into practice through various rites pertaining to birth, puberty, courtship, marriage, sexuality, childbearing, spirituality, healing, and death. The use of odor to combat illness is thought to be one of the most common ritual uses of olfactory across cultures.¹⁰²⁵ While Akkadian healing/exorcistic rituals employ aromatic substances to free individuals plagued with sickness resulting from spirits (see CT 17 9:37f.), reference the foul smell of evil spirits (CT 16 34:215f.), and suggest ghosts of the netherworld are attracted to fragrant anointing oil (Gilg. XII 17, 36), I am not aware of

¹⁰²⁴ James Watts, “Ritual Rhetoric in Ancient Near Eastern Texts,” in *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*, ed. Carol Lipson and Roberta A. Binkley (West Lafayette, Ind.: Parlor, 2009), 40.

¹⁰²⁵ Classen, Howes, and Synnott, *Aroma*, 146. See also chapter 8, “Fragrant Elixers,” of Dorland, *Scents Appeal*.

comparable texts in Egyptian and Israelite literature of this period.¹⁰²⁶ In the ANE as a whole, the most prominent olfactory-based rituals involve the establishment, maintenance, and expression of the divine-human relationship through the medium of incense offerings.

Since ancient times, incense has played an important religious, economic, and political role throughout the world. Often associated with the Far East or south Arabia, incense was also prominent in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan/Israel. Biblical prescriptions for the use of incense have stimulated great interest in both the textual sources and archaeological finds of the ancient Near East, which testify to the use of odiferous elements as early as the third millennia BCE. The term “incense” can be and is used in a variety of ways and often quite loosely. On the one hand, it can refer to the aromatic smoke of an odiferous substance (sap, wood, bark, roots, fruit) that is released when burned. Alternately, and in a narrower sense, it may denote the aromatic substance itself.¹⁰²⁷ Aloe, camphor, cloves, sandalwood, cedar, juniper, balsam, galbanum, and turpentine are all examples of these substances, although the principle ingredients of incense compounds were frankincense and myrrh.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁶ In the Apocryphal Book of Tobit (2nd-3rd centuries BCE), the angel Raphael instructs Tobit to drive out the evil demon that killed Sarah’s seven prior husbands on their wedding night by burning the heart and liver of a fish on the incense embers of his bedchamber. Tobit 8:3 says the odor sent the demon fleeing to Egypt where Raphael bound it hand and foot.

¹⁰²⁷ There is a good measure of difficulty in relating botanical words as they appear in texts to flora as known in nature, partly due to the fact that there are some 25 species of frankincense and 250 species of myrrh to consider.

¹⁰²⁸ Most ingredients in incense compounds are resinous/gummy exudates from the surface of trees, the bark of which has a botanical function to repair wounds. They contain volatile essential oils, which evaporate on pressure to the air, leaving resin to set hard in the wound.

SYMBOLIC AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTION

Atchley, the first to comprehensively study incense use in the ancient world, collected Egyptian textual evidence, particularly the early expeditions to Punt and southern Arabia and the records of incense offerings, as well as the common pictorial representations of incense censers and offerings. He demonstrated the literary and pictorial representations of funeral rites associate it with ceremonial purification, while its disinfectant properties are suggested by its use after the 8th century sack of Memphis.¹⁰²⁹ People's recognition of the sweet smell of incense led to the natural conclusion it must be equally pleasant to deities, he reasoned, therefore incense was commonly offered as a sacrifice to the deity.¹⁰³⁰ The primitive idea, he suggests, is that this offering was a gift that feeds the deity or, at the very least, pleases or satisfies him/her. It was not until the next stage of ideas (reflected in the historic period of Egypt) that incense had to be burnt to reach the gods/goddesses. Incense references in Mesopotamian texts (i.e. Utnapishtim's offering in the Gilgamesh Epic) and the Hebrew Bible convey this understanding. Other suggestions given by Atchley for the role of incense include its use as a demonifuge to drive away evil spirits, a symbol to honor a living person, an accompaniment to festivities, weddings, processions of rejoicing, etc., and a refreshing perfume at banquets and other occasions.¹⁰³¹

About a decade later, G. Elliot Smith argued the "true" origin and explanation for incense and libation offerings comes from the ancient Egyptian "Pyramid Texts" where libations functioned to revivify the corpse, animating it and enabling it to continue the

¹⁰²⁹ Atchley, *A History of the Use of Incense*, 6–27.

¹⁰³⁰ Following William Robertson Smith, Atchley agrees that the value and use of incense was a "survival" arising from the notion that it was the blood of an animate and divine tree. *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁰³¹ *Ibid.*, 61–77.

existence that had been interrupted by death.¹⁰³² With time, this action came to be associated with an act of worship to any deity. Burning incense, on the other hand, restored to the statue/mummy the odor of the living body, thus animating it. According to statements in the *Ritual of Amon*, incense was believed to be not just the “odor of the god” but also the god’s sweat. Therefore, the pouring of libations and burning of incense revived the statue of a god and body of a man by restoring their lost moisture.¹⁰³³ Smith then reconstructs the complex of circumstances setting the stage for this ritual invention and diffusion. The extensive use of resinous material as an essential ingredient in cosmetics existed from earliest Predynastic times in Egypt. In that hot climate, a strong aroma was associated with a living person. At first, the ritual burning of incense before a statue/corpse was intended to convey the warmth, sweat, and odor of life (thus the associations to the life-giving power of incense), but with time it became an act of homage to the deity. Eventually, the smoke of burning incense came to be seen as the vehicle by which the soul wafted to the sky or an earth-dweller’s requests were conveyed to the deities.¹⁰³⁴ Smith appropriately recognizes the operative role of tradition in this rite, such that the original meaning may have been forgotten in the process of transmission from antiquity, as people’s actions are often inspired more by natural instincts, personal circumstances, and conventions of society than pure reason or logic. This is a crucial point, as the remarkable attestation of the religious use of incense throughout the ANE suggests that there may be a more fundamental or intrinsic rationale for why incense is so widespread a custom.

¹⁰³² G. Elliot Smith, “Incense and Libations,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 4 (Sept. 1917-Jan. 1918): 193.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, 226–8.

Written half a century later, Groom's *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (1981), addresses botany, linguistics, archaeological artifacts, history, geography, climate, etc. in ancient and modern times. He utilizes historical information and traditions preserved in the biblical, classical, and other writings to describe the ancient states/peoples of Arabia and the incense areas of the south and north. Though Groom's emphasis is on the incense trade¹⁰³⁵ and the substances themselves, chapter 1, "Incense: The Food of the Gods," demonstrates the religious significance of incense throughout history from the ancient civilizations to the present day. Among other examples from the ancient Near East, he mentions the balls of incense found in Tutankhamun's tomb, the Harappan figures of the mother goddess found in the Indus valley which show the smoke stains of incense (3rd millennium BCE), an Assyrian sculpture at Ninevah in which incense is burnt for the sun-god, and numerous reliefs with incense stands between the king and his subjects. Groom mentions the Sumerian and Babylonian burning of incense to purify and to please their gods and the Egyptian use of incense as an offering, reiterating some of Atchley's explanations for the function of incense.¹⁰³⁶ As a matter of interest, he adds the comment that the Jewish religion prescribed the use of incense more exactly than anywhere else, as biblical and rabbinic texts give extremely detailed accounts of its composition and the ceremonies surrounding its use.¹⁰³⁷

The 1974 doctoral dissertation by Kjeld Nielsen, "Incense in Ancient Israel," was published in 1986 with the same title in the Supplements to Vetus Testamentum series.

¹⁰³⁵ As for the origins of the incense trade from south Arabia, Groom avoids the controversial subject of chronology except to a search for a *terminus post quem* date, which he associates with the domestication of the camel and places no earlier than the first millennium BC. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 33–7.

¹⁰³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1–9.

¹⁰³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

The operative goal in Nielsen's comprehensive study is to identify incense substances mentioned in ancient Near Eastern sources (Egypt, Arabia, Syria-Mesopotamia, and especially Israel) and their uses. Of the various ideas associated with the odor and smoke of incense in religious and secular life, Nielsen affirms the practical function of incense in eliminating unpleasant smells. He claims that offering something pleasing to human/divine nostrils is the basic reason for the important place of aromata in the daily and religious life of ancient peoples, and a wide range of ideas associated with the smoke and odor of incense explain its application in religious rituals.¹⁰³⁸ After mentioning the archaeological evidence of incense in Egypt (resinous materials in graves in predynastic times, incense burners/censers from as early as the 5th dynasty), Nielsen addresses historical and literary sources referring to Egyptian incense import from Punt (especially Hatshepsut's 15th century BCE voyage) and Retenu (territories north of Egypt). Daily Egyptian religious rituals demonstrate the apotropaic, propitiatory, purificatory, and mediatory ideas associated with incense, while on a day-to-day basis it was employed for a number of non-religious purposes like fumigating a house or clothing, improving one's personal olfactory aesthetic (as a cosmetic application or chewing gum), and meeting medicinal needs. In the magical cult of the dead, illumined by the Pyramid Texts, embalming and incense were employed to do away with the odors of putrefaction. The understanding was that the fumigation of the dead king purifies, protects, and makes the king's body divine. The ascending smoke of incense was important as a means of transportation and communication between man and god.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁸ Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, xi.

¹⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*, 4–13.

As in Egypt, incense use in Syria-Mesopotamia is well attested in historical, religious, and literary texts. Nielsen lists the Akkadian terms for incense and describes the incense altars and burners found in archaeological excavations. Most of the examples of ritual incense use in Syria-Mesopotamia come from the magical rites of ancient Mesopotamia.¹⁰⁴⁰ Nielsen comments on the incense references in prayers, Utnapishtim's incense offering in the Gilgamesh Epic, the connection between burning incense and the *bārû* ("diviner"), the role of incense in the official ritual of Babylonian New Year festival, and its association with foundation deposits.¹⁰⁴¹ In opening his section on ancient Israel, Nielsen suggests that while there is no written evidence for *how* the Canaanites used incense, pre-Israelite incense vessels confirm its existence and use. Among the various types of incense vessels customarily treated as related to incense burning, he identifies utensils, pottery incense-burners/stands, horned altars, cubic altars/censers, pottery shrines, tripod cups, and round stone incense altars.¹⁰⁴² After a linguistic analysis of the biblical terms for incense,¹⁰⁴³ Nielsen turns his attention to the ritual uses of incense in Israelite prescriptive literature. He investigates the descriptive source material to see if the non-legal passages confirm the existence of and adherence to the Priestly codes, foremost of which is the detailed explanation given to Moses in Exodus 30:1-10 for the construction, placement, and authorized use of the gold-plated incense altar. Nielsen concludes that the Priestly source (P), while working with authentic ritual traditions from the monarchic period, has deliberately limited the ritual

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 29–30. The cultic vocabulary of Ugaritic religious rituals indicate incense was used, though there is no clear mention of it in epic texts.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid., 30–3.

¹⁰⁴² Kjeld Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 38 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 38–51.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., 51–67.

uses of incense, the priests who were allowed to burn it, and the legitimate incense materials, perhaps as a reaction to its common use among Canaanite and popular Israelite religion. Thus, the biblical prescriptions are an incomplete picture of incense use in the early Israelite cult. In redefining the purpose of incense, Nielsen believes P virtually eliminated what appears to be the most common ritual use of incense in other Near Eastern cultures—incense as a means of purification.¹⁰⁴⁴

Nielsen rejects Wellhausen's theory that general incense offerings were not part of Israelite cult until late monarchic times (the earliest reference being Jeremiah 6:20) and that the actual golden incense altar of Exodus 30 did not function in Israelite-Jewish cult until a post-exilic date. As for the date of the introduction of incense offerings into the Israelite cult, Nielsen highlights 1 Samuel 2:28, a passage he believes is a pre- or early monarchic identification of incense burning as one of the priestly duties. Rather than addressing the question of the literary position of Exodus 30, Wellhausen's main argument for asserting a post-exilic origin for the incense altar, Nielsen turns to Isaiah 6:1ff. He explains why the smoke mentioned in this narrative (dated fairly precisely to the 2nd half of the 8th century BCE) must have come from the incense altar. The view that the incense altar was used in pre-exilic Israelite cult, he argues, is in line with the archaeological material, which, he notes, was unavailable in Wellhausen's time.¹⁰⁴⁵

The more general scholarly debate as to whether incense was used in ancient Israelite rituals is narrowed by Paul Heger in *The Development of the Incense Cult in Israel*.¹⁰⁴⁶ He focuses on the date of earliest introduction of the independent, twice daily,

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid., 87–8.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid., 101–4.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Paul Heger, *The Development of the Incense Cult in Israel* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997); *The Three Biblical Altar Laws: Developments in the Sacrificial Cult in Practice and Theology* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999).

perpetual incense celebration on the golden altar (Exodus 30ff) into the Israelite cult, concluding the gradual development of the incense ceremony occurred in three stages, beginning with the use of fragrant substances as an auxiliary cultic rite and ultimately leading to the late Second Temple form of the celebration as it is described in Exodus 30:1-9 and 34-38 (under the exclusive control of a restricted priestly clan).¹⁰⁴⁷ As for the function of incense, Heger suggests there appeared at some unknown juncture in human culture a conscious enjoyment of fragrant odors emanating from natural substances. With increased sophistication in dwelling conditions, available fragrant substances were used to create a more pleasant environment and dissipate offensive odors. When humans came to believe they should offer food to gods, the provision of fragrant spices as food condiments and use of aromatics were the natural results. Absorbing and refashioning foreign customs, particularly those of Mesopotamia and Egypt (where incense appears to have been used since the earliest times), the Israelites incorporated an incense altar into “legitimate” cultic worship in the 2nd Temple period, and its development was related to priestly attempts to control the larger cult and its prerogatives.¹⁰⁴⁸

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

These biblical and ANE scholars have tackled the question of ritual incense use in the ancient world through a study of both literature and artifacts. Assuming that the

¹⁰⁴⁷ Heger, *Development of the Incense Cult*, 8–9.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibid., 3–5. The published dissertation by Dominika Kurek-Chomycz considers the evolutionary model of Israelite sacrifice from hints of an early, popular conception of sacrifice as food for the gods to pre-exilic literature demonstrating a view of sacrifice as scent for gods and, finally, to post-exilic conceptions lacking any sensory component. Dominik Kurek-Chomycz, “Making Scents of Revelation: The Significance of Cultic Scents in Ancient Judaism as the Backdrop of Saint Paul’s Olfactory Metaphor in 2 Cor. 2:14-17” (Ph. D. diss., Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2008).

use of incense—particularly its ritual use—would have necessitated some form of burner or altar, and that tools like censers, shovels, cups, or containers would have been involved in these rites, the archaeological discovery in the Levant of numerous artifacts or portrayals that fit this profile is intriguing and at times compelling. It is generally accepted on the basis of these finds that incense had, often enough, a prevalent role in public and private settings. The arm or hand-shaped incense burners so characteristic in Egyptian reliefs and paintings that have been found offer substantial proof for ancient Egyptian incense use among the royal or priestly class. Archaeological discoveries of objects that could have been involved in ritual incense burning in Canaan proper, some of which appear to match in detail the biblical descriptions of these artifacts, have prompted designations like “incense altar,” “incense stand,” or “incense shovel.” Moreover, the presence of these various implements has been used to justify the biblical claim that incense featured prominently in early Israelite ritual. However, the somewhat hasty, uncritical assumption that these various altars or stands functioned for incense burning has been challenged and rejected by many. Caution should be exercised in identifying incense paraphernalia, as pedestal-type artifacts may not have been used cultically and even when found in a cultic context, they were used for drink offerings and grain/cereal offerings, as well as fire offering of incense.¹⁰⁴⁹

With that caution in mind, more recent archaeological evidence for Iron Age incense altars (evidence that was not accessible to most of the studies mentioned above) comes not from South Arabia, Mesopotamia, or Egypt but much closer to Israel proper—the Negev and Transjordan. These finds confirm the popularity of incense (both

¹⁰⁴⁹ Lamoine F. Devries, “Cult Stands: A Bewildering Variety of Shapes and Sizes,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13, no. 4 (1987): 27. Though there are no pictorial representations from ancient Israel, the biblical text paints a picture of similarly diverse offerings: the *minchah*/cereal offering (flour or cakes), libations, incense offerings, and possible vegetation rituals. *Ibid.*, 32.

cultic and domestic contexts) in the immediate environs of Judah, the use of indigenous materials for incense compounds, and the well-attested surge in trade between South Arabia and the Fertile Crescent in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE.

One such case comes from the Iron Age temple recently discovered at Khirbat al-Mudayna (1999), the first Moabite temple discovered in Jordan. The small temple is situated just inside the six-chambered, two-story gate of the walled city (dated to about 800 BCE). Three limestone altars were found broken on top of a large, highly polished stone slab set into the floor. One is interpreted as a libation altar, as there is evidence for liquid to drain from the reservoir, and another offering table with soot is thought to have been used for burnt offerings, but the third is completely different in shape. Tall (more than three feet), with a conical base, and cut from a single piece of limestone, this piece has a cup-shaped depression on top that is also stained with soot. With elaborate decoration and intricate painting, the back side of the stand is decorated with a palm tree and an inscription (בִּקְטָרִי אֵשׁ עֵשׂ אֶל־שֹׁמֵעַ לִי־כִּף בַּת אֹתָהּ) translated “The incense altar that Elishama made for YSP, the daughter of ’WT”¹⁰⁵⁰ or “Incense altar which ’Eîššāma’ made to augment the oracle house.”¹⁰⁵¹ Two samples of incense were found *in situ* at the same site, one from a cuboid altar in the kitchen of Building 125, immediately south of Temple 149, and a second sample found on an incense altar located in the upper story collapse of pillared building 200. Based on preliminary analysis, the burnt substances appear to be a local aromatic floral material rather than resinous frankincense imported

¹⁰⁵⁰ P. M. Michèle Daviau and Paul-Eugène Dion, “Moab Comes to Life,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 28, no. 1 (2002): 42.

¹⁰⁵¹ Rainey argues this is Israelite/Phoenician, not Moabite. Anson F. Rainey, “The New Inscription from Khirbet El-Mudeiyineh,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 52 (2002): 82.

from Arabia. For the excavators, this suggests the site was outside the perimeters of the incense trade via Edom and the Negev.¹⁰⁵²

Among the astonishing assemblage of clay vessels and stone altars recently discovered at the Iron Age Arabah site 'En Ḥaṣeva are three anthropomorphic stands, eight stands, fifteen incense burners in the shape of fenestrated pedestaled bowls, eleven incense burners decorated with projecting lugs, eleven chalices; five tripod-perforated cup-shaped incense burners, five small bowls, two incense shovels with projecting handles, three tiny whole pomegranates and four larger incomplete specimens used to decorate incense burners.¹⁰⁵³ Strategically placed at a crucial commercial crossroads in the Negev at the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth centuries BCE, this site is considered to have been especially vital for the south Arabian spice trade, perhaps evidenced by the quantity of incense-related items.

To sum up so far, the ritual use of aromatics is widely attested from early times in the ANE, and it is associated with funerary rites, with divine worship in the daily cult and on special festivals, and with rituals of magic/medicine. Incense was used to attract the attention of or establish connection with gods, to appease them, to exorcise evil/harmful forces, to sanctify or purify a place/object/person, and to display reverence or respect. The general consensus is that the pleasing fragrance of incense was assumed to be agreeable to the gods, thus it played an important role in worship and ceremonies of offering, prayer, intercession, and purification. The non-religious role of incense is given ample attention too. Beyond its common use as a cosmetic/perfume, incense was used as a deodorant, air freshener, and insecticide. Its practical necessity in combating

¹⁰⁵² P. M. Michèle Daviau and Paul-Eugène Dion, "Economy-Related Finds from Khirbat Al-Mudayna (Wadi Ath-Thamad, Jordan)," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 328 (2002): 48–9.

¹⁰⁵³ Rudolph Cohen and Yigal Yisrael, "The Iron Age Fortresses at 'En Ḥaṣeva," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 58, no. 4 (1995): 223–35.

unpleasant odors may be overlooked by those living in a more environmentally sanitized world¹⁰⁵⁴ and yet, at the same time, this aesthetic and pragmatic effect function may be overemphasized with respect to cultic use.

While the archaeological evidence confirms a steady growth in the incense trade and incense use, it also testifies to the early, extensive presence of incense materials and offerings in ancient Near Eastern societies, including Canaan/Israel. Antagonists and skeptics assume that Judah was a small, unimportant, and relatively poor country during the only period in which the Bible claims it had control of trade routes (the only means of obtaining incense at reasonable costs). They claim the absence of incense references in the “early” material indicates incense was not burnt at this stage.

However, textual and archaeological evidence justifies the presence of different types of incense and incense offerings in Palestine in the pre-monarchic and monarchic periods. Comparative analysis confirms similar usages of incense in ancient Egypt, Arabia, Syria-Mesopotamia, and Israel. Problems and weaknesses with source-critical and redaction methodologies temper their assured results. In my estimation, it is not only plausible that incense featured prominently in early Israelite ritual, as it did in virtually all ancient Near Eastern cultures, it is quite probable, and there were certainly developmental stages in its cultic use.

MODERN PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE INSIGHTS

The ritual practice of incense burning appears to have a continuous, universal religious significance throughout history. However, from a phenomenological perspective, the arbitrary details and peculiar circumstances of incense use reflect

¹⁰⁵⁴ Kjeld Nielsen, “Incense,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David N. Freedman; vol. 3, 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:407; Neufeld, “Hygiene Conditions in Ancient Israel (Iron Age).”

tremendous diversity in how various cultures and periods understand it. Most scholars explain the uniformity of practice on the basis of pragmatic aesthetics (“incense smells good and covers bad odors”), but modern physical and social science insights provide additional (perhaps more fundamental) explanations for the universality of a practice that is interpreted so very differently.

In the opening chapter of Marcel Proust’s novel *Swann’s Way*, the narrator is overcome by the rush of memories about a long-forgotten childhood event triggered by the smell of a madeline biscuit dipped in linden-blossom tea. Thus, the common term for a powerful, odor-evoked memory today is a “Proustian memory.” The anatomy and physiology of olfaction (or, more specifically, how odors affect the human mind and body) is quite fascinating and relevant to the popular ritual use of incense. Though olfaction remains a vastly unknown scientific frontier, some common properties of odor have been identified, and a good deal is known about the complex biological process of smelling.¹⁰⁵⁵ The chemicals making up what is interpreted as an odor, when moved through the nasal cavity due to breathing or during mastication of food via small air movements sent through the rear access of the nasopharynx, are somehow detected by the system of sensitive nerve endings at the top of the nasal cavity.¹⁰⁵⁶ The average person has about ten million receptors on these neurons in the nose, with over 1000 different kinds, each of which recognizes a particular chemical feature of odor

¹⁰⁵⁵ The common properties of odor include its volative nature (airborne and in a finely divided state in order to come into contact with odor receptors located high in the nostrils) and solubility (presuming the odorous materials must go into solution in order to be captured by the mucous lining of the nostrils). It is impossible to generalize the chemical composition of odors, as some compounds with very different chemical structures smell alike, while others with virtually identical molecular constituents do not. Frank A. Geldard, *The Human Senses*, 2d. ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), 441. It is not known how volatile molecules are interpreted as specific smells, how smells travel through the brain, how signals are decoded to yield the perception of a scent, or how odor memories are formed and stored. Rachel S. Herz, “Scents of Time,” *Sciences* 40, no. 4 (2000): 35.

¹⁰⁵⁶ The process by which molecules bind to receptors on tiny hairlike cilia at the ends of olfactory nerves or neurons, which fire messages to the brain, is mysterious. Gibbons, “The Intimate Sense of Smell,” 332.

molecules.¹⁰⁵⁷ Neurons send signals to the brain where they are collated by the main olfactory bulb, which relays the odor signature to other parts of the brain. Via those complicated and little understood pathways, odor signals eventually reach the areas involved in the conscious perception of odors and the limbic areas that are involved in emotional (amygdala), memorial (hippocampus), and motivational responses (hypothalamus).¹⁰⁵⁸ The limbic system reaches into the neocortex, the site of the brain's higher processes, to stimulate conscious thoughts and reactions. At the same time, the over-stimulation of the limbic system can actually retard or prohibit logical reasoning, as this system activates the endocrine (hormone) and autonomic nervous systems.¹⁰⁵⁹ Therefore smells, or at least *some* smells, can obscure certain thinking processes.

It is important to note for the purposes of this study that odor assessments are processed primarily in the right hemisphere of the brain, the part most associated with visceral motor functions and emotional expression. Moreover, in traveling to the limbic region of brain, the neural signal crosses only one synapse at the olfactory bulb, whereas sensations of sight, sound, and touch reach the limbic lobe less directly, across more synapses.¹⁰⁶⁰ To put this in non-technical terminology, of all the human senses,

¹⁰⁵⁷ This receptor system supplies the overtones for fundamental tastes. It adds "aroma" that virtually creates the aesthetic realm of flavor. Without the sense of smell, one would only taste the sourness of acid, the sweetness of sugar, the bitterness of quinine, and the saltiness of sodium chloride. Geldard, *The Human Senses*, 438.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Herz, "Scents of Time," 35; Geldard, *The Human Senses*, 443–7. Some smells cause the limbic system to activate the hypothalamus and pituitary gland, stimulating the production of hormones controlling sex, appetite, body temperature, and other functions. A well-documented example of the interaction between odors and hormones is the case of young women living together in a college dormitory, whose menstrual cycles synchronize by means of the faint odor signal in sweat. Gibbons, "The Intimate Sense of Smell," 338. In considering the biological underpinnings of the perfume industry, Stoddart tries to argue, I believe unsuccessfully, that incense culture and body perfume were developed based on odors reminiscent of sex attractants which are able to penetrate to the deeper levels of the psyche to gently stimulate the emotions. D. M. Stoddart, "Human Odour Culture: A Zoological Perspective," in *Perfumery: The Psychology and Biology of Fragrance* (ed. Steve Van Toller and George H. Dodd; New York: Chapman & Hall, 1988), 16.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Gibbons, "The Intimate Sense of Smell," 332–7.

smells have the most direct route to the part of the brain considered to be the core of emotions and memory. Both anecdotal reports and anatomical analyses demonstrate odors have a connection to memory and emotion, although this association needs clarification. Based on the findings of her experiments, Herz argues that odor-evoked memories are no more potent and accurate cues to memory than those of other the senses. The proclaimed vividness of these memories, she argues, is an illusion created by the powerful rush of emotion.¹⁰⁶¹ The emotional intensity, though, is no illusion. Odors tap into the emotions more directly and powerfully than stimuli from the other senses.

From a sociological or anthropological perspective, it is inconsequential that smell is the least understood of the senses or that there are a great number of rivaling theories to explain the mysterious mechanism of odor perception and classification in the brain.¹⁰⁶² Olfaction is gradually entering into serious ethnographic discourse, though it is still considered an under-represented area of anthropological analysis.¹⁰⁶³ While the focus of much social science research centers on how societies invest odors with values and use them to define and interact with the world (value-coded odors), some have

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid., 332.

¹⁰⁶¹ Herz, "Scents of Time," 35. In her survey and outline of mainstream psychological literature on olfactory memory, which rapidly expanded since the mid-1970's, Annett notes a focus on the examination of Proustian characteristics of smell. In contrast to the proliferation of anecdotal accounts of olfactory memory, there is a small but growing experimental literature on olfactory cognition, some of which casts doubt on the views of the early 1970's that odor memory is unique and independent from other sense modalities. "Olfactory Memory: A Case Study in Cognitive Psychology," *Journal of Psychology* 130 (1996): 309–20.

¹⁰⁶² Less is known about the physiology, psychophysiology, or psychology of the human olfactory system than the visual or auditory systems. Annett, "Olfactory Memory," 2. The greater challenge, though, pertains to the obscure nature of smells and their idiosyncratic quality. The process of internalization in which components of the natural and social order carrying odor become part of one's routine life and social/physical milieu renders it difficult to distinguish knowledge and value. Almagor, "Odors and Private Language."

¹⁰⁶³ For important ethnographic analyses of the senses, see Paul Stoller, *The Taste of Ethnographic Things* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989); *Sensuous Scholarship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997).

focused on the application of culturally constructed olfactory concepts or symbolism in ritual contexts.¹⁰⁶⁴

Classen, Howes, and Synott, for example, compare and analyze of diverse “rites of smell” elaborated around a wide range of activities and events including courtship/seduction, healing, hunting, communication with spirits, funerals, and raising crops. Intending to discover characteristics attributed to odors cross-culturally and how they contribute to the meaning of ritual events, they illustrate how fragrant and foul odors are imbued with moral and religious associations and not merely aesthetic preferences.¹⁰⁶⁵ Some of the cultural attributes of odors dealt with include 1) their integrative power, as scent is an excellent means of uniting participants in a ritual since all persons involved breathe in and are enveloped by same aroma, 2) their boundary-crossing nature, as odors symbolize transition by altering and shifting and have an “out-of-placeness” that aptly corresponds to the ambiguous status of subjects undergoing a rite of passage, and 3) their repellent nature, as foul odors are ritually employed to ward off unwanted presences (such as evil spirits), and bad smells are ritually controlled to prevent them from disrupting social/cosmic order.¹⁰⁶⁶

Susan Rasmussen investigates the “aromascape” of the Tuareg of Niger, West Africa, showing how scents and the idea of aroma play important evocative roles in human-to-human and human-to-spirit communication. She notes how aroma both marks and challenges boundaries, diminishes distance, and establishes indeterminacy (because of its deniability and ambiguity). In more formalized ritual, incense and perfumes play important mediatory roles in communication between humans and spirits

¹⁰⁶⁴ Classen, Howes, and Synott, *Aroma*, 3. Chapter 3 of this work, “Universes of Odour,” explores how smell is used to structure and classify different aspects of the world (time, space, gender, selfhood).

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 124–30.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 123–4.

(usually in more positive, protective ways), as these rituals involve transition, boundary definition, communication, and exchange.¹⁰⁶⁷

David Howes' integrative article, "Olfaction and Transition," is worth referencing in detail as it demonstrates the important, operative role-played by the sense of smell in different types of transition or category change.¹⁰⁶⁸ Modeled after Rodney Needham's well-known article on "Percussion and Transition" (1967), which addresses what seems to be a universal association between the use of percussion noise-makers and situations involving passage from one state/condition to another, Howes' study in the phenomenology of olfaction argues for a similar connection between olfaction and times or states of transition.¹⁰⁶⁹

Any number of contemporary cross-cultural examples for the connection between olfaction and transition can be cited. Howes notes the olfaction-transition connection among the Malagasy speakers of the Mayotte isle in the Comoro archipelago, Madagascar, where aromatics play a crucial role in the ceremonies initiating manhood/womanhood and completing wedding ceremonies, in the transition of social time at major calendrical holidays, and in the transition from an ordinary to an altered state of consciousness.¹⁰⁷⁰ Typical of Indo-Pacific societies, the Tanimbar Islands of

¹⁰⁶⁷ Susan Rasmussen, "Making Better 'Scents' in Anthropology: Aroma in Tuareg Sociocultural Systems and the Shaping of Ethnography," *Anthropological Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1999): 55–74.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Howes, "Olfaction and Transition." Other studies pertaining to ritual and olfaction include Alfred Gell, "Magic, Perfume, Dream . . .," in *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism* (ed. I. M. Lewis; London: Academic, 1977), 25–38; Seeger, *Nature and Society*; Alde Kanafani, *Aesthetics and Ritual in the United Arab Emirates* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983); Janice Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1989).

¹⁰⁶⁹ Rodney Needham, "Percussion and Transition," *Man* 2 (1967): 606–14. While a combination of visual, auditory, and olfactory stimuli are present in various forms of transition rites, Howes predicates his emphasis on the olfactory dimension on the basis of its gross traditional neglect among anthropologists. "Olfaction and Transition," 399.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 399–400.

eastern Indonesia also illustrate the olfaction and transition relationship. For example, newborn children are “smoked” over the household fire, and in the decomposition process of a corpse when the skull finally falls away from the skeleton, a whiff of cadaverous odor is believed to be the means by which the deceased “make themselves known” for the last time as human beings, after which they are treated as gods.¹⁰⁷¹ In the Trobriand Islands, the practice of magic to change the condition or disposition of another person is believed to achieve its effect by means of the sense of smell—its greatest potency in love and sorcery spells occurs when it enters through the nose. A classic example of the use of odiferous substances to communicate with the gods occurs among the Dakota of the Western Plains of North America, where a fragrant sweet grass is burned during a mystical rite to enhance the awareness and experience of ultimate unity.¹⁰⁷²

Howes explains the connection between olfaction and transition on three levels—logical, psychological, and sociological. At the logical level, there is an intrinsic relationship between olfaction and transition because smell, more than the auditory or visual senses, is a liminal sense.¹⁰⁷³ Since smells are most noticeable at boundaries (for example, an odor is noticed at the threshold of a room), they constitute and operate in the boundaries drawn between different realms or categories of experience.¹⁰⁷⁴ Howes says the rites and representations attached to birth and death most clearly reflect the

¹⁰⁷¹ Since death is thought to be contagious through the smell of the corpse among many Javanese, an incense called *menyan* is burned at funerals. Unpleasant unless honey is added, *menyan* was originally used to cover up the smell of the corpse but is now used to suppress the memory stimulated by the smell of death. Siegel, “Images and Odors,” 12-13.

¹⁰⁷² Howes, “Olfaction and Transition,” 399–401.

¹⁰⁷³ The liminal period is a transitional phase of life-crisis rites, which intervene the separation of an individual from his/her previous position in society and the aggregation of that individual to his/her new position. *Ibid.*, 404.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 401.

connection between smell and periods of liminality.¹⁰⁷⁵ Psychologically, Howes asserts that odors stimulate memory and obstruct discursive reasoning, making people ripe for the suggestion that transition is taking place. By triggering intense emotional and physiological changes, as previously explained, they create openness to and even motivation for category change.¹⁰⁷⁶ The “untranslatable” essence of aroma also contributes psychologically to a sense of transition. Elusive, indefinable, and often inarticulable, odors cannot be contained for long and frustrate attempts at rational categorization.¹⁰⁷⁷

At the sociological level, smells can synchronize the physical and emotional states of individuals in a corporate setting. In 1923, McKenzie commented on the harmonizing effects of smell in ritual contexts.¹⁰⁷⁸ From a psychoanalytic perspective, Largey and Watson explain that odors and the act of smelling are integral to achieving a sense of communion with the divine because, in contrast to the more alienating senses of vision and hearing, olfaction involves the actual imbibing of the stimulating particle, a more personal and intimate identification. The ritual burning of incense, therefore,

¹⁰⁷⁵ Case studies from Indonesia and Melanesia demonstrate the physical process involving the natural disintegration of the body after death functions as a liminal stage. For example, among the Olo Ngaju of southeastern Borneo and in the Tanimbar Islands a direct link exists between the condition of the body and the soul, as both participate in the same odor and are frequently referred to by the same name throughout the intermediary period. The time in which the corpse is reduced to bones is a liminal period for the human transition from the society of the living to the society of the dead, and smell is socially imaged as *the* transitional marker. By virtue of their effusibility in the atmosphere, smells are always “out of place” and crossing boundaries, and so they are especially able to express the experience of a “category muddle.” Gell, “Magic, Perfume, Dream . . .,” 27. Moreover, they cannot be defined in static terms, just like those undergoing a passage ritual. Howes, “Olfaction and Transition,” 405–6.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 402. Studies of percussion show a similar effect. Knauft, “On Percussion and Metaphor,” 189–90.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Despite many attempts, there is no objective, scientific, systematic classification of odors like there is for colors and tastes. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, iv. Borthwick demonstrates how smell, due to its dissolvability, lack of form, and resistance to classification, is rendered incapable of giving objective knowledge in Western metaphysics and thus thought to have little relevance in the formation of conceptual knowledge or in classificatory systems. Borthwick, “Olfaction and Taste.”

¹⁰⁷⁸ Dan McKenzie, *Aromatics and the Soul: A Study of Smells* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber Inc., 1923).

provides a symbolic representation of the invisible act of communion with the divine that is taking place. It also nurtures an intersubjective “we-feeling,” which undermines a detached, atomized, objectified awareness of others.¹⁰⁷⁹ Borthwick asserts that when odors are simultaneously inhaled and shared by more than one person, they are part of a social experience and form a basis for relationship between subjects. Inhaling an odor during a ritual, then, is an act that symbolically represents both communion and community.¹⁰⁸⁰

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL FUNCTION

What we now know about the physiological impact and sociological significance of olfaction bears directly on the issue of ritual incense use in the ancient Near East and aids in providing an interdisciplinary rationale for its universal use in religious contexts. The use of incense means different things in different times and places, but the same practice occurs the world over. This suggests there is a more fundamental basis for the cultic incense use than any one symbolic value of the odor, smoke, or substance itself. Common to the existing studies is an emphasis on the aesthetic and utilitarian functions of incense. The pervasive, all-consuming fragrance of incense was naturally used in a fumigatory or purificatory sense to counter offensive or “dangerous” odors,¹⁰⁸¹ but we must be cautious in attributing to the ancients our modern hygienic and deodorizing scruples. The suggestion that incense was used to do away with the stench of the

¹⁰⁷⁹ Gale Peter Largey and David Rodney Watson, “The Sociology of Odors,” *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972): 1021–32.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Borthwick, “Olfaction and Taste,” 132.

¹⁰⁸¹ The most common use of incense in other ANE cultures appears to be purification. Nielsen argues P attempted to limit that use in Israel by avoiding censer rituals, limiting the number of priests allowed to burn incense, reducing the number of materials that could be used, and prohibiting the private use of holy incense. This implies common use in Canaanite rituals and Israelite popular religion. Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 87–8.

burning flesh of Israelite sacrifices does not fully correspond to the biblical accounts, as the incense altar was not located in the immediate vicinity of the altar of burnt offering (Exodus 30:6; 40:5, 26), and incense was added to grain and not animal offerings (Leviticus 2:1).¹⁰⁸² The general view in scholarly literature is that the pragmatic and pleasing nature of incense together explain its extensive occurrence in ANE religious cult, but there are other basic functions that help explain the important place of aromata in the religious life of the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Israelites.

As early as 1580 AD, Michel de Montaigne observed that incense helps to inspire religious devotees, creating an atmosphere of sacredness conducive for contemplation:

I have often noticed that [scents] cause changes in me, and act on my spirits according to their qualities; which make me agree with the theory that the introduction of incense and perfume into churches, so ancient and widespread a practice among all nations and religions, was for the purpose of raising our spirits, and of exciting and purifying our senses, the better to fit us for contemplation.¹⁰⁸³

A less appreciative stance suggests that incense was burnt in all forms of primitive worship because the heavy, intoxicating smoke of burning incense brought on religious ecstasies.¹⁰⁸⁴ Thanks to the work of medical researchers, biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, though, we now know more about the complex effects of incense on the human body/psyche. Because of the linkage between the olfactory

¹⁰⁸² Nielsen comments that the Babylonians sometimes sprinkled their meat offerings with incense, “maybe to soothe the odour of the offering and thus to make it even more pleasant to the gods.” *Ibid.*, 32. The application of *rêah nihôah* (he translates “odour of tranquilization”) to Israelite animal sacrifices is explained as an anthropomorphic survival from earlier conceptions of deity eating the sacrificial “meal.” *Ibid.*, 76. Anthropological evidence for culturally conditioned odor hedonics provides another explanation for burning flesh/grease products as smelling “good” (see “Function of Olfaction in Interpersonal Relationships”).

¹⁰⁸³ Michel de Montaigne, *Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), 135.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Roy Genders, *A History of Scent* (London: Hamish, 1972), 19. Bartley suggests early religious ceremonies utilized environmental odors to invoke multi-modal visions and awakenings [Howard S. Bartley, *Perception in Everyday Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 154], yet there is no scientific research that I am aware of suggesting any of the relatively small number of ingredients used in the manufacture of ancient and modern incense have hallucinogenic properties.

system and the limbic system, strong smells have the power to activate an involuntary rush of emotion/memory and inhibit logical reasoning. This is the “Proustian” sense of being transported to another time and place. The distinctive odor of incense or any other strong, distinct scent (such as a whole burnt offering) in a religious ritual context, then, is ideal for inducing and motivating a mystical or spiritual experience of communion or communication with the divine for two reasons: 1) it moves the participant from thinking to feeling, and 2) it transfers them back in time, so to speak, to prior transcendent encounters. The nostalgic effect of significant olfactory experiences in worship, assuming they were positive, would draw individuals back for more.¹⁰⁸⁵

Research demonstrates that the effect of smells on the emotions and memory is somewhat idiosyncratic, as odors conjure up very different associations among different individuals. At the same time, odors are a culturally inscribed or “coded” communication. Evaluations of odor are acquired early on through experience and shaped by individual learning histories, which are embedded in the structure of one’s socio-cultural surroundings. The cultic use of incense as well as other olfactory-based sacrifices would have a conditioning effect upon an entire culture. Moreover, with the exception of some small percentage of individuals suffering from anomia (inability to smell) or hyposmia (decreased ability to smell), a worshipping community is united by the collective experience of any boundary-crossing aroma, as the human instrument of breathing (the nose, not the throat in ANE perceptions) cannot be easily sealed off from the olfactory environment in the same way eyes can be instantly closed. The simultaneous inhalation of the invisible airborne chemical by members of a religious group produces and reinforces a sense of community cohesion, identity, and unity. An

¹⁰⁸⁵ See Vannini, Waskul, and Gottschalk, *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture*, 94–8.

olfactory environment that collectively permeates the human frame and attaches to absorbent materials such as clothing has the ability to effectively fuse people together in a shared “we” experience.

In addition, the dynamic aspects of smell symbolism deriving from the fragrance of incense or other sacrifices, in addition to visually-ascending incense smoke, contribute to the sense of transition or category-change taking place as human-divine contact is being established in worship. This may explain why incense offerings often took place at liminal times of the day (morning and evening).¹⁰⁸⁶ From a spatial perspective, the Israelite temple had three spheres of holiness: the outer court with the altar for burnt offerings that was designated for regular Israelites, the inner Holy of Holies containing the ark and accessible only to the high priest, and the middle zone with the menorah, table, and incense altar that priests could enter.¹⁰⁸⁷ Holy incense was mandated in the intermediate region between the general populace and the LORD’s manifest presence, and we might presume the regular incense offerings within this region wafted out into the courtyard to mingle with the pungent “sweet-smelling” aroma of animal sacrifices to create a unique and sacred smellscape. From a different perspective, Akkadian royal inscriptions frequently mention the ritual application of fragrant anointing oils to thresholds and the use of aromatic wood to construct doorways of palaces and temples. Does the transgressive nature of smell factor into this fixation with creating pleasant smells in these “pass-through” spaces, and is there any religious significance attached to this practice? We know sweet-smelling liminal spaces serve

¹⁰⁸⁶ A visual basis for the symbolic function of incense may explain the deficit in ANE prescriptions for incense offerings at night, when the smoke ascending to heaven would be wasted.

¹⁰⁸⁷ The outer area represents people reaching up to God, the inner sanctum represents God reaching down to humans, and the place in between is a place of two-way communication and reciprocal activity. Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 73.

apotropaic functions in other cultures and periods,¹⁰⁸⁸ but we can only project the same for the ANE.¹⁰⁸⁹ The application of olfaction in spiritually ambiguous, “in-between” places may not be coincidental. Moreover, this may be true for the use of anointing oil in commissioning ceremonies (such as the priestly dedication in Exodus 30:30), where individuals transition from one category to another.

Both ancient and modern civilizations have utilized incense in religious ceremonies, but the purpose of incense attested by these same cultures is quite diverse. From a purely functional perspective, which need not diminish the symbolic significance of ritual incense use (for apotropaic, propitiatory, purificatory, and mediatory functions), these sacred rites of smell not only involve sensory pleasure and serve the practical purposes of overpowering or masking unpleasant smells, but the memory-sparking, emotion-provoking odor of incense fuels a personal and corporate experience of spiritual union and exchange. Just as scent is invisible yet tangibly known, the unseen divine presence is perceived, in part, through olfactory-based rituals.

¹⁰⁸⁸ For examples, see Dorland, *Scents Appeal*, 187.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Nielsen suggests, without evidence, the priest’s smearing of the sanctuary doors with cedar resin/oil during the Babylonian New Year’s festival was an apotropaic act designed to keep the spirits away. Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 32.

CHAPTER 6: THE FUNCTION OF OLFACTION IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

Having considered the role of olfaction in the ritual activity of the ANE, attention must be given to how the sense of smell factors into the social space of interpersonal relationships. Webs of family, kinship, marriage, friendship, neighborhood, and business relationships serve as the basis of society, and ANE olfactory dynamics influence these patterned relationships between individuals and groups. Historical and cultural investigations of smell do not attempt to answer the question of what scents existed in the past, for chemical compounds existing in varying concentrations are everywhere and always have been. Rather, modern historical and social science research has focused attention on how smells were and are perceived. The foundational assumption is this: smells are intrinsically meaningless, but because of social and cultural constructions, people are socialized into ideas of fragrant or foul.¹⁰⁹⁰ So smells are imbued with cultural meanings.¹⁰⁹¹ Modern psychological studies have demonstrated some measure of plasticity in adults' odor hedonics due to a Pavlovian stimulus contingency, but the fundamentals of odor hedonics are clearly acquired in childhood through individual and cultural experience.¹⁰⁹²

¹⁰⁹⁰ Synnott, in *The Body Social*, quotes Hamlet: "There is nothing either fragrant or foul, good or bad, but thinking makes it so." *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 190. "The 'odour of sanctity,' for instance, may be sweet to Christians and repellent to everyone else. Smelling a rat may be pleasing if you are a detective." Brant, "Fume and Perfume," 446.

¹⁰⁹¹ "There are very few universal good and bad tastes, pleasant and unpleasant sounds, beautiful and ugly appearances. Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so aroma is in the nose of the beholder, and so forth." Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 114.

¹⁰⁹² Frank Baeyens, and Amy Wrzesniewski, "Toilet Rooms, Body Massages, and Smells: Two Field Studies on Human Evaluative Odor Conditioning," *Current Psychology* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 77-97.

The idiosyncratic nature of the sense of smell helps explain its prominent application in varied aspects of interpersonal relationships. Odors are a public, shared experience. Scent can be both pervasive and ephemeral, and it produces personal and subjective reactions.¹⁰⁹³ It defies objective evaluation and representation in words and pictures, as demonstrated by the lack of a specialized, independent vocabulary or scientific classificatory system. A subliminal stimulus that can function beneath conscious perception, smell often goes unnoticed, yet when a disagreeable odor is perceived, the nose cannot be shut in the same manner eyes may be closed. Hearing something that one does not want to hear through the ears is similar to smelling something “bad” through the nose, as neither organ has a “closing” feature like the eyes. The significant difference, though, is that nose is closely associated with breathing, and breathing is and always has been considered a most basic element of life.¹⁰⁹⁴ Because the boundaries of the human frame are permeable and smell actually enters you, olfaction has an intrusive character. The invasive nature of scent is also transgressive, as both aromas and stench may cross boundaries, turn corners, and permeate walls. The sense of smell, more advanced in animals, is nonetheless powerful for humans who may perceive potent smells at some distance, like it or not. For this reason, it has been considered more apt in identifying spiritual truth than the “superficial” sense of sight.¹⁰⁹⁵

Because of the link between the olfactory system and the limbic system, smell has strong spontaneous and reflexive effects on memories and emotions, whether positive or negative, and this visceral experience often transcends or supersedes logical

¹⁰⁹³ Almagor, “Odors and Private Language.”

¹⁰⁹⁴ See Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 124–5.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 7.

reasoning in a way that is different than other forms of sensory perception.¹⁰⁹⁶ Synnott calls smell a “potent wizard” in this respect and an effective tool for self-glorification and other-depreciation.¹⁰⁹⁷ Additionally, studies have shown the effect of aromas on work performance, personal well-being, and sexual relations.¹⁰⁹⁸

The combined effect of the anatomy, physiology, and psychology of olfaction factors into its role in ANE interpersonal relationships along two important lines: 1) as a means of knowing (a revelatory role),¹⁰⁹⁹ and 2) as a means of stereotyping (a judging role). In *The Body Social*, Synnott identifies three types of smell: natural body odor (such as sweat), manufactured odor (such as perfumes), and symbolic odor.¹¹⁰⁰ The first two categories pertain to the revelatory, diagnostic role of olfaction for a person’s identity or condition, whereas the third is strategically leveraged to create and recreate typecasts for individuals or whole groups of people. The literal use of olfaction in evaluating or diagnosing others based on smell will be considered first and then the symbolic stereotyping function.

¹⁰⁹⁶ “Personal odors do not, as vision does, give us information that is very largely intellectual...they make an appeal that is mainly of an intimate, emotional, imaginative character.” Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (vol. 3, 6 vols.; Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1921), 82.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Synnott, *Body Social*, 187, 192.

¹⁰⁹⁸ See William S. Cain, “History of Research on Smell,” in *Tasting and Smelling* (ed. E. C. Carterette and M. P. Friedman; Handbook of Perception 6a; New York: Academic, 1978), 197–229; Steve Van Toller and George H. Dodd, eds., *Perfumery: The Psychology and Biology of Fragrance* (New York: Chapman & Hall, 1988); and Vroon, *Smell*.

¹⁰⁹⁹ FN Harvey investigates the late antique Christian use of sense perception, specifically olfaction, as a means of religious knowledge. More specifically, olfaction served an epistemological function to reveal unseen aspects of the divine-human relationship. Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 77. This was a shift away from the religious significance of aromatics to establish or reinforce the divine-human relationship.

¹¹⁰⁰ Synnott, *Body Social*, 182.

REVELATORY FUNCTION

All humans emit and perceive smells, which is one of the reasons it has such a powerful, universal role in social interaction. Often overlooked, most people are unaware of their own odor fingerprint, though they regularly notice others' scent.¹¹⁰¹ Natural body odors, including sweat, odors from orifices, and sexual odors convey the essence of a person's identity. In the ANE, the positive personal odor of another as an identifying mark for another is suggested in an OA letter where a political servant of the king of Mari indicates that he regrets the absence of "the smell of my master" in his house (RHA 35 71:3). This metaphorical language of respect seems to reflect an underlying cultural point of view whereby an individual is known via his aroma. More figuratively, the scent of a beautiful girl's hair is associated with aromatic oils in the NK "The Two Brothers."¹¹⁰² This "fluid of the gods" phraseology is common in Egyptian texts, which frequently discuss divine scent, whereas the Hebrew Bible offers no clear indications of God's personal aroma despite other anthropomorphic conceptions of him.¹¹⁰³ The Egyptian "Satire on the Trades" highlights occupations known for their foul smell: the smith, farmer, stoker, and cobbler/leather-worker.¹¹⁰⁴ No similar olfactory castigation of certain vocations are known from Akkadian and Hebrew texts (which does

¹¹⁰¹ See chapter 5 of Dorland's *Scents Appeal* for many examples of ancient/pre-industrial recognition that each individual has a unique odor determined by diet, age, sex, health, and character, status, morality. Dorland, *Scents Appeal*.

¹¹⁰² Miriam Lichtheim, "The Tale of Two Brothers (1.40)," in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 1, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 1.40:187; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II: The New Kingdom* (vol. 2, 3 vols.; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973), 207.

¹¹⁰³ P. A. H. de Boer argues it was not an unknown or preposterous concept. de Boer, "An Aspect of Sacrifice."

¹¹⁰⁴ Miriam Lichtheim, "Dua-Khety or the Satire on the Trades (1.48)," in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 1, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 1.48:123-4.

not necessarily mean that was not the case), but the identification of Jacob's garments as smelling like Esau, who worked in the outdoors (Gen. 27:27) may provide some indication that certain professions had a distinctive aroma in Israel.

Akkadian love lyrics make joke of a woman's unwelcome flatulence and warn about the smell of her armpit (Lambert Love Lyrics 122 col. B 12, 17). The disgusting smell of urine upon a treaty-breaker's breath is given as a curse in a NA treaty (Wiseman Treaties 603-5). Conveying the opposite, erotic Hebrew love lyrics speak of the maiden's clothes as exuding the fragrance of Lebanon's cedars (Song 4:11), and more intimate yet, her breath is said to be like apples (7:9). The two Hebrew metaphorical usages of olfaction for the kinaesthetic sense to indicate intimate distance (Judges 16:9 and Job 14:9) brings to mind the social theory of proxemics first expounded by cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall.¹¹⁰⁵ He examined the influence of space in interpersonal communication, suggesting intimate space exists within 1.5 feet of an individual where olfactics play a profound role. Further study of spatial relationships in these early periods may lend more or less support for the idea that an intimate relationship involves imbibing the scent of another individual.

Classen, Howes, and Synnott demonstrate how non-Western cultural greetings and interchanges associate one's smell with one's essential self. Among Ongee of the Andaman Islands, the tip of the nose is touched to refer to "me," as it represents the olfactory organ and one's odor, the means of defining the individual self. In India, the traditional method of greeting is to smell a person's head. The Ongee, greet with "How is your nose?" not "How are you?"¹¹⁰⁶ Olfactory discernment functions well in personal

¹¹⁰⁵ Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, 131–64.

¹¹⁰⁶ Classen, Howes, and Synnott, *Aroma*, 113–14.

greetings because smell is carried by the breath of life, it renders an involuntary emotional effect on the recipient, and it invokes a more intimate perception than vision, touch, or hearing because it is actually assimilated into the body. For these reasons, people in many (perhaps most) cultures practice the perfuming of one's surrounding layer of air in a characteristic way to render a scent impression that is not only recognizable but also agreeable.¹¹⁰⁷

The aesthetic use of natural and manufactured fragrances (perfumes) as odorants was vital to and for the divine-human exchange, as already seen with religious ritual, but it was also important in interpersonal relationships from the earliest times.¹¹⁰⁸ Along with body decorations, a fundamental element in expressing personal identity, perfuming the body is a cultural tradition evident among ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Israelites.¹¹⁰⁹ The Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic provides a literary window into cultural practices such as body perfuming with fragrant oil which is treated as commonplace alongside such images as wearing new clothes, throwing a stick, kissing one's wife, and disciplining one's child (Gilg. XII 17, 36). The ingredients of and usage instructions for the holy anointing oil given in Exodus 30:22-33 indicate personal application for non-ritual use was common, otherwise the prohibition would be irrelevant

¹¹⁰⁷ Georg Simmel, "Culture of Interaction: Sociology of the Senses," in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (ed. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone; London: Sage, 1997), 118.

¹¹⁰⁸ A perfume is generally considered any natural or manufactured fragrance intentionally applied to give the human body, food, objects, and living spaces a pleasant scent. In providing archaeological evidence for perfume in the ANE, Green suggests perfumery had more to do with dry skin and the social convention of smelling attractive than masking displeasing odors, at least for Mediterranean antiquity. Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 21.

¹¹⁰⁹ The Egyptians demonstrated great sophistication in the use of artificial fragrances. For example, hieroglyphics on the walls of the temple at Idfu present a recipe for the preparation of the "twice-good" perfume known as *kyphi*. Its principle ingredients were honey, wine, cyprus, grapes, myrrh, broom, stoenanthe, saxifrage, saffron, juniper, cardomom, patience, and calamus, and these were ground in smooth consistency put through a fine sieve to make the most odorous part of it into a paste with the addition of oasis wine. Cf. William Kaufman, *Le Grand Livre des parfums* (Paris: Minerva Vilo, 1974). Le Guéner, *Scent*, 35.

(v. 32-3). The Song of Songs includes, among other sensory depictions of the beautiful maiden, the fragrance of her oils as superior to all kinds of luxuriant spices (4:10). Similarly, Egyptian instructions mention aphrodisiacal functions of personal anointing, as the fragrance of myrrh upon a man has seductive power.¹¹¹⁰

The literal use of the olfactory sense to discern a person's natural or contrived odor is stressed in the highly literary pericope of Genesis 27, where smell becomes the penultimate means of identity discernment for Isaac's eldest to receive the blessing, yet even then, it is susceptible to manipulation. Interestingly, the physical act of olfaction is unique compared to other senses in terms of its sensitivity and longevity. Odor molecules glide back into the nasal cavity behind the bridge of the nose where they are absorbed by the mucosa containing five million receptor cells which fire impulses to the brain's olfactory bulb or "smell center." The neurons in the nose are constantly replaced about every thirty days, which differs from neurons in the eyes, or ears, which, if damaged, are irreparable. Thus, the sense of smell is less susceptible to injury or to the impairments of old age.¹¹¹¹

Multiple examples of olfactory discernment in Akkadian medical texts involve the *āšipu*, a healing expert whose diagnostic and prognostic handbook included both "magical" duties (exorcism) and the "medical" treatment of ailments (though even these undertakings might also address the spirits whose activity produced the problem).¹¹¹² These practitioners made home visits and used their senses to observe clinical

¹¹¹⁰ Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III: The Late Period* (vol. 3, 3 vols.; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973), 171.

¹¹¹¹ Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses*, 10.

¹¹¹² To illustrate the complementary intersection of medical and magical treatment methods, see CT 23 36:58ff where a *šiptu* (an incantation, spell, or charm used for apotropaic or healing purposes) immediately follows. Though cryptic from our perspective and not explicitly olfactory in reference, it bears direct symbolic associations with the prior affliction.

symptoms, laying hands on their patients, testing their temperature, noting the color of feces and urine, watching movement, listening to breathing and bowel sounds, and smelling the odor of such things as urine, breath, ears, and infected wounds (AJSL 36 81:50; AMT 23,1:11; CT 23:36:58, 64; AMT 34,5:5; Köcher BAM 3 iv 14; AMT 52,9:5; Köcher BAM 268:3').¹¹¹³ Anthropological accounts suggest strong-smelling aromatic medicines and remedies such as fumigation in the Akkadian medical texts were believed to expel or repel the disease-causing demons.¹¹¹⁴ The diagnostic function of olfaction takes on a spiritual dimension in a collection of Akkadian incantations/exorcisms, where foul stench of evil spirits is compared to a rat-dung infested basement (CT 16 34:215).¹¹¹⁵ Akkadian medical texts are inimitable for the ANE with respect to odor evaluations in magico-medical practice. The Hebrew Bible provides a somewhat comparable set of diagnostic and therapeutic instructions for various types of skin disease (Leviticus 13). However, only sight and touch are used for identification and not smell.¹¹¹⁶ The psalmist's reeking wounds come close, but this appears to be a symbolic evaluation more than a medical one (Ps. 38:5).

In interpersonal relationships, the human olfactory sense has a revelatory function with respect to discerning another individual (either positively or negatively)

¹¹¹³ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine*, 8–9. To date, olfaction is still considered a useful and important diagnostic tool in modern, western medical practice. See Dorland, *Scents Appeal*, 195–8. I found it interesting that with all of the references to stomach, digestion, intestinal, and anus problems, which include symptoms of flatus, there is no reference to foul odor given there. R. Campbell Thompson, "Assyrian Medical Prescriptions for Diseases of the Stomach," *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 26, no. 2 (1929): 7–92.

¹¹¹⁴ In chapter 8 of *Scents Appeal* ("Fragrant Elixers"), Dorland demonstrates the importance of olfactory diagnoses and treatments in ancient, medieval, and modern pre-industrial cultures of the Amazon, Africa, Asia, and New Guinea. Unpleasant or putrid-smelling odorous materials or herbal remedies are often used to repel diseases/spirits and cure the afflicted. Dorland, *Scents Appeal*, 183–95.

¹¹¹⁵ For anthropological examples of good and evil spirits being associated with fragrance and stench, see Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 94–6.

¹¹¹⁶ Perhaps more texts would reveal a diagnostic function of olfaction in Israelite society.

through literal smell and, in specialized contexts, diagnosing his/her physiological condition. More conspicuous in ANE texts, though, is the use of olfaction to both discern and project the “real” moral character/nature of another person or group. In this way, smells have a derived meaning where the moral categories of “good/bad” or “holy/evil” are built on the operative presupposition that “what smells good *is* good, and what smells bad *is* bad.” This heuristic approach applies to the words, deeds, character, reputation, and moral essence of others.

JUDGING FUNCTION

Description turns into prescription as smell is translated from physical sensations to powerful symbolic assessments.¹¹¹⁷ Attributing a malodor to another (whether literal or figurative) is a highly effective means of creating, enforcing, and reinforcing stereotypes. Competing parties have been doing this to each other throughout history, with the dominant class characterizing itself as pleasant-smelling or inodorate and the subordinate one as foul-smelling.¹¹¹⁸ Moral categories of “good/bad” or “righteous/evil” are symbolically used to construct and undergird class, race, gender, and age stereotypes that serve as a scapegoat for the antipathy of another individual or group.¹¹¹⁹

Social historians have shown how various ethnicities have been the brunt of olfactory labeling to reinforce racial inferiority, such as the Jews under Hitler’s regime. For example, in *How Race is Made*, Mark Smith tracks the manufacture of offensive sensory stereotypes from the late 18th century to the late 1950’s by southern whites to

¹¹¹⁷ Anthony Synnott, “A Sociology of Smell,” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 28, no. 4 (1991): 444.

¹¹¹⁸ Classen, “The Odor of the Other,” 192.

¹¹¹⁹ This has been noted by 20th century novelists such as George Orwell who writes that the “real secret of class distinction in the West . . . is summed up in four frightful words . . . The lower classes smell.” George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), 159.

justify slavery, segregation, and other forms of racial oppression.¹¹²⁰ Women have been the brunt of scent-typing as well, often in relation to the odor of menstruation. Classen summarizes the more complex olfactory symbolism applied to sub-categories of women in the West: 1) sluts and prostitutes are associated with stench, 2) maidens and wives or mothers have pleasant, non-threatening smells, and 3) the corrupting influence of attractive seductresses associated with sweet and spicy fragrances.¹¹²¹ Corbin shows the widespread role of odor as an icon of social identity and difference in mid-18th century France, where the rich and ruling class expressed a lowering threshold of tolerance for stench, as seen in public health policy, urban regulations (pertaining to waste, burial, etc.), and town planning,¹¹²² and Brant's survey of 18th century travel writing demonstrates the use of smell as "an index of cultural difference and measure of contempt."¹¹²³

Anthropologists document how symbolic olfactory codes are used in different cultures to express and regulate cultural identity and difference.¹¹²⁴ The pastoralist Dassanetch of SW Ethiopia, for instance, have perpetuated a rigorous olfaction class division with the Dassanetch fishermen, who are characterized as foul-smelling, like fish. Despite the fact that the fishermen regularly enter the water of the river, they are said to

¹¹²⁰ Mark M. Smith, *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 2006).

¹¹²¹ Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 86–94. For more on gender and smell, see Constance Classen, "Engendering Perception: Gender Ideologies and Sensory Hierarchies in Western History," *Body & Society* 3, no. 2 (1997): 1–19; "The Essence of Femininity," chapter four of Dorland, *Scents Appeal*; Classen, Howes, and Synnott, *Aroma*, 162–9; Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk, *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture: A Sociology of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 139–42; Synnott, *Body Social*, 201ff; and Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1985), 114.

¹¹²² Trades that caused unpleasant odors (including tanning, fulling, dying) were moved outside the walls, with cemeteries, hospitals, and butcher's shops. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, 100.

¹¹²³ Brant, "Fume and Perfume," 456.

¹¹²⁴ For theoretical framework, see Almagor, "Odors and Private Language."

perpetually stink.¹¹²⁵ Meanwhile, the herders perpetuate the “positive” smell of cattle upon their bodies by washing their hands in cattle urine, smearing manure on the men’s bodies, and rubbing ghee on nubile girls and fertile women as a form of perfume.¹¹²⁶

Classen summarizes how the Suya of Brazilian Mato Grosso symbolically distinguish both gender and age through odor classes. Adult men who live in the men’s house in the village plaza are “bland” or inodorate (the highest degree of culture), old men/women are “pungent,” boys and girls are “strong smelling,” and women and the tribal leader are “very strong smelling,” the lowest degree of culture. Here olfaction establishes degrees of culture and socialization, with adult men who live in the men’s house of the village being dominant while women are low-ranking because they threaten the men’s ideal social life and are associated with nature because of their fertility. The tribal leader, surprisingly, is also “strong smelling,” but this is due to his association with nature an anomalous status in a conformist society.¹¹²⁷

Among the Kapsiki and Higi of north Cameroon and north-east Nigeria, social stratification and discrimination is mediated through cultural definitions of dirt and cleanness and olfactory labels. This small-scale society is divided between the normal Kapsiki and the malodorous “blacksmith” class—those who work with forging metals as well as other technical and ritual specializations including music, divination, magic/medicine, pottery, leatherworking, and funerals. The low status on the social hierarchy is thought to be related to their role as undertakers working with the quintessential vile odor—the decaying corpse.¹¹²⁸

¹¹²⁵ Almagor, “The Cycle and Stagnation of Smells,” 114.

¹¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹¹²⁷ Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 85–6.

¹¹²⁸ Van Beek, “The Dirty Smith.”

As seen in these examples, smell functions as a stereotyping device to delineate the superiority of one group or the hierarchical relationship of society. While there is some empirical basis for different races and social groups having different characteristic odors due to diet and genetics, “It is evident in most such cases that the stench ascribed to the other is far less a response to an actual perception of the odour of the other than a potent metaphor for the social decay it is feared the other, often simply by virtue of its being ‘other,’ will cause to the established order.”¹¹²⁹

Having demonstrated culturally and historically that odor valuations for the “other” provide a form of moral “branding” that justifies attitudes and practices of bigotry on the basis of economic status, ethnicity, gender, and/or age, let us consider how ANE texts do or do not reveal a similar stereotyping function.

In exploring the sexual and economical subordination of women in archaic, patriarchal states from the earliest written history (4th millennium BCE), Lerner provides no evidence of marginalization through olfactory stereotypes.¹¹³⁰ Similarly, Bahrani’s investigation of sexuality and gender conceptions in the historical documents and archaeological ruins of the ANE heralds no specific examples of gender-based typecasting through odor in Assyro-Babylonian society.¹¹³¹ Additionally, this investigation of olfactory-based lexical terms in Akkadian and Hebrew produces little empirical basis to suggest the sense of smell was utilized to propagate gender stereotypes or hierarchies, contrary to evidence from other cultures and periods.¹¹³² Derogative

¹¹²⁹ Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 80.

¹¹³⁰ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University, 1986).

¹¹³¹ Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*.

¹¹³² Constance Classen, “Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses,” *International Social Science Journal* 49, no. 153 (1997): 409.

references are made to the offensive smell of a woman's flatulence and armpits in a somewhat baffling Late Assyrian literary text dealing with love lyrics between Marduk and Ishtar, but this negative olfactory description runs counter to the enthusiastic response of the male towards this visibly attractive woman.¹¹³³ Similarly, negative smell does not appear to factor into descriptions of the "other" along age lines. The NK Egyptian reference to an insult invoking the bad-smelling breath of a youngster (deity) may insinuate youth were symbolically associated with repellent breath, or it may provide an example of a mixed metaphor that united two or more different slurs including negative olfaction *and* youthfulness (which may not have been associated) for a heightened affront.¹¹³⁴

On the contrary, there is evidence that perceptions of the female include fragrant aromas, at least in the erotic imagery of Song of Songs, where the maiden's perfume, garments, and breath entice her male lover (Song 1:12, 4:10-11, 7:9). He too, is characterized by pleasing scents, as his oils arouse the maidens. This corresponds with an Egyptian mention of the man's aphrodisiac—fragrant myrrh.¹¹³⁵ While women were associated with gardens, spices, and pleasant scents in the ANE,¹¹³⁶ scent-laden depictions were attributed to men as well, suggesting that the context of erotic, sexual love is a more significant factor than gender in these instances. The sensory images of the seductress in Proverbs 5 and 7 include deceptive taste (5:3-4), touch (5:20, 7:13, 18), hearing (7:5; 14-21), and sight (7:10, 16). Additionally, depictions of the temptress

¹¹³³ See Lambert Love Lyrics 120 col. B 12, 122 col. B 9, 17.

¹¹³⁴ "Horus and Seth" in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II*, 216.

¹¹³⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III*, 171.

¹¹³⁶ For rabbinic interpretations, see Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 97.

as having sprinkled (ניי) her bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon (7:17) match modern, Western descriptions of the alluring immoral woman whose exotic, spicy fragrance lures the unsuspecting. However, characterizations of the prostitute in prophetic writings like Jeremiah 3-4 and Ezekiel 16 center on visual features such as clothing, jewelry, and makeup without providing any suggestion of odor, contra the sociological theory that harlots were associated with stench.¹¹³⁷

In contrast to gender and age, the symbolic application of malodor to distinguish socio-economic classes has more empirical basis in the ANE. For example, the Egyptian “Satire on the Trades” casts several occupations in negative olfactory terms—the metal smith who works the forge, the toiling farmer whose swollen fingers reek, and the reed collector who works among and acquires the smell of foul-smelling marshes.¹¹³⁸ The cobbler, too, because of his work with nauseating vats of oil used with tanning animal hides.¹¹³⁹

Harvey documents how pleasing fragrances provided a means for differentiating social classes in classical antiquity, as “the degree to which one could control that environment indicated levels of wealth, status, and power.”¹¹⁴⁰ Green highlights how the employment of ritual fragrance was a means of reinforcing social groupings in ancient Israel. The unique juxtaposition of prescriptions for priests and proscriptions for regular Israelites in Exodus 30:22-26 suggests the use of both anointing oil and incense was commonplace among the populace. However, the Israelite priests are given exclusive

¹¹³⁷ See Classen’s recapitulation of the theory in *Worlds of Sense*, 88.

¹¹³⁸ Lichtheim, “Canonical Compositions,” in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. Hallo and Younger), 1:123.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. Hallo and Younger), 1:124. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II*, 169.

¹¹⁴⁰ Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 192.

access to a specific aromatic recipe thus segregating this group. As the only ones allowed to wear this fragrance, they stand apart by their scent as a group holy and elected by God.¹¹⁴¹ The professional perfumer/apothecary mentioned here (Exodus 30:25,35) is elusive in description but would have come from a priestly family (1 Chronicles 9:30, Nehemiah 3:8). Other depictions of this business either provide no clarity or suggest otherwise (Ecclesiastes 10:1; 1 Sam 8:13), according to Green.¹¹⁴² Additionally, she argues, the four narratives centered on priestly authority or reassertion of power after insurrection¹¹⁴³ draw attention to themes of authority, exclusivity, and restriction. The proper application of fragrant incense in the hands of legitimate priests functions symbolically as a powerful form of apology and appeasement.¹¹⁴⁴ The priestly command of fragrance in Israel distinguishes their status and power, perhaps similarly to the Mesopotamian kings' exclusive possession of rare, expensive, aromatic building materials publicizes their rank and sovereignty.

The majority of symbolic olfactory references to the “other” as a means of exclusion/distinction represent personal or political stereotyping more than gender, age, and class. The evil-smelling “other” may refer to an ethnic foreigner or an “insider” who already is or becomes a social outcast because of his actions. In this way, the frequent Hebrew references employing various forms of the verb *באש* (“to stink”) are figuratively applied to communicate the odious and repulsive nature of the individual or collective

¹¹⁴¹ Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 71.

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹⁴³ Leviticus 10 (Nadab and Abihu), Numbers 16 (the rebellion of Korah), Numbers 17 (the plague narrative after the rebellion), and 2 Chronicles 26 (Uzziah's encroachment upon the temple).

¹¹⁴⁴ Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 77–83.

group.¹¹⁴⁵ Because literal applications of the term frequently reference something dead, dying, or rotting (Ex. 7:18, 21, 8:10, 16:20, and Is. 50:2), Green suggests the objectifying application to people is designed to imply they are already dead or in some state of decomposition to the rest of society, and that disgust is uniquely engendered among the majority, the ruling class, or the leadership.¹¹⁴⁶ In each instance, there is a jockeying for power and some presumption of weaker and stronger parties. In the same way a literal foul odor that is perceived by the human body's olfactory system initiates an immediate visceral reaction of disgust and avoidance, the figurative Hebrew expression "to stink" involves performing some shocking, reprehensible deed that evokes the ire and wrath of a more powerful other, and this always presumes imminent conflict (see Chapter 7, "The Function of Olfaction in Literature").

First millennium Akkadian royal correspondence confirms a similar usage of negative, olfactory-based idiomatic expressions involving the socio-political standing of individuals or parties.¹¹⁴⁷ Often, "evil-smelling" words have been spoken about the king (PRT 47:3; ABL 460:4), to the king (ABL 290:6; 498 r. 9; 716:27, r. 3; 1374:12; BIN 1 22:6, 31), or in the palace (ABL 283:10, r. 5), but in one letter from Ashurbanipal to the people of Babylon, the king implores the people not to make their reputation stink to him (ABL 301:22). By the same token, the NK Egyptian model letter, "The Craft of the

¹¹⁴⁵ Individuals receiving this designation include Jacob (Gen. 34:30), David (1 Sam. 27:12), Absalom (2 Sam. 16:21), and groups of people include the Israelites (Ex. 5:21; 1 Sam. 13:4) and Ammonites (2 Sam. 10:1/1 Chr. 19:6).

¹¹⁴⁶ Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 95.

¹¹⁴⁷ NB/LB letters reflect the idiomatic expression applies in other contexts as well, as slander in the form of "odorous/bad" words are spoken against workers by locals (YOS 3 19:21), to the *šangu* (chief temple administrator) about an individual accused of theft (BIN 1 43:18), and about other individuals who are being slandered (BIN 1 22:6, 31; 75:13; CT 22 155:11).

Scribe,” applies the phrase “You have made my name stink” in a direct quote related to the internationally-active scribe’s reporting role.¹¹⁴⁸

The symbolic application of malodor has political connotations, as demonstrated, but olfaction is also used in the ANE to communicate repulsion and disgust towards moral reprobates. In this way, the sense of smell is naturally the supreme human sense used to distinguish a person’s moral nature. In describing how the human senses are used as a means for subjective, moral judgment, Avrahami points out the deficit (compared to the other senses) in biblical examples where a human subject uses a smell metaphor for moral judgment. He cites Isaiah 11:3 as one exception, though it is applied to a future, utopic period.¹¹⁴⁹ Green explains this verse: “God’s chosen one will not be fooled by his eyes or his ears. He will be able to see past and hear through lies and deception and will know the truth.”¹¹⁵⁰ This sensory perception of ancient pedigree, she says, is a form of intuition or acquiring knowledge that confounds Western philosophical and psychological approaches, and it comes from none other than God himself.¹¹⁵¹ Scriptures convey the LORD’s prerogative to perceive the inner state of a person, group, or act through the sense of smell, as evidenced by the revulsive aroma of Israelite assemblies (Amos 5:21-2) that otherwise were deemed a sweet aroma to Him. This is the superior ability to perceive the things of the heart lurking beneath outwardly-

¹¹⁴⁸ James P. Allen, “The Craft of the Scribe (3.2),” in *Archival Documents From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 3, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 3.2:314.

¹¹⁴⁹ Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 172. She refers the reader to her and Kurek-Chomycz’s dissertations: Yael Avrahami, “The Sensorium and Its Operation in Biblical Epistemology with Particular Attention to the Senses of Sight and Smell [Hebrew]” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Haifa, 2008), 181–2; Kurek-Chomycz, “Making Scents of Revelation: The Significance of Cultic Scents in Ancient Judaism as the Backdrop of Saint Paul’s Olfactory Metaphor in 2 Cor. 2:14-17,” 10–2.

¹¹⁵⁰ Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 113.

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

appropriate actions. Ritchie compares the description of the “anointed one” or messiah’s superior olfactory ability with recent anthropological studies of olfactory discernment in African religion and the Islamic world where, for example, “chief sniffers” stand at the entrance to or kneeling area of the worship area to discern the intentions of would-be participants.¹¹⁵²

Egyptian theology attributes discernment to the olfactory sense, as the nose, eyes, and ears all work together to transmit situational realities to the heart, the decision-making center of a god.¹¹⁵³ One NA prophetic oracle that compares the goddess Ishtar to a keen-smelling animal provides another instance of divine discernment that transcends the visual surface of things (SAA 9 2.3 ii 10’, 20’). The goddess is said to have the ability to sniff out enemies of King Esarhaddon in the palace, for “Mankind is deceitful; I am the one who says and does” (l. 17’-18’). The sense of smell, sometimes considered the most animalistic of the senses, here detects what the eyes cannot see. Vision and hearing are later employed in this prophecy as a means of detecting imminent risk from deceptive traitors, as seen in other oracles, illustrating how all three senses work together.

In addition to Isaiah 11:3, if the verb *יִבְאֵשׁ* in Proverbs 13:5 is translated without emendation as “he stinks,” as discussed in the Hebrew lexical analysis, a symbolic olfactory judgment is levied at the wicked man who embraces falsehood. Similar castigations are rendered in Egyptian instructions for the person who leaves when chiefs enter (a questionable behavior around superiors),¹¹⁵⁴ is gluttonous (5,18 and 25,18-

¹¹⁵² Ian D. Ritchie, “The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11.3,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25, no. 87 (2000): 64-5.

¹¹⁵³ James P. Allen, “From the Berlin ‘Hymn to Ptah’ (1.14),” in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 1, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 1.14:121.

19),¹¹⁵⁵ is sexually loose (9,2),¹¹⁵⁶ is unavailable to his boss (10,12-13),¹¹⁵⁷ befriends fools (13,19-20),¹¹⁵⁸ is greedy (15,7),¹¹⁵⁹ prideful (27,17), shameful or foolish (25,18-19),¹¹⁶⁰ and arrogant (27,17).¹¹⁶¹ Added to this list of immoral actions and attitudes is drunkenness, uttering offensive words,¹¹⁶² and anger.¹¹⁶³ Further, an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription states “He whose odor is unpleasant shall be punished and ostracized.”¹¹⁶⁴ These examples illustrate how, in the ANE, moral order is revealed by moral odor, and character faults expressed through constructions of smell.

Mark Smith, in documenting the genesis and propagation of racial stereotypes in America from the late 18th to the mid-20th centuries, effectively illustrates why olfaction is the natural vehicle for constructing any negative stereotype: “Because of its associative function,” he says, “smell especially gave prejudice an emotional, irrational edge,” because it tapped into the gut not the mind and sequestered raw emotion not logical reflection.¹¹⁶⁵ So, he says, “Feeling, not thinking, was segregation’s best friend.

¹¹⁵⁴ Miriam Lichtheim, “Instruction of Any (1.46),” in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 1, 3 vols., *The Context of Scripture* (New York: Brill, 1997), 110. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II*, 137.

¹¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III*, 189 and 205.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹¹⁶² *Ibid.*, “Canonical Compositions,” (ed. Hallo and Younger), 1:112.

¹¹⁶³ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III*, 165.

¹¹⁶⁴ Louis Speleers, *Traduction, Index et Vocabulaire des textes des pyramides Égyptiennes* (Brussels, 1934), 89; cited in Le Guérér, *Scent*, 30.

¹¹⁶⁵ Smith, *How Race Is Made*, 143–4.

Cherished sensory understandings of race shaped white attitudes in visceral ways.”¹¹⁶⁶ By keeping the focus on feeling and not thinking, the sensory underpinnings of segregation took on a primitive quality that relieved most white southerners of the discomfort of thinking. While, by their own account, black people smelled distinct because of diet, cosmetic choice, their long work hours, and changing/bathing restrictions, whites of all classes reconstituted these contextual differences as biologically governed.¹¹⁶⁷ In response, black people challenged the assumptions with materialist, commonsense arguments for the olfactory disparities: “we might smell, but you would too if you had to live like this.” However, in doing so, “they were subjected to the indignity of an infuriating self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby masters argued that because blacks smelled their enslavement was appropriate.”¹¹⁶⁸ So, says Smith, “segregationists lived an illogical, emotionally powerful life that relied on gut rather than brain to fix racial identity and order society...when it came to race, ordinarily thoughtful people contorted reason to fit a system of racial segregation riddled with so many exceptions and nuances that it should have imploded under its own nonsense.”¹¹⁶⁹

Moreover, the projection of symbolic stench to construct any category of “other” for the purposes of group preservation has, as its basis, the “animalistic” nature of olfaction for the purposes of self-preservation.¹¹⁷⁰ Together, the ubiquitous quality of the

¹¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 115.

¹¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹¹⁷⁰ See Howes and Lalonde for the suggestion that the symbolic importance of smell and taste (the so-called “discriminating senses”) increase when social boundaries are threatened. David Howes and Marc Lalonde, “The History of Sensibilities: Of the Standard of Taste in Mid-Eighteenth Century England and the Circulation of Smells in Post-Revolutionary France,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (1991): 125–35.

sense of smell and the irrepressible, overpowering effect that disgust has upon the human psyche explain its prominence as a metaphor used to describe and prescribe the “outsider,” “other,” or enemy. That said, there are also occasions when the attribution of foul odor is turned upon oneself. Classen describes this happening: “Significantly, individuals who feel themselves to be cut off from society can sometimes attribute a foul odour to themselves. Such persons imagine that their bodies give off putrid emanations, often as a result of an inherent fault or evil within themselves, which cause them to be socially isolated.”¹¹⁷¹ This self-identification of “otherness” through a fetid smell is evidenced in ANE wisdom literature. In the Egyptian “Dispute Between a Man and His Ba,” a man compares his reputation to the reek of carrion and dead fish on a hot day and offensive-smelling natural habitats and their animals. Even more intriguing, his litany of self-criticism includes for comparison the foul stench of a wife who has been slandered to her spouse, the noxious identity of a child whose biological father is discovered to be one hated by his father, and the malodor of a town that is traitorous to the king.¹¹⁷² In Psalm 38, the nasty reek of open lesions serve a dual function to highlight both the sufferer’s physical misery and the emotional anguish experienced from his social isolation (the result of his disgusting condition).

Phenomenologically, the olfactory sense has a profound ability to distinguish and interpret the invisible, which renders it the perfect symbolic sense of discernment and judgment of both friend or foe and sanctified or stigmatized. The physiological nature of olfaction distinguishes olfaction among the senses for popular symbolic castigations of

¹¹⁷¹ This disorder is particularly found in Japan, she says, as timid young men constantly wash and deodorize themselves and avoid contact with others because they believe they emit extremely repugnant odors. Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 98.

¹¹⁷² Miriam Lichtheim, “The Dispute Between a Man and His BA (3.146),” in *Archival Documents From the Biblical World* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; vol. 3, 3 vols.; The Context of Scripture; New York: Brill, 1997), 3.146:323; *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (vol. 1, 3 vols.; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973), 166.

political nemeses, personal adversaries, and any other menace to the moral fabric of society. A stench-stereotype functions as the ideal metaphor of antipathy along ethnic, economic, political, and moral lines because smell, of all the senses, has the most direct link to the limbic portion of the brain, where instinctive, involuntary, visceral reactions are formed.

CHAPTER 7: THE FUNCTION OF OLFACTION IN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

To this point, olfactory references in ANE literature have been examined for information about the religious, political, and social world of ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Israelites, but modern and postmodern literary criticism provides another lens with which to examine these texts. Many authors of ANE literature chose, whether consciously or not, to incorporate olfactory references and themes to further fulfill “literary”¹¹⁷³ or “rhetorical” functions for their texts, and a literary approach to ANE literature helps to elucidate these functions, though there is some disagreement about what this means or entails.¹¹⁷⁴ The terms “literary criticism” and “literary theory” are applied in biblical studies for the range of methodological approaches to the Bible that share a common commitment to “a close reading of the exact wording and inner working of the text, and an understanding of the text as in some sense dynamic rather than static or fixed.”¹¹⁷⁵ “Literary” approaches have been distinguished from so-called “historical” approaches because they bracket questions of history, authorship, and other related concerns to focus on the autonomous text and how its words and language play a central role. Holland contrasts the “historical” paradigm (the historical critical method

¹¹⁷³ The term “literary” is here applied in the sense of a marked style intended to create a particular effect.

¹¹⁷⁴ This is one of the most potentially ambiguous terms in the field of biblical studies. Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, “Literary Criticism,” in *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (3rd ed., rev. and expanded.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 105.

¹¹⁷⁵ Margaret M. Mitchell, “Rhetorical and New Literary Criticism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (ed. J. W. Rogerson and Judith Lieu; New York: Oxford University, 2006), 617. For a history and assessment of literary approaches in biblical literature, see Duane Frederick Watson and Alan J. Hauser, *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography With Notes on History and Method*, Biblical Interpretation Series 4 (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994). For literary approaches in the humanities, see Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted, eds., *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Blackwell’s Companions to Literature and Culture 22; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

including textual, source, tradition-historical, form, redaction criticism, canonical criticism and sociological analysis) with an emerging “literary” paradigm that embraces a set of assumptions and approaches commonly associated with critical literary theory, especially “New Criticism,” though it is also inclusive of other approaches that either directly challenge the historical paradigm or provide plausible alternatives (such as literary, rhetorical, narrative, reader-response criticism, reception theory, structuralism, deconstruction).¹¹⁷⁶

“Literary theory” was originally applied with respect to the historical study of Scripture now known as “source criticism.” Gradually, in the early to mid-20th century, there were more attempts to understand the author’s intention through a detailed analysis of rhetorical elements and the literary structure of the text. In his 1968 Presidential Address to the Society of Biblical Literature, James Muilenberg called scholars to move beyond form criticism to pay close attention to the literary features and elements of biblical texts in their present literary form. This seminal address spawned a new school of biblical scholars with heightened literary sensitivity. Their numerous scholarly works sometimes interchanged the terms “literary” or “rhetorical” in contradistinction with traditional, “historical” approaches.¹¹⁷⁷ Today, “literary theory” or “New Criticism” is used in a broad sense for any attempt to understand biblical literature in a way that parallels the interests and theories of modern literary critics who focus on the message and meaning as being inherent in the words themselves not in authorial

¹¹⁷⁶ Carl. R. Holladay, “Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible,” in *General Articles on the Bible, General Articles on the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus* (vol. 1, 12 vols.; The New Interpreter’s Bible; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 1136.

¹¹⁷⁷ For the debate about whether “rhetorical criticism” or “literary criticism” should be the umbrella category, see Watson and Hauser, *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible*, 4ff.

intention or historical, social realities.¹¹⁷⁸ These scholars seek to enter, understand, and address the dynamic “story world” inside the text.

The methodological approach called “Narrative Criticism” emerged in biblical studies as biblical scholars trained as historians started to listen and learn from colleagues in the humanities (especially English departments). Robert Alter’s *The Art of Biblical Narrative* exemplified the new focus on biblical narrative as narrative. Questions centered on word choice (repetition, sound play, syntax, etc.), pace of narration, movements of dialogue, varied interconnections within stories, shifts in time-scale, and the Bible’s highly laconic mode of narration—why does the narrator ascribe motives or designate feelings to some characters in some cases but not others, and how does the oscillation between omniscience and unobtrusiveness influence our reading of the text? The narrative criticism approach concentrates on the story being told and the events occurring within it, including their setting, and how the characters and plot develop.

Like narrative criticism, the literary approach called “rhetorical criticism” is text-centered. It investigates how an author communicates persuasively to win over an audience to a particular point of view or course of action. As such, it is connected to ideology (any representation of life is part of a social construction of reality)¹¹⁷⁹ and focuses on how symbols act upon people. “Rhetoric” is the communicator’s attempt to inform, persuade, and motivate. Rhetorical criticism demonstrates how literature is a vehicle for exerting this influence. Rhetorical devices leveraged to this end may include parallelism, chiasm, alliteration, irony, sarcasm, cynicism, paronomasia, allegory, hyperbole, metonymy, and metaphor. Despite the prominent application of rhetorical

¹¹⁷⁸ Soulen and Soulen, “Literary Criticism,” 106.

¹¹⁷⁹ See Berger and Luckman for theory on the socially constructed world. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Repr.; New York: Irvington, 1980).

criticism to the Hebrew Bible, Hallo surveys in “The Birth of Rhetoric” the comparably slow application of rhetorical criticism to cuneiform texts, issuing a programmatic statement for further work despite the challenges.¹¹⁸⁰

The basic assumption underlying narrative criticism and rhetorical criticism of the biblical texts is that they are, for the most part, well composed,¹¹⁸¹ demonstrating a “conscious artistry”¹¹⁸² through narrative art, rhetorical technique, and aesthetic interests.¹¹⁸³ Because the same may be said of Akkadian literary works, the tools, strategies, and methodologies of literary analysis can be applied to ANE literature to explicate various aspects of rhetoric and aesthetics.¹¹⁸⁴ A study of Akkadian and Hebrew olfactory references contextually with an eye to narrative art, literary features, and rhetorical devices (especially figurative, metaphorical language) reveals how often olfactory references fulfill artistic and persuasive functions. Descriptive, nuanced olfactory imagery deepens the reader’s appreciation for and engagement with the text. Rhetorically, the metaphorically-expressed sense of smell furthers persuasive aims, whether ideological, propagandistic, or didactic. Without rehashing the literary analysis already performed in the Akkadian and Hebrew lexical analyses, let me summarize and

¹¹⁸⁰ William W. Hallo, “The Birth of Rhetoric,” in *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics* (ed. Carol Lipson and Roberta A. Binkley; West Lafayette, Ind.: Parlor, 2009), 25–46. For an example of tentative application to ANE texts, Meynet’s *Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric* provides a few brief, concluding examples of his rhetorical approach to Ugaritic and Babylonian texts. Roland Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement series 256; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 312–14, 316–18.

¹¹⁸¹ Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis*, 169.

¹¹⁸² Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 36.

¹¹⁸³ In literature, aesthetics pertains to the value of the language for its own sake. Recently, biblical scholars have called the field to not miss the “artfully constructed playfulness of language.” Rhiannon Graybill, “Literary Criticism, Literary Theory, and the Bible,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie; vol. 1; Oxford: University Press, 2013), 1:522.

¹¹⁸⁴ With the exception of lexical texts, which catalogue vocabulary, and perhaps the Akkadian terrestrial omens, which itemize cause-effect relationships in a straightforward fashion, most genres cited in the Akkadian lexical analysis, demonstrate some rhetorical intent.

highlight some of the ways this ANE literature demonstrates the use of olfaction for aesthetic and rhetorical functions.

AESTHETIC FUNCTION

Among the various forms of sensory imagery prominent in ANE literature (visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, and kinesthetic), positive and negative olfaction plays an important evocative role.¹¹⁸⁵ The Hebrew Song of Songs revels in the sensory pleasures associated with a physical expression of human love. The explosion of multi-sensory imagery in a pastoral garden setting includes blossoming fragrant henna, the ripening of aphrodisiacal, sweet-smelling pomegranates and mandrakes, and a lush proliferation of aromatic trees, myrrh, and aloes. Botanical metaphors tantalize every human sense, and olfaction is not left out. The airborne fragrance of one lover's oils compare to the metaphorical aphrodisiac of his name while the woman's perfume wafts forth from the sachet of myrrh between her breasts. The scent of her oils supersedes that of every exquisite type of spice, her garments are likened to the memorialized cedars of Lebanon, and, more intimately yet, her breath has the pleasing fragrance of apples. As seen here, the use of images from the tangible world of sensation enriches and intensifies the affective impact of the poetry as it mnemonically awakens familiar memories and mysterious fantasies.¹¹⁸⁶

Several ANE narrative accounts utilize the sense of smell as an indispensable plot element connected with intrigue and suspense. In Genesis 27, the patriarchal account of Jacob's (and Rebekah's) usurping of Esau's blessing, the sense of smell is

¹¹⁸⁵ "Imagery" is the term used to account for the sensory details and figurative language used to evoke a feeling, call to mind an idea, or describe an object.

¹¹⁸⁶ Patrick Hunt makes the mnemonic argument in *Poetry in the Song of Songs: A Literary Analysis* (vol. 96; Studies in Biblical Literature; New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

instrumental in the tale, beginning with Jacob's savory meal presented to his aging father and culminating in the decisive diagnostic test of personal identity through olfaction. The narrator's use of verbal pacing and dialogue heightens the tension of the text as Rebecca hurriedly conjures up the means of deception and then as the elderly Isaac, lacking sight as a means of discernment, has his suspicions aroused. When summoned closer, the sense of touch supports his recognition of Esau, as does the taste of the delicious repast, yet he cannot escape lingering doubts about trickery. The sense of smell functions as the ultimate confirmation to Isaac who, when entering the zone of "intimate distance" for a fatherly kiss, inhales the smell of Esau and reaches his mistaken conclusion, pronouncing the blessing upon the wrong person despite the best of intentions.

The Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic, too, utilizes olfaction as a crucial plot feature. First, Gilgamesh's quest for immortality is foiled when the fragrance of the special plant of rejuvenation that he harvested from the ocean floor attracts the attention of a serpent, which glides out from the water while Gilgamesh is—ironically—bathing in it in order to steal the pleasant-smelling plant. Then, in the epilogue, Gilgamesh counsels Enkidu to avoid drawing attention to himself in his journey to the netherworld with several specific admonitions against such things as wearing clothing that would make him stand out, throwing a stick which might hit ghosts/spirits, producing sounds that would give him away, and wearing aromatic oils which would cause the spirits to gather around him. As the story plays out, Gilgamesh's experience-born advice is spurned and our lurking fears are confirmed. As with Genesis 27, the featuring of smell as a decisive plot element is enthralling for the reader. Likewise, the tension in the plot development of the Egyptian story of "The Two Brothers" hinges on the divinely fragrant hair lock that when stolen and taken to the sea, scented the water used to wash Pharaoh's clothing. This is

discovered after some hankering back and forth thanks to Pharaoh's finely-tuned sniffer and not the head launderer.

In other ANE texts, the inclusion of details involving the sense of smell increases the reader's engagement with and enjoyment of the text. This would be true for narrative references in Exodus 7-8 of the foul stench of the Nile with its dead fish, the reek of the piles of dead frogs, and in Exodus 16 of the rotten, maggot-infested manna. In all three instances, the olfactory reference was not textually imperative for meaning, as the author could have simply written that the fish died in the Nile, the dead frogs were piled up, and the manna was inedible. Instead, the additional layer of sensory particularization intensifies the experiential effect at a gut level upon any reader who has ever smelled rot or decomposition.¹¹⁸⁷

Non-narrative texts, too, exploit olfactory imagery in a way that adds to the reader's engagement and response. An Akkadian psalm to Shamash (BA 10/1 73) utilizes an olfactory metaphor to characterize the frightful state of the wicked man who is unable to enjoy the pleasing smell (not taste!) from a meal. Similarly, an Akkadian incantation (ASKT No. 11, p. 89) depicts the dreaded absence of the smell of food in prison. In contrast to olfactory deprivation, one Hebrew psalm renders a horrible consequence that is opposite that of sensory deprivation—the author of Psalm 38 mentions the foul stench of his own festering wounds in a gut-wrenching litany of sufferings that include not only physical decomposition but also social rejection.¹¹⁸⁸

Hebrew and Egyptian wisdom literature applies negative olfactory metaphors didactically

¹¹⁸⁷ The details also further the rhetorical aims of the text. See the Hebrew lexical analysis for explanations of the theological polemic against the Egyptian deities and warning against disobedience.

¹¹⁸⁸ Though it differs by virtue of its imprecatory thrust, Psalm 69 includes similar metaphorical descriptions of tangible and intangible agony minus any mention of literal or figurative "stench." Perhaps the phrase derives from a common stock of expressions that may be utilized as desired.

to teach the way of wisdom and righteousness. A cluster of proverbs or popular wisdom sayings in Ecclesiastes includes the olfactory metaphor of a small fly ruining a valuable perfume/ointment to illustrate the destructive impact of foolishness (10:1). In a context employing various forms of imagery, an antithetical couplet in Proverbs 13:5 contrasts the righteous man and the wicked one, rendering a foul smell towards the wicked person. Fueled by a didactic aspiration, popular maxims in Egyptian instruction literature (“The Instruction of Any” and “The Instructions of Ankhsheshonq”) apply odorous comparisons to discourage moral impropriety. One Babylonian popular saying (BWL 215 rev. III. 5-16) comments on how the pig makes the streets stink, but this has nothing to do with moral instruction. Rather, these humorous texts reflect a unique mix of wit and fable.

Some olfactory references seem to have even less direct bearing on the meaning of the text. For example, the metaphor of a string snapping when it “smells” fire adds an interesting but unnecessary element of literary texture in the narrative of Delilah’s manipulation and trickery of Samson in Judges 16:9). Similarly, in a gloomy discourse about the vulnerability of death, Job 14:9 indicates that a tree’s old, dry roots can revive when they “smell” water. Later, in a disputation speech with hymnic descriptions tapping into cosmology, meteorology, and zoology, the warhorse is said to be instinctively aware of the smell of battle from afar (Job 39:25). In cases like these cases, one wonders if the application of poetic language is simply the personal prerogative of the author to stylistically express concepts more vividly.

RHETORICAL FUNCTION

Unlike classical antiquity with its Greek and Latin handbooks on rhetoric, no treatises on the purposes and methods of rhetoric have survived for the ANE (if they

ever existed). However, there is a basic rubric for how a verbal message constructs authority, conveys credibility, and/or appeals to the emotions.¹¹⁸⁹ Traditional heuristics given by Greek philosophers identify three primary appeals of rhetoric: 1) *ethos*: trying to win over an attentive and receptive audience's trust by displaying expertise, virtue, and concern for their best interest, 2) *pathos*: engaging the hearer's emotions, seeking to establish credibility/authority and diminish that of alternate voices, and 3) *logos*: deductive or inductive rational argumentation. One or more of these methods may be implemented in order to reach the desired rhetorical goals, whether deliberative (a decision the audience needs to make), judicial/forensic (a judgment in favor of one party and/or against another), or epideictic/demonstrative (adherence to values or acceptance of the correctness of a proposition).¹¹⁹⁰

By virtue of its strongly visceral, emotive influence, the sense of smell is a natural, ideal persuasive tool in rhetorical compositions that are explicitly driven by a more ideological or propagandistic agenda. That is not to say that the olfactory sense would not factor into logical arguments designed to render a decision in favor or ongoing support of a position or person. Take, for instance, the Hebrew admonitory speech (Deut. 4) and pejorative psalm (Ps. 115) which use invective language to mock and insult the idea of worshipping foreign gods/idols crafted by human hands. These emotive anti-idol polemics draw attention to the sensory disabilities of rival deities, including that of smell, but in doing so, they level an intentional inductive argument amidst the “trash-talking”—the multiple sensory handicaps of these false gods add up to

¹¹⁸⁹ David A. deSilva, “Rhetorical Criticism,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie; vol. 2; Oxford: University Press, 2013), 2:274.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. McKenzie), 2:278.

a judicial verdict against their legitimacy.¹¹⁹¹ As another example, consider the Egyptian “Memphis Theology,” NA prophetic oracle SAA 9, and Hebrew oracle of Isaiah 11, all three of which appeal to *ethos* in exulting in the respective deity’s discernment and decision-making expertise through the sense of smell. References to pleasant-smelling building materials and other fragrant adornments in the palaces as per the Akkadian royal inscriptions were not just another means of gloating, they served a deliberate rhetorical function. Watts demonstrates how ritual rhetoric was employed for persuasive purposes in royal propaganda and temple texts, as pious kings invoked ritual adherence to historical tradition to authorize and reinforce their political power.¹¹⁹² This political propaganda utilized ritual spaces, practices, and even their smells as much as military successes to bolster their legitimacy. So, olfactory references in ANE literature can reinforce the credibility of the individual or deity being advocated by the text and build the logic of the appeal, but the emotive effect seems to be even more apparent.

Repugnant olfactory metaphors are often utilized in impassioned rhetoric for deliberative or epideictic aims, probably because they have a profound effect upon the tone of a text and the mood it creates within the reader. To illustrate, consider Esarhaddon’s vassal treaty with a whopping 254 lines of curses designed to motivate compliance to the terms of the deal. One loathsome olfactory image (breath smelling like urine) occurs amidst violent sensory images such as strangulation and being squashed like a fly (Wiseman 603, 605). The epilogue to the Holiness Code of Leviticus, too, presents a series of carefully structured curses that result from disobedience (ch. 26). In escalating fashion, the second to last curse (vv. 30-1) before the grand finale of

¹¹⁹¹ Avrahami demonstrates how human and divine punishment was met out by harming the senses and how sensory deprivation was linked to physiologically-inspired and culturally-determined prejudice and marginalization. Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 196–221.

¹¹⁹² Watts, “Ritual Rhetoric,” 39.

foreign exile utilizes ambiguity to produce a horrifying thought—the aroma of Israelite sacrifices may be eliminated because the worshipping community will be utterly decimated, their corpses stacked atop the pagan idols they mistakenly worshiped. Disturbing scenes of the destruction of Edom in Isaiah 34-5, of foreign invaders in Joel 2, and of the Israelites themselves in Amos 4 include olfactory elements, as God’s fury and wrath leave in their wake the uncontainable stench of unburied corpses and decimated inhabitations. The message is not just to be understood, it is to be felt—the LORD is not to be trifled with.

The allegory of a vineyard in Isaiah 5 compares Israel to a planted vine that produces nothing but worthless grapes. The choice of the adjective with an olfactory resonance (“stinking”) adds a layer of disgust to disappointment. In the end, this parable indicts the Israelites for producing bloodshed (visual) and a cry (auditory) instead of justice and righteousness. The interplay of sensory images hit the reader at every level. Accusations against the LORD in Isaiah 50 are answered with questions of his own and statement of his sovereign power to dry up the sea and make the rivers a wilderness. The additional reference to fish “stinking” for lack of water is an embellishment that not only brings to mind God’s sovereignty as evidenced in the Egyptian plagues but also invokes the olfactory sense for visceral reinforcement.

Other types of smells, besides that of death, feature in Israelite prophecy. Most of Hosea’s metaphors derive from family relationships (marriage and parenting), but a series of botanical metaphors are also rendered in in chapter 14 to describe divine restoration. The LORD’s love and healing drench Israel like dew, and Israel is compared to a tree with deep roots and young shoots. A reference to the pleasing fragrance of Lebanon compliments this analogy and stirs a longing for God’s redemption. In Jeremiah 48, a lengthy poem dealing with the judgment and destruction of Moab, an

extended metaphor based in ANE wine-making tradition compares Moab's self-arrogant complacency to undisturbed wine that is about to be separated from its dregs in the final stages of fermentation. The taste and smell that had remained unaltered for this lengthy period of time (neutral or positive smell?) is about to be changed forever as the LORD judges them.

Olfactory idioms, in addition to olfactory images, serve rhetorical purposes. The popular use of one particular olfactory idiom plays out frequently in ANE literature—the ritualistic divine “smelling” the incense/offerings of worshippers.¹¹⁹³ The narrative accounts of the post-flood happenings in Genesis and Gilgamesh spotlight aromatic ritual offerings given immediately after the protagonist's landing exiting the watercraft on dry ground. In both cases, the author deliberately chose to indicate the “smell” of the offering was the determining element and not its sight, taste, or the sound of confession, thanksgiving, worship, or some other form of verbal piety. Yes, this idiomatic expression is part of the stock language pertaining to divine-human relations, but one wonders if there is more at play here. In the biblical account, it is the “soothing aroma” (*rêah hannîḥōah*, a possible word play with the Hebrew proper name *Nōăḥ*) of Noah's whole burnt offering that produces the favorable reaction in God, and the LORD immediately expresses to himself the commitment not to destroy again in that manner. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the gods smell Gilgamesh's aromatic incense offering (whatever form it took) and hurriedly gather round like flies because they have lacked sustenance. In both cases there is indication of appeasement of divine anger following the aromatic

¹¹⁹³ The Descent of Ishtar indicates the dead came up from the underworld to smell the offering, Enuma Elish highlights Marduk's role in causing other gods to smell incense, the Erra poem speaks of the gods inhalation of incense and receipt of offerings, and multiple biblical examples involving divine acceptance of ritual offerings crisscross several genres, as already demonstrated.

exchange. Beyond the religious or theological applications, the insertion of ritual language may feed the art and rhetoric in ways we have yet to discern.

From a different angle, the Hebrew expressions “to be odious” and “to make oneself or another odious” are usually applied narratives as direct quotes and always when two factors are in play: 1) a setting presuming an extreme, violent reaction to some offensive act, and 2) situations involving power dynamics with a real or perceived stronger and weaker party. Though sometimes couched in terms of ethnic identity and political or national affiliation, the more fundamental issue behind this figurative, stock expression is a posturing of power dynamics and immanent threat to those who are abhorrent to a stronger entity. In the same way a noxious smell invokes an immediate and involuntary reaction to turn away or in some other way eliminate the source of the reek, “to become odious” is to have an instantaneous and uncontrollable response that is deadset on extinguishing the source of the disgust. To be malodorous to a more powerful adversary is to have a death sentence: the foreigner Jacob fears violent retaliation from local Canaanites and Perizzite upon his minority clan (Gen. 34:30), the suffering Israelites wail about their loathsomeness to their ruthless slave master, Pharaoh (Ex. 5:21), the fledgling Israelites hear rumors of their abhorrence to the ominous Philistines (1 Sam. 13:4), Achish muses to himself that the fugitive David has earned the hatred and antagonism of his people (1 Sam. 27:12), the sons of Ammon recognize they have become noxious to the more dominant Israelites and brace themselves for punitive action (2 Sam. 10:6, 1 Chron. 19:6), and Ahithophel counsels the political upstart, Absalom, to make himself irreparably odious to his father (2 Sam. 16:21). The application of this idiomatic expression to the mouths of trepidatious

speakers, perhaps not accidentally in Samuel,¹¹⁹⁴ seems to be an intentional decision to use an olfactory-based verb instead of others like *סָנַא* (“to reject, despise”).¹¹⁹⁵

Akkadian royal letters, too, exploit idiomatic expressions with an olfactory sense (“odious words” or “odious name/reputation, if rendered etymologically) to further rhetorical aims. The context presented by these epistles involves some degree of emotional fervency, paranoia, dire circumstances, and (often) scrambling for allegiances. To illustrate this point, a more detailed literary analysis of three Akkadian letters than given in the Akkadian lexical analysis is provided here.

The NA letter ABL 283 demonstrates a thick layering of words, phrases, and imagery used to describe the chilling effect of slanderous accusations in the royal Assyrian court. Pfeiffer categorizes this letter within the rubric “The Court and the Officials,” and, more specifically, as an accusation text.¹¹⁹⁶ ABL 793, a parallel text, is almost identical with a few minor but significant differences. Most importantly, it is addressed to the king, whereas ABL 283 is dispatched to one of the king’s officials to obtain his assistance in petitioning the king on his behalf. The duplication of literary form, style, and expression in these two letters indicates this type of royal letter was not the flippant expression of an individual’s momentary thoughts but a carefully structured rhetoric designed to accomplish a particular aim.

The letter initiates with a rationale for Bel-ibni’s avoidance at the palace. His name had been slandered by a contingent of men from Elam seeking to further their own

¹¹⁹⁴ The narratives of 1 and 2 Samuel are no stranger to rhetoric. Consider persuasive speeches such as 1 Samuel 8:10-18 (Samuel’s lecture on the implications of a monarchy), 1 Samuel 25:23-31 (Abigail’s dissuasion of David’s rash response on Nabal), 2 Samuel 12:1-6 (Nathan’s parable of the lamb), and 2 Samuel 16:15-17:14 (two royal counselors competing for Absalom’s ear).

¹¹⁹⁵ Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 104.

¹¹⁹⁶ Robert H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Official Assyrian Letters Dating From the Sargonid Period (722-625 B.C.)* (American Oriental Series 6; New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1935), viii.

interests, and one enemy in particular had uttered and relayed “foul-smelling” words about him to the palace. This visceral, disgust-invoking olfactory term best captures the gravity of the situation, as it evokes the displeasure of all.¹¹⁹⁷ In light of what modern research has demonstrated about the socio-physiological effect of olfaction, it comes as no surprise that Bel-ibni kept his distance. Dreading the king’s just anger in response to this repugnance, Bel-ibni had stayed away from the Ninevah court, but his longing to return prompted this written appeal for the letter-recipient’s intercession to the new king. The hoped for outcomes include the following:

1. To be pardoned of any charges (l. 19 *šarru luzakkiannima*, “may the king [himself] clear me”), even as the offenses of many others in the past were forgiven (though Bel-ibni continues to allege his innocence of any wrongdoing).
2. To be summoned by the king into his presence (r. 19 *liššannima*, “may he summon me”), where he will kiss his feet and perform “the service of the king” with family and friends. Ultimately, Bel-ibni wants to regain the king’s favor as one of his servants who performs his will, even as he has been loyal in the past.
3. To be freed from public shame and humiliation among all who are connected to the court by the king’s very own declaration (r. 6-7 *ina pî šarri bêlia liḳḳabima ina êkalli lâ addallaḥ*, “let the very words of the king my lord form the command that I be not humiliated in the palace of the king my lord”).

It is in relation to this adamant concern for his reputation that the second olfactory reference in this letter appears. Bel-ibni is appealing to the king’s protection so that others at court would not “misconstrue my actions” (Pfeiffer) or “misrepresent my

¹¹⁹⁷ Examples of other adjectives besides *bīšu* that are employed to express negative “words” (*dibbū*) include *lašlaštete*, “valueless” (121:r. 5); *idububu(?)*, “false” (131:r. 7); *lâ šalmūti*, “not trustworthy” (240:13); *dibbi ša šāri*, “empty words” (301:3); *dibbī lā dibbī*, “not words” (403:10). On the flip side, positive adjectives include: *ṭābūtī*, “kind” (ABL 129:r. 21); *kūnnūte*, “reliable” (145:r. 8); *kāmanūtu*, “trustworthy” (282:r. 23); and *damqūte*, “good” (ABL 604:r. 10).

words” (Waterman), a literal translation being “may no one make my words stink in the palace” (r. 5 *mamma dibbā ina ēkalli lā uba’aš*). In light of the way negative olfaction works in interpersonal relationships, I suspect these particular expressions were chosen to communicate the sinister effect of slander. Just as a repulsive smell creates a negative predisposition and even stirs up hostile feelings in others, the false reports about him have brought disrepute, and he no longer wants to be despised among his brothers, the Babylonians (r. 10-11 “...I shall not be abased before the Babylonians, my brothers, I shall not hang my head”).

The letter concludes with a unique ending: r. 23 [*qâtâ šá^{amêlu}rab rêši bêli]ia aššabat la abâšu*, “I take hold [of the hands of the general my lord] (that) I will not be put to shame.”¹¹⁹⁸ The verb *abâšu* has been translated as a G durative 1cs with the *-u* subordination marker from the verb *bâšu* (“to be ashamed”). Though derived from a different homophonous root, there is a strong resonance with the prior two references to foul-smelling words. In fact, there is good reason to see this as an intentional play on words, as we find two of the *only* three occurrences of the root *bâšu* (“to be ashamed”) in Harper’s NA letters appearing right alongside various forms of the root *ba’âšu* (“to smell bad”), which are not-so-common themselves. To recap, when the Elamite pronounced “smelly” (*bîšuti*) words against Bel-ibni and sought to make Bel-ibni’s words “reek” (*ubâš or uba’aš*), it undermined his reputation not just to the king but also to the royal court, and as a result he wanted to escape from under that shame (*la abâšu*). Bel-ibni desires

¹¹⁹⁸ The expression “To take hold of the hands of someone” is not apparent in any of the court letters involving accusations. There is a reference to “the hands of...” in ABL 454 r. 10 near the end of the letter, but breaks make it unclear. It is interesting that the word *uba’iš* occurs just prior to this phrase with only a small break between. For discussion on idioms containing names of the human body, including *qâta* “hands,” see Oppenheim, “Idiomatic Accadian (Lexicographical Researches).” Oppenheim is antagonistic to literal translations: “word-for-word translations of idioms are simply wrong translations.” *Ibid.*, 252.

not only for his past to be cleared and his future service of the king to be secured, he also appeals for the redemption of his character in the present.

ABL 301 is peculiar with respect to its source and audience. Written in Assyrian characters but with an intentional Babylonian dialect, this letter comes from none other than King Ashurbanipal himself. It is an “open letter” directed to the people of Babylon as a last ditch effort to capture their support against his elder brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, who had compromised his position as Babylonian viceroy through sedition. The medley of rhetorical techniques deployed, such as open insults, compelling sensory imagery, subtle word plays, praise and threat, are intended to bring about a shift in the Babylonian’s political allegiance. While history shows the line of argumentation did not work, its intensity and design captures our focus, as the careful use of expressions and phrases heightens the emotional effect. Take, for example, references to the “words of wind” (*dibbī ša šari*) and “evil-smelling words” (*dibbī bišuti*) spoken by his “pseudo” or “false” brother (literally *lâ ahi*, “not brother”). Waterman renders the expression *dibbī ša sari* as “empty” words in the sense of lacking substance and effect, but one wonders if there is not intentional ambiguity here.¹¹⁹⁹ Perhaps there is an implicit but intentional association of Shamash-shum-ukin’s malodorous words with flatulence, another “windy” projection that had a known pejorative connotation in ancient Mesopotamia (see Lambert Love Lyrics 120 col. B 12, 122 col. B 9, 17).

In recounting Shamash-shum-ukin’s threat towards the king’s Babylonian supporters, the retaliatory nature of Assurbanipal’s rhetoric is clear. Apparently, Shamash-shum-ukin had menaced them with the idea/threat that he was going to make their reputation just as rancid as his own, an interesting posture of haughty self-

¹¹⁹⁹ Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 209.

awareness. Assurbanipal manipulates the Babylonian's with a reference to their current status as being unblemished . . . though in danger of besmirchment to him and to the gods. These repeated references to having a foul odor may be part of an attempt to sequester the powerful forces of disgust in the same way that the southern, white justification of slavery and segregation utilized an argument based on feelings not logic.¹²⁰⁰

The letter shifts gears to address the related subject of *biltu* (traditionally understood as tribute or tax). However, the problematic Akkadian has been deciphered in more than one way here. Pfeiffer translates as if the Babylonians' imminent stand with his adversary changes the nature of tribute, for Shamash-shum-ukin makes it more of an imposition and a sin against the essence of the oaths sworn before the gods.¹²⁰¹ Waterman understands the text as a reassurance that their past history need not imply mandated tribute in the present, though should they continue support his brother from this point on, that would change the situation and make them liable for it.¹²⁰² Moran, however, poses a different perspective based on his reading of BIL-*tu* not as "tribute" but as *piltu*<*pištu*, a well-attested word meaning "insult, reproach, scorn."¹²⁰³ If this is correct, there is a direct correspondence with the central thing at stake in the letter—the name/reputation of the Babylonians. That said, if Assurbanipal intends to address the subject of actual tribute obligations, then an allusion to "reproach and scorn" fits well with the context and adds fuel to his rhetoric.

¹²⁰⁰ See Smith, *How Race Is Made*.

¹²⁰¹ Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, 71.

¹²⁰² Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*, 209.

¹²⁰³ William Moran, "Assurbanipal's Message to the Babylonians (ABL 301), With an Excursus on Figurative Biltu," in *Ah, Assyria...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor* (ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph'al; vol. 33; Scripta Hierosolymitana; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 3:3323–4, see also Excursus 327–31.

As the letter nears completion, the king indicates their failure to submit to him as the higher authority would pollute or defile (*lâ tuṭannipā*) them.¹²⁰⁴ The verbal root is *ṭanāpu*, “to become soiled, spoiled,” and in the D stem “to soil, to spoil.” Aside from this instance, the word occurs in several other contexts, most notably Lambert Love Lyrics 215:14 (see lexical analysis), which makes a clear connection between this word and stench, as a pig’s defecation not only smells up the streets but pollutes (*[mu]ṭan-nipu*) homes. If the letter begins with mocking insinuations of Shamash-shum-ukin’s “windy words” being of the same caliber and effect as anal flatus, the conclusion takes a sobering turn, not unlike a parallel phenomenon evidenced in 18th century English political discourse where satire about the smell, noise, and gaseous nature of flatus took on comic form to highlight the transience, insignificance, and superficiality of attention-getting political oration. More serious in nature, though, references to “the stink of corruption,” a popular trope, were employed to invoke disgust as a reflex for the inescapable and loathsome nature of political vice.¹²⁰⁵ There is no way to prove whether similar undertones permeate this ancient Assyrian letter, but the possibility certainly exists. This letter ends with a request for a speedy response and a final curse against Shamash-shum-ukin (r. 17 *ak/gṣur sikipti Marduk*, “a wretch forsaken of Marduk”), leaving its recipients to weigh out some highly significant and emotional considerations as to the effect of their actions on their reputation and the implications of having a bad reputation. Implementing rhetorical techniques (including the use of loaded olfactory

¹²⁰⁴ There is also some disagreement over lines rev. 13-15 as to whether Assurbanipal writes this to compel them to not pollute or defile (*lâ tuṭannipā*) themselves with him anymore in the present/future (translating as a *ki*- object clause in the present tense) or if the given preterite form of the text should be taken in the sense of “If you have not defiled yourselves with him, then...” Ibid., in *Ah, Assyria...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor* (ed. Cogan and Eph’al), 33:326.

¹²⁰⁵ Brant, “Fume and Perfume,” 447.

imagery) to gain credibility and create prejudice against his opponent aids the judicial purpose of this letter, a judgment on the part of the Babylonians in favor of Assurbanipal over Shamash-shum-ukin.

The use of negative olfactory imagery in the OA letter Balkan 7 serves as one final example, as it factors into Anum-ḥirbi's polemic against Waršama, his ally, for not assisting him against Taišama, a neighboring town that took advantage of Anum-ḥirbi's weakness and vulnerability. Even though Anum-ḥirbi seems to be willing to reopen the borders between Mama and Kaniš for trade according to the terms of the old treaty, there is definitely a sense in which he remains particularly angered by what has transpired (not only the Taišameans' assault but Waršama's complicity). The language, style, and other characteristics of this letter reflect this displeasure. Consider the language at the beginning of the letter:

You wrote me: "the Taišamean is my slave; I shall take care of him." But do you take care of the Sibuhēan, your slave? Since the Taišamean is your dog why does he argue with other *šarrus*? Does the Sibuhēan, my dog, argue with other *šarrus*? Is a Taišamean *rubā'u* to become the third *rubā'u* with us? (ll. 4-16).¹²⁰⁶

In calling vassal kings "dogs," a common and vulgar expression intending to communicate a clear sense of inferior social standing, Anum-ḥirbi's agitation is apparent. The reference to the *rubā'um Taišamā'um* in line 15 instead of *šarrum Taišamā'um* was no doubt intended as a derisive, sarcastic jab, as the scribe of Mama distinctively uses *rubā'um* for independent kings and *šarrum* for vassal kings.¹²⁰⁷ Anum-ḥirbi uses an accumulation of rhetorical questions to make the point that Waršama is not taking

¹²⁰⁶ Balkan, *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi*, 8.

¹²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

responsibility to put his “dog,” the Taišamean king, in his place (like Anum-ḫirbi does with his “dog,” the Sibuhēan king).¹²⁰⁸

It seems as though Waršama’s failure to restrain or recompense the Taišamean is even more repugnant because it stands in contrast to the precedent of his actions. He not only keeps his present vassals on a short leash, so to speak, but he has demonstrated faithfulness to Kaniš in the past. Later in the letter, he recalls how Waršama’s father and predecessor, Inar, was once embroiled in a nine year siege which rendered him susceptible to the same type of attack, but Anum-ḫirbi saw to it that his vassals did not take advantage of Kaniš.¹²⁰⁹

The reference to smoke “stinking” seems to convey some of this indignation as well. Balkan adds a note to his translation of lines 28-29 (“to make smoke stink’ by burning corpses”) though this seems to be an arbitrary conclusion.¹²¹⁰ His reasoning, I assume, is that the unique expression “to make smoke stink” indicates smoke is not in and of itself bad, but rather the particular type of smoke created by burning human bodies is what makes it so deplorable.¹²¹¹ There is not, however, indications of this in the text, which simply states the country was invaded, twelve cities were destroyed, and

¹²⁰⁸ This feature has no parallels in any other OA or OB texts, with the exception of the familiar colloquialism in line 57: “are these (things) good in the sight of the gods?” (that is, “they are not good”). *Ibid.*, 24.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²¹¹ While burning muscle tissue is said to give off an aroma similar to beef in a frying pan, and body fat might have the smell of a side of fatty pork on the grill, the scent of burning bodies differs from a barbecue because the iron-rich blood still inside gives off a coppery, metallic component, the internal organs with high fluid content smell like burnt liver, skin has a charcoal like smell, and hair produces a sulfurous odor. Moreover, the bacteria inside decomposing bodies release methane byproducts, which, when burnt, produce a noxious stink. Emergency workers and survivors of war atrocities compare the smell of charred flesh as nauseating and sweet, putrid and steaky, or something like leather being tanned over a flame. Modern crematoriums heat bodies to 1,750 degrees Fahrenheit for two to three hours and feature smoke stacks and exhaust fans that remove almost all odor. Michelle Tsai, “Bar-B-You: What’s the Smell of Burning Human Flesh?,” March 26, 2007, n.p. Online: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/03/barbyou.html.

livestock were carried away. Based on what we know from military history, it is reasonable to assume smoke would have come from cities being razed and crops being burnt.

I would suggest that it was not the burning of bodies in contrast to urban dwellings or agricultural tracts that made the smoke of a distinctively foul aroma, but rather the especially offensive and shameful nature of the action taken, whereby an inferior party defied his place in society as a vassal to take advantage of the superior's weakness. The offense would be akin to having your servant stab you in the back or kick you while you are down instead of helping you up. It is, therefore, more reasonable to conclude that Anum-ḫirbi determined the smoke to smell foul not because it was inherently so, and not merely because it was indicative of a significant economical loss, but because it symbolically represented an unexpectedly devastating blow to his status.

Finally, while the scribe wrote with an unusual amount of sloppiness for a royal letter, with colloquial diction and some aberrations in the use of Assyrian words that suggest he was not a native speaker of Assyrian (unless he dictated very closely the words of King Anum-ḫirbi),¹²¹² it could be that this reflects the impulsive, reactionary nature of Anum-ḫirbi's response and *not* the outright incompetence or laziness of the scribe. Line 34 reads "Today you wrote me as follows..." Apparently Anum-ḫirbi didn't want to waste even a day in responding, so perhaps he did not permit the scribe to rewrite the letter.¹²¹³ After all that had transpired, he appears all too ready to let Waršama feel the full brunt of his frustration.

¹²¹² Balkan, *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi*, 18–19.

¹²¹³ Balkan suggests it may have been a scribal unwillingness to rewrite. *Ibid.*, 23.

In summary, a “literary” survey of ANE literature containing olfactory lexemes demonstrates the ancient author’s verbal artistry.¹²¹⁴ Aesthetically, the use of scented language in the plot and texture of the literature increases the reader’s investment and delight. Rhetorically (in the Aristotelian sense of persuasion), literal and metaphorical olfactory language in religious polemic and political propaganda appeals to authority (*ethos*), logic (*logos*), and *especially* the reader’s emotion (*pathos*) to persuade readers/hearers to make decisions, render judgments, or embrace a particular set of values.

¹²¹⁴ Admittedly, it is a “literary approach” more in the modern sense than postmodern one, as I have a particular interest in the socio-historical legacies of this ancient literature.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

*But while it is easy to follow historically the ability of poets and novelists to perceive and then paint the flesh and landscape in their uniqueness, it is much more difficult to make statements about the perception of odors in the past. To write well about this past perception of odors would be a supreme achievement for a historian because the odors leave no objective trace against which their perception can be measured. When the historian describes how the past has smelled he is dependent on his source to know what was there and how it was perceived. The case is the same whether he deals with odors perceived by lovers or those that help physicians recognize the state of the ill or those with which devils or saints fill the spaces within which they dwell.*¹²¹⁵

Whether the pleasing fragrance of incense or the abhorrent stench of rot, smells are elusive and do not endure the test of time—some may disappear within minutes, none can last a millennia. Any historical study of odors (and the olfactory sense which makes them perceptible) is dependent upon the acquisition and interpretation of textual sources, as smells leave no archaeological evidence. We may discover various implements related to perfumery and cultic incense burning or visual portrayals of the nose and related olfactory rites, but these artifacts and pictorial representations are themselves limited by identification, condition, and quantity. Though no written works containing a systematic classification of smells or sustained philosophical reflection on the senses exists, survives, or has been excavated for the ANE period, a lexical investigation of Akkadian and ancient Hebrew olfactory references (both literal and figurative) demonstrates these cultures upheld a general dichotomy of positive aromas and negative stench. This bifurcation characterized deities, humans, their relationship, natural substances, products, elements, features, and geographic regions.

¹²¹⁵ Ivan Illich, “The Dirt of Cities, The Aura of Cities, The Smell of the Dead, Utopia of an Odorless City,” in *City Cultures Reader* (ed. Malcomb Miles, Tim Hall, and Iaian Borden; Urban Reader 3; New York: Routledge, 2000), 250.

To “sense” is to “*make sense*,”¹²¹⁶ and olfaction seems to have been particularly instrumental in this regard. Because the human sense of smell, even with its relative inferiority compared to other species, can distinguish thousands of scents, perhaps a more elaborate classificatory scheme or “osmology” *will* be discovered with additional ANE material and research. That said, our inability to render scents in “objective” semantic categories (contrary to the other senses) frustrates the construction of a robust smell vocabulary, and this is just as true today as it was for the ancients:

The lexicon of smell is very limited and usually must work by making an adjective of the thing that smells. Excrement smells like excrement, roses like a rose, rotting flesh like rotting flesh. Sometimes we attempt description by saying that rotting flesh smells like feces, or that a perfume smells like a rose. What is missing is a specially dedicated qualitative diction of odor that matches the richness of distinction we make with the tactile as with squishy, oozy, gooey . . . Odor qualifiers, if not the names of things emitting the odor, are usually simple adjectives and nouns expressing either the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the smell, most of which merely mean bad or good smell . . . Olfactory and gustatory reduce us to saying little more than yum or yuck.¹²¹⁷

Based on this study of olfactory-based verbs, nouns, and adjectives in Akkadian texts and the Hebrew Bible, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that olfaction played a significant role in both cultures. Logical appeals to the sense of smell, sensuous metaphors, and a common stock of idiomatic expressions were artfully expressed to further ideological agendas. Peering past aesthetic and rhetorical functions in literature, we discover a crucial psychological and socio-cultural role for the sense of smell in religious ritual and interpersonal relationships. Ritual smells bond groups in very

¹²¹⁶ Dennis D. Waskul and Phillip Vannini, “Smell, Odor, and Somatic Work: Sense-Making and Sensory Management,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 53.

¹²¹⁷ William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 67. As a result, “Gustatory terms, such as sour, sweet, or pungent, usually double for olfactory terms. Olfactory terms themselves often derive from words referring to fire or smoke. Smell, reek, perfume and incense, for example, all have bases meaning to burn or smoke. Breath originally meant the smell of anything cooking or burning, and is derived from an Indo-European base meaning to boil. This suggests that odours produced through burning were the archetypical smell for our linguistic ancestors who, of course, attached far more practical and symbolic significance to fire than we do.” Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 52.

powerful ways and have an “other-worldly” way of stimulating spiritual experiences. As a means of knowing, the human olfactory system served a diagnostic, revelatory function and, symbolically, it was and always will be an effective social branding tool.

With respect to smell as a sense in the Hebrew Bible, Avrahami notes the relative paucity of biblical verses that mention smell, scents, or other olfactory words in relation to other senses.¹²¹⁸ The same could be said, perhaps, of the Akkadian, but a simple, truncated vocabulary is not necessarily the result of disinterest, as we have shown. On the contrary, “The long list of aromata testifies to the sophisticated use of aromata and incense materials in ancient Israel. She in no way lagged behind the other ancient cultures of the Middle East in that regard. The Israelites evidently loved fragrant odours as much as their neighbors did.”¹²¹⁹

Western thinking about the senses from Plato to Aristotle, through Christian thought, and to Hegel and Marx reflects divergent approaches toward the senses and their hierarchization. It confirms an oscillation between sense-positive and sense-negative attitudes and the relative superiority or inferiority of sense-knowledge with respect to reason.¹²²⁰ From an ANE perspective, the affirmation and elevation of the olfactory sense is seen in the Egyptian awareness of the nose’s profound ability to influence cognition and volition through the breathing of air¹²²¹ and the Israelite’s assertion that the supreme form of sensory perception comes through not through

¹²¹⁸ Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 103. She mentions as exceptions Ps. 115:4-7, Deut. 4:28, Gen. 27, Ex. 5:21 and 2 Sam. 16:21 (synaesthetic expressions linking smell and sight/hearing), Is. 11:3, and Gen. 31:35 and 45:5 (syntagmic associations of smell and sight).

¹²¹⁹ Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel*, 67.

¹²²⁰ Synnott, *Body Social*, 61–76.

¹²²¹ “The eyes’ seeing, the ears’ hearing, the nose’s breathing of air send up (information) to the heart, and the latter is what causes every conclusion to emerge...” Allen, “Canonical Compositions,” in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World* (ed. Hallo and Younger), 1:21.

seeing or hearing but through smelling.¹²²² The significance of the nose and its role in smelling is featured along with touch, hearing, sight, and taste in the Akkadian lexical texts.¹²²³

More work is yet to be done with respect to olfaction and the other human senses before rendering any judgment on the relationship and relative importance of the senses in the ANE context.¹²²⁴ This necessarily includes a thorough investigation of smell terminology in other ANE languages, such as Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Ugaritic.¹²²⁵ Additionally, while this study introduced a wealth of Akkadian primary source material that has not received adequate scholarly attention, that is not to say there is not more out there. Linguistic and literary studies may shed more light on the relationship of anger to smell and the etymologically similar words for smell/smelling, shame, and rejection. Narrative and rhetorical criticism is needed to consider the selection and function of specific aromatic substances mentioned in other texts not studied here, and further reflection must be done related to the absence of olfactory references or specific aromas/odors in texts where they might be expected.

In generalizing Seeger's idea that body decoration both expresses and enforces its particular sensory order, Howes suggests if the nose is decorated, olfaction must be

¹²²² "And he will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear" (Isaiah 11:3).

¹²²³ See the Akkadian lexical analysis of SIG₇.ALAM = *nabnītu*.

¹²²⁴ "An in-depth discussion of sensory perception in each separate language and culture would have to be conducted before grand comparison." Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 36.

¹²²⁵ Sumerian: *ir* / *ir.si.im* (*eṣēnu*, "to smell"; *erešu*, "smell, scent"), *u* (*ba'āšu*, "to stink"); *ḫab* / *ḫul* (*bīšu*, "malodorous, bad"; *bu'šu*, "stench"); Egyptian: *'ntyw* ("myrrh"), *ntr snṯr/snṯr* ("incense"), *idt* ("sweet savor, fragrance"), *ḫny* ("odious"), *ḫnm* ("smell, odor, smelly, fragrance"), *ḫnš* ("to stink"), *šnš* ("smelly"), *stj* ("smelly, fragrance"); Hittite: *ištaḫ*-(??) ("to smell"); Ugaritic: *rḫ* ("aroma"), Phoenician *rḫ* ("aroma?").

considered a “social faculty.”¹²²⁶ This invites more thorough assessment of how are the sense organs were decorated and treated in the ANE from archaeological and textual perspectives.¹²²⁷ Avrahami’s study of the senses in Scripture has effectively surveyed the biblical references to the nose, demonstrating its dual function as a smelling and (especially) breathing organ,¹²²⁸ but a full-scale, cross-cultural study of ANE words associated with nose would be illuminating.¹²²⁹ Also, a thorough assessment of the archaeological material evidence pertaining to smell, especially iconographic representation of the sense organs, particularly the nose and its adornment, would add greatly to the textual sources.

For example, we are intrigued by the prominent portrayal of the nose on Chalcolithic items thought to relate to the domestic cult. In the Golan, for example, more than 50 circular basalt pillar figures with shallow bowls atop (thought to be receptacles for propitiatory offerings) are sculpted with facial features that usually include an exaggerated nose and no mouth. Additionally, the nose is functionally applied in the “eye and nose” handles of pottery vessels and emblematically featured between the

¹²²⁶ With the people of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, “It is not the eyes that are the ‘windows of the soul’ for the Ommura, but the nose.” David Howes, “Sensorial Anthropology,” in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*, ed. David Howes (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991), 179. The nose plays a prominent role in other domains of the cultures of Papua New Guinea as an important way of knowing, though it remains subordinate to hearing. *Ibid.*, 175.

¹²²⁷ Harvey points out the symbolic ritual application of anointing oil first to the forehead and then to the sense organs, specifically the ears and nostrils (to open or attune the senses to the divine), but this is from the early Christian period. Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 2006), 70.

¹²²⁸ Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture*, 124–5.

¹²²⁹ For example, what more might we learn about the recognized custom in the ANE, especially in times of war, of inflicting damage on senses. Most often this gouging the eyes, but there are biblical references to cutting off the nose as punishment (Ezek. 23:25), which has a real effect on the senses of smell, impairing or destroying its functional ability. Avrahami suggests symbolic values as well, humiliating, shaming, and marginalizing the person who loses their sensory independence. *Ibid.*, 200–2.

horns of some earthenware.¹²³⁰ Epstein suggests the emphasis on the nose as the “seat of the breath of life,” and, hence, a symbol of life itself, explains its prominence in the domestic cult of agro-pastoral people preoccupied with the fertility of flocks and herds.¹²³¹ Other Chalcolithic finds, such as the anthropomorphic ivory statuettes from Bir es-Safedi near Beersheba, portray an unusually long nose that begins at the top of the forehead and extends to the bottom of the face and the absence of a mouth,¹²³² as is common in Mesopotamian statuettes from the Halaf period.¹²³³ A comprehensive assessment of facial features in ANE iconography would be a huge asset to our understanding of the sense of smell for this period.

For now, rather than trying to posture the relative dominance or marginalization of olfaction within a sensory hierarchy, a more fruitful path of research is to consider what we can learn about how meaning is invested and conveyed through it within respective ANE cultures, as potent sensory symbolism forms a sensory model by which people make sense of their world.¹²³⁴ Exploring how sensory experience is expressed and ordered by language necessarily entails attention to the seemingly insignificant aspects of sensory perception. This “micro-sociology,” the examination of the everyday mundane processes within human interaction in contrast to the study of major social

¹²³⁰ Claire Epstein, *The Chalcolithic Culture of the Golan* (IAA Reports 4; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1998), 170.

¹²³¹ *Ibid.*, 230–1.

¹²³² Thomas Evan Levy, “Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine. The Chalcolithic Period,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 49, no. 2 (1986): 93.

¹²³³ Nili Sacher Fox, “The Striped Goddess From Gilat: Implications for the Chalcolithic Cult,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 45 (1995): 220.

¹²³⁴ Classen, “Foundations,” 405.

structures and formations, produces a deeper and more accurate understanding of society and of cultural formations.¹²³⁵

The real life of society, provided in experience, could certainly not be constructed from those large objectivized structures that constitute the traditional objects of social science. It would break apart into a number of different systems, just as if a person consisted only of the large, differentiated and immediately recognizable organs and all the innumerable, diverse and complicated cellular processes, that have only been revealed by the microscope, were missing.¹²³⁶

Truly, “the possibilities for investigations into the field of the senses in culture are as endless as the ways in which the senses are combined and structured by different cultures.”¹²³⁷

¹²³⁵ Frisby, “Introduction to the Texts,” 9.

¹²³⁶ Simmel, “Culture of Interaction: Sociology of the Senses,” 110. Green, too, makes the case for studying the everyday olfactory quotidian of ancient peoples, as layers of meaning are drawn from everyday practice. Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 2.

¹²³⁷ Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abusch, I. Tzvi. "Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Mesopotamia." Pages 353–55 in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Edited by Sarah Iles Johnston. Harvard University Press Reference Library. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2004.
- Abusch, I. Tzvi, and Ann K. Guinan, eds. *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*. *Ancient Magic and Divination* 5. Boston: Brill, 2002.
- Achtemeier, Elizabeth. "The Book of Joel: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." Pages 299–336 in *Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature, Daniel, The Twelve Prophets*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. Vol. 7. 12 vols. The New Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Ackerman, Diane. *A Natural History of the Senses*. New York: Random House, 1991.
- Allen, James P. "From the Berlin 'Hymn to Ptah' (1.14)." Pages 20–21 in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- . "The Craft of the Scribe (3.2)." Pages 9–14 in *Archival Documents From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 3. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- Almagor, Uri. "Odors and Private Language: Observations on the Phenomenology of Scent." *Human Studies* 13, no. 3 (1990): 253–74.
- . "The Cycle and Stagnation of Smells: Pastoralists-Fishermen Relationships in an East African Society." *RES* 14 (1987): 106–21.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.
- Annett, Judith M. "Olfactory Memory: A Case Study in Cognitive Psychology." *Journal of Psychology* 130 (1996): 309–20.
- Annus, Amar, ed. *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World*. *Oriental Institute Seminars* 6. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010.
- Atchley, E. G. Cuthbert F. *A History of the Use of Incense in Divine Worship*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909.
- Avalos, Hector. *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East: The Role of the Temple in Greece, Mesopotamia, and Israel*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 54. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.

- Avrahami, Yael. *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 545. New York: T&T Clark, 2012.
- — —. “The Sensorium and Its Operation in Biblical Epistemology with Particular Attention to the Senses of Sight and Smell [Hebrew].” Ph.D. diss., The University of Haifa, 2008.
- Bachar, S. “Perfume in the Song of Songs: An Erotic Motif and Sign of Social Class.” *Shnaton* 15 (2005): 39–51.
- Bahrani, Zainab. *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Balkan, Kemal. *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi of Mama to King Warshama of Kanish*. Turk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından 7/31a. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1957.
- Bartley, Howard S. *Perception in Everyday Life*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
- Beaulieu, John C., and Elizabeth A. Baldwin. “Flavor and Aroma of Fresh-Cut Fruits and Vegetables.” Pages 391–425 in *Fresh-Cut Fruits and Vegetables: Science, Technology, and Market*. Edited by Olusola Lamikanra. New York: CRC, 2002.
- Beaulieu, Paul-Alain. “The Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus (2.123A).” Pages 310–13 in *Monumental Inscriptions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 2. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- Beckman, Gary. “The Siege of Uršu Text (CTH 7) and Old Hittite Historiography.” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 47 (1995): 23–34.
- Van Beek, Walter E. A. “The Dirty Smith: Smell as a Social Frontier Among the Kapsiki/Higi of North Cameroon and North-Eastern Nigeria.” *Africa* 62, no. 01 (1992): 38–58.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Repr. New York: Irvington, 1980.
- Biggs, Robert D. “Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia.” Pages 1911–24 in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Jack M. Sasson, John Baines, Gary Beckman, and Karen S. Rubinson. Vol. 3. 4 vols. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1995.
- Blome, Friedrich. *Die Opfermaterie in Babylonien und Israel*. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1934.
- Boddy, Janice. *Wombs and Alien Spirits*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin, 1989.

- De Boer, P. A. H. "An Aspect of Sacrifice: II. God's Fragrance." Pages 37–47 in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 23. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972.
- Boling, Robert G. *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible 6a. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1975.
- Borger, Rykle. *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Analecta orientalia 54. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1979.
- — —. "Die Erste Teiltafel der ZI-PA-Beschworungen (ASKT 11)." Pages 1–22 in *Lišān Mithurti: Festschrift Wolfram Freiherr von Soden zum 19.4. 1968 Gewidmet von Schülern und Mitarbeitern*. Edited by Wolfram von Soden, Manfred Dietrich, and Wolfgang Röllig. Vol. 1. Alter Orient und Altes Testament. Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1969.
- — —. *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons: Königs von Assyrien*. Archiv für Orientforschung. Beiheft 9. Graz: Weidner, 1956.
- — —. "Ein Omentext aus der Sammlung de Liagre Böhl." *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 11 (1954): 88–89.
- — —. *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*. Vol. 3. 3 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967.
- — —. "Zu den Asarhaddon-Verträgen aus Nimrud." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 56, no. 1 (1961): 173–95.
- Borthwick, Fiona. "Olfaction and Taste: Invasive Odours and Disappearing Objects." *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11, no. 2 (2000): 127–40.
- Bottero, Jean. "The Cuisine of Ancient Mesopotamia." *Biblical Archaeologist* 48, no. 1 (1985): 36–47.
- Brant, Clare. "Fume and Perfume: Some Eighteenth-Century Uses of Smell." *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 444–63.
- Brenner, A. "Aromatics and Perfumes in the Song of Songs." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983): 75–81.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Message of the Psalms*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985.
- Bryce, Trevor. *Hittite Warrior*. Oxford: Osprey, 2007.
- Bubandt, Nils. "The Odour of Things: Smell and the Cultural Elaboration of Disgust in Eastern Indonesia." *Ethnos* 63, no. 1 (1998): 48–80.
- Cagni, Luigi. *L'epopea di Erra*. Studi semitici 34. Roma: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente dell'Università, 1969.

- — —. *The Poem of Erra*. Vol. 1. Sources and Monographs. Sources From the Ancient Near East. Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977.
- Cain, William S. "History of Research on Smell." Pages 197–229 in *Tasting and Smelling*. Edited by E. C. Carterette and M. P. Friedman. Handbook of Perception 6a. New York: Academic, 1978.
- Cameron, George G. "The 'Daiva' Inscription of Xerxes: In Elamite." *Die Welt des Orients* (1959): 470–76.
- Caplice, Richard. "Akkadian Ud(d)û." Pages 62–66 in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim: June 7, 1964*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964.
- Caseau, Béatrice. "Christian Bodies: The Senses and Early Byzantine Christianity." Pages 101–9 in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium*. Edited by L. James. Aldershot: Variorum, 1999.
- — —. "Euodia: The Use and Meaning of Fragrances in the Ancient World and Their Christianization (100-900 AD)." Ph. D., Princeton University, 1994.
- — —. "Les Usages médicaux de l'encens et des parfums: un aspect de la médecine populaire antique et de sa Christianisation." Pages 74–85 in *Air, Miasmes et Contagion: les épidémies dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age*. Edited by S. Bazin-Tachella, D. Quéruel, and E. Samama. Langres: Dominique Guéniot, 2001.
- Cavigneaux, A. "Lexikalische Listen." Pages 609–41 in . Vol. 7–8. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 6. New York: W. de Gruyter, 1983.
- Cavigneaux, Antoine, Hans G. Güterbock, and Martha T. Roth, eds. *The Series Erim-Huš = Anantu and An-Ta-Gál = Šaqû*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 17. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1985.
- Civil, Miguel. "Ancient Mesopotamian Lexicography." Pages 2305–14 in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Jack M. Sasson, John Beaulieu, Gary Beckman, and Karen S. Rubinson. Vol. 4. 4 vols., 1995.
- — —, ed. *Ea A = Nâqu, Aa A = Nâqu, with Their Forerunners and Related Texts*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 14. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1979.
- — —, ed. *Izi = Išātu, Ká-Gal = Abullu and Níg-Ga = Makkūru*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 13. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971.
- — —. "Lexicography." Pages 123–57 in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on His Seventieth Birthday, June 7, 1974*. Edited by S. J. Lieberman. Assyriological Studies 20. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976.

— — —, ed. *The Series DIRI = (w)atru*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 15. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 2004.

Classen, Constance. "Engendering Perception: Gender Ideologies and Sensory Hierarchies in Western History." *Body & Society* 3, no. 2 (1997): 1–19.

— — —. "Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses." *International Social Science Journal* 49, no. 153 (1997): 401–12.

— — —. "Heaven's Scent: The Odour of Sanctity in Christian Tradition." *Journal of Religion and Culture* 4, no. 2 (1990): 87–92.

— — —. "The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories." *Ethos* 20, no. 2 (1992): 133–66.

— — —. *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Classen, Constance, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott. *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Clay, Albert Tobias. *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan. Part 4 Epics, Hymns, Omens, and Other Texts*. Edited by Albert Tobias Clay. Vol. 4. 4 vols. New Haven: Yale University, 1923.

— — —. *Neo-Babylonian Letters From Erech*. Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 3. New Haven: Yale University, 1919.

Clements, R. E. "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah." *Interpretation* 36, no. 2 (1982): 117–29.

Clines, David J. A. *Job 1-20*. Vol. 17. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, 1989.

Clutton-Brock, Juliet. *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Cocquerillat, Denise. *Palmeraies et Cultures de l'Eanna d'Uruk <559-520>*. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka 8. Berlin: Mann, 1968.

— — —. "Recherches sur le verger du temple campagnard de l'Akītu (KIRI6 Hallat)." *Die Welt Des Orients* 7, no. 1 (1973): 96–134.

Cohen, Erik. "The Broken Cycle: Smell in a Bangkok Soi (Lane)." *Ethnos* 53, no. I–II (1988): 37–49.

Cohen, Mark E. *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993.

- Cohen, Rudolph, and Yigal Yisrael. "The Iron Age Fortresses at 'En Ḥaṣeva." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 58, no. 4 (1995): 223–35.
- Cole, Steven William, and Peter Machinist, eds. *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*. State Archives of Assyria 13. Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1998.
- Contenau, Georges. *Contrats et Lettres d'Assyrie et de Babylonie*. Textes cunéiformes 9. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1926.
- . *Contrats Néo-Babyloniens*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Textes cunéiformes 13. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927.
- Corbin, Alain. *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*. Translated by Miriam Kochan, Roy Porter, and Christopher Prendergast. Cambridge: Harvard University, 1986.
- Crocker, Piers. "Apothecaries, Confectionaries, and a New Discovery at Qumran." *Buried History* 25, no. 2 (1989): 36–46.
- Cryer, Frederick H. *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 142. Sheffield: JSOT, 1994.
- Dalley, Stephanie. "Erra and Ishum (1.113)." Pages 404–16 in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- . *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*. Repr. of rev. ed. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University, 2008.
- Daviau, P. M. Michèle, and Paul-Eugène Dion. "Economy-Related Finds from Khirbat Al-Mudayna (Wadi Ath-Thamad, Jordan)." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 328 (2002): 31–48.
- . "Moab Comes to Life." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 28, no. 1 (2002): 38–49, 63.
- Dayagi-Mendels, Michal. *Perfumes and Cosmetics in the Ancient World*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1989.
- Deimel, Anton. "Enuma Eliš," sive, *Epos Babylonicum de Creatione Mundi*. 2nd ed. Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici. Romae: Sumptibus Pont. Instituti Biblici, 1936.
- deSilva, David A. "Rhetorical Criticism." Pages 273–83 in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Steven L. McKenzie. Vol. 2. Oxford: University Press, 2013.
- Detienne, Marcel. *Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology*. Translated by Jean Pierre Vernant. Princeton: Princeton University, 1994.

- Devries, Lamoine F. "Cult Stands: A Bewildering Variety of Shapes and Sizes." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13, no. 4 (1987): 26–37.
- Dietrich, Manfred. "Bēl-Ibni, König von Babylon (703-700). Die Rolle des Königs in den Neubabylonischen Briefen." Pages 81–108 in *Dubsar Anta-Men. Studien zur Altorientalistik*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Veröffentlichungen zu Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments 253. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998.
- — —. *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib*. State Archives of Assyria 17. Helsinki: Helsinki University, 2003.
- Dorland, Gabrielle J. *Scents Appeal: The Silent Persuasion of Aromatic Encounters*. Mendham, NJ: W. Dorland Company, 1993.
- Dossin, G. "Une Mention de Hattusa dans une Lettre de Mari." *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* 5, no. 35–36 (1939): 70–76.
- Douek, Ellis. "Ancient & Contemporary Management in a Disease of Unknown Aetiology." Pages 215–18 in *Disease in Babylonia*. Edited by Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller. Cuneiform Monographs 36. Boston: Brill, 2007.
- Dougherty, Raymond Philip. *Archives From Erech*. Goucher College Cuneiform Inscriptions 2. New Haven: Yale University, 1933.
- — —. *Records from Erech, Time of Nabonidus (555-538 B.C.)*. Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 6. New Haven: Yale University, 1920.
- Van Driel, G. "Cattle in the Neo-Babylonian Period." *Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture* 8 (1995): 215–40.
- Driver, Godfrey Rolles. *Letters of the First Babylonian Dynasty*. Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts 3. London: Oxford University, H.Milford, 1924.
- Ebeling, Erich. *Altbabylonische Briefe Amerikanischer Sammlungen aus Larsa*. Vol. 1/2. Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft 16. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1972.
- — —. *Der Akkadische Mythos vom Pestgott*. Vol. 1. Berliner Beiträge zur Keilschriftforschung 2. Berlin: Im Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1925.
- — —. *Die Babylonische Fabel und ihre Bedeutung für die Literaturgeschichte*. Vol. 3. Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft 2. Leipzig: Verlag von Eduard Pfeiffer, 1927.
- — —. *Die siebente Tafel des Akkadischen Welterschöpfungsliedes Enuma Eliš*. Vol. 4. Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft 12. Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1972.

- — —. “Ein Heldenlied auf Tiglatpileser I und der Anfang einer neuen Version von ‘Ištars Höllenfahrt’ nach einer Schülertafel aus Assur.” *Orientalia* 18 (1949): 30–39.
- — —. “Ein Neuassyrisches Beschwörungsritual gegen Bann und Tod.” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 51, no. 1 (1955): 167–79.
- — —. “Keilschrifttafeln medizinischen Inhalts.” *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 13 (1921): 1–42.
- — —. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 28. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919.
- — —. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 34. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1920.
- — —, ed. *Keilschrifttexte medizinischen Inhalts*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Berlin: Im Selbstverlage, 1922.
- — —, ed. *Keilschrifttexte medizinischen Inhalts*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Berlin: Im Selbstverlage, 1923.
- — —. *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.
- — —. *Neubabylonische Briefe*. Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Neue Folge 30. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1949.
- — —. *Neubabylonische Briefe aus Uruk*. 4 vols. Beiträge zur Keilschriftforschung und Religionsgeschichte des vorderen Orients. Berlin: Im Verlage des Herausgebers, 1930.
- — —. *Quellen zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion*. Vol. 1. Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft 23. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1918.
- — —. *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1931.
- Ellis, Havelock. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. Vol. 3. 6 vols. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1921.
- Epstein, Claire. *The Chalcolithic Culture of the Golan*. Israel Antiquities Authority Reports 4. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1998.
- Erman, Adolf. *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians; Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, From the Third and Second Millennia B. C.* Translated by Aylward M. Blackman. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1927.

- Evans, Carl D., W. Hallo, and John B. White, eds. *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method*. Pittsburg: Pickwick, 1980.
- Falkenstein, Adam. *Die Haupttypen der Sumerischen Beschwörung. Literarisch Untersucht*. Leipziger semitistische Studien, n. f. 1. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1931.
- Falkenstein, Adam, and Wolfram von Soden. *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*. Die Bibliothek der alten Welt der alte Orient. Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953.
- Figulla, H. H. *Business Documents of the New-Babylonian Period*. Publications of the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, to Mesopotamia; Ur Excavations, Texts 4. London: Printed by Order of the Trustees of the Two Museums, 1949.
- Figulla, H. H., E. Forrer, and Ernst F. Weidner. *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi: Erstes bis Viertes Heft*. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 30. J. C. Hinrichs, 1923.
- Finkel, Irving L., ed. *The Series SIG7.ALAM = Nabnītu*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 16. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1982.
- Forbes, Robert J. *Bitumen and Petroleum in Antiquity*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1936.
- Fossey, Charles. *La Magie Assyrienne: étude suivie de textes magiques*. Vol. 15. Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études. Sciences religieuses. Paris: E. Leroux, 1902.
- — —. *Nouveaux Textes magiques Assyriens: transcrits, traduits et commentés*. Paris: E. Bouillon, 1904.
- — —. "Textes Magiques Assyriens." *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes* 26, no. 1–2 (1904): 89–128.
- Foster, Benjamin R. *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*. Vol. 2. Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007.
- — —. *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993.
- — —. *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1993.
- — —. "Epic of Creation (1.111) (Enūma Elish)." Pages 390–402 in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- — —. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1995.

- Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*. 2 vols. 1st ed. The Anchor Bible 18A-B. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- — —. *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1985.
- Fox, Nili Sacher. "The Striped Goddess From Gilat: Implications for the Chalcolithic Cult." *Israel Exploration Journal* 45 (1995): 212–25.
- Frahm, Eckart. *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries: Origins of Interpretation*. Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 5. Münster, Germany: Ugarit, 2011.
- Frankena, Rintje. "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy." *Oudtestamentische Studien* 14 (1965): 122–54.
- Freedman, Sally M. *If a City Is Set on a Height: The Akkadian Omen Series Šumma Alu Ina Mēlê Šakin*. 2 vols. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 17. Ann Arbor, MI: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1998.
- — —. *If a City Is Set on a Height: The Akkadian Omen Series Šumma Alu Ina Mēlê Šakin*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 17. Ann Arbor, MI: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1998.
- Friedländer, M., ed. *Ibn Ezra on Isaiah*. Translated by M. Friedländer. Spring Valley, NY: Philipp Feldheim, 1873.
- Frisby, David. "Introduction to the Texts." Pages 1–35 in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. Edited by David Frisby and Mike Featherstone. London: Sage, 1997.
- Gadd, C. J. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XL (50 Plates)*. 40. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University, 1927.
- — —. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XXXIX (50 Plates)*. 39. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University, 1926.
- — —. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XXXVIII (50 Plates)*. 38. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University, 1925.
- Gadd, Cyril John. "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus." *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958): 35–92.
- Garelli, Paul. *Gilgameš et sa légende: études recueillies par Paul Garelli à l'occasion de la VII Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Paris - 1958)*. Cahiers du Groupe François-Thureau-Dangin 1. Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1960.
- — —. *Les Assyriens en Cappadoce*. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'institut français d'archéologie d'Istanbul 29. Paris: Libr. A. Maisonneuve, 1963.

- Gelb, Ignace J. "Review of The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon." *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 19 (1962): 159–62.
- Geldard, Frank A. *The Human Senses*. 2d. ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972.
- Gell, Alfred. "Magic, Perfume, Dream . . ." Pages 25–38 in *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism*. Edited by I. M. Lewis. London: Academic, 1977.
- Geller, Markham J. "Introduction: 'Oeil malade et mauvais oeil.'" Pages 1–12 in *Advances in Mesopotamian Medicine from Hammurabi to Hippocrates. Proceedings of the International Conference "Oeil malade et mauvais oeil," Collège de France, Paris, 23rd June 2006*. Edited by A. Attia and Gilles Buisson. Cuneiform Monographs 37. Boston: Brill, 2009.
- Geller, Samuel. "Die Rezension von 'Ištar's Höllenfahrt' aus Assur." *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 20, no. 2 (1917): 41–48.
- Genders, Roy. *A History of Scent*. London: Hamish, 1972.
- George, A. R. *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University, 2003.
- — —. *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University, 2003.
- Gibbons, Boyd. "The Intimate Sense of Smell." *National Geographic* 170, no. 3 (1986): 324–60.
- Gilbert, A. N., and C. J. Wysocki. "The Smell Survey." *National Geographic* 172, no. 4 (1987): 514–25.
- Gilman, Sander. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1985.
- Goetze, Albrecht. "The Soldiers' Oath." Pages 353–54 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3d, with supplement. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1974.
- Goltz, Dietlinde. *Studien zur Altorientalischen und Griechischen Heilkunde: Therapie-Arzneibereitung-Rezeptstruktur*. Sudhoffs Archiv 16. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974.
- Gössmann, F. *Das Era-Epos*. Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1956.
- Graybill, Rhiannon. "Literary Criticism, Literary Theory, and the Bible." Pages 515–24 in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Steven L. McKenzie. Vol. 1. Oxford: University Press, 2013.

- Grayson, A. Kirk. "Literary Letters from Deities and Diviners: More Fragments." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103, no. 1 (1983): 143–48.
- Green, Deborah A. *The Aroma of Righteousness: Scent and Seduction in Rabbinic Life and Literature*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2011.
- Greengus, Samuel. *Laws in the Bible and in Early Rabbinic Collections: The Legal Legacy of the Ancient Near East*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011.
- — —. "The Old Babylonian Marriage Contract." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1969): 505–32.
- Gressmann, Hugo, ed. *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. 2nd ed. *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum alten Testament*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1926.
- Groom, Nigel. *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade*. New York: Longman, 1981.
- Le Guérer, Annick. *Scent: The Mysterious and Essential Powers of Smell*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Kodansha International, 1992.
- Gunkel, Hermann. *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1967.
- Gurney, O. R. *The Hittites*. Rev. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Güterbock, Hans-Gustav. "Die Historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 42, no. 1–4 (1934): 1–91.
- Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969.
- Hallo, William W. "Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Their Relevance for Biblical Exegesis." Pages xxiii – xxviii in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. New York: Brill, 1997.
- — —. "The Birth of Rhetoric." Pages 25–46 in *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*. Edited by Carol Lipson and Roberta A. Binkley. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor, 2009.
- — —. "The Concept of Canonicity in Cuneiform and Biblical Literature: A Comparative Appraisal." Pages 1–19 in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective; Scripture in Context IV*. Edited by K. Lawson Younger, William W. Hallo, and Bernard F. Batto. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies* 11. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 1991.
- — —. *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 38. Boston: Brill, 2009.

- Hallo, William W., Bruce William Jones, and George L. Mattingly, eds. *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature*. Scripture in Context III, Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8. Lewiston NY: Mellen, 1990.
- Hallo, William W., James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue, eds. *Scripture in Context: More Essays on the Comparative Method*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983.
- Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger, eds. *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- Harper, Robert Francis. *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum*. Edited by Leroy Waterman. 14 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1892.
- Hartman, Louis Francis, and A. Leo Oppenheim. *On Beer and Brewing Techniques in Ancient Mesopotamia: According to the XXIIIrd Tablet of the Series H^AR.ra = H^Ubullu*. Supplement to the Journal of the American Oriental Society 10. Baltimore: American Oriental Society, 1950.
- Harvey, Susan Ashbrook. "Incense Offerings in the Syriac Transitus Mariae: Ritual and Knowledge in Ancient Christianity." Pages 175–91 in *The Early Church and Its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson*. Edited by J. J. Malherbe, F. W. Norris, and J. W. Thompson. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- — —. "Olfactory Knowing: Signs of Smell in the Vitae of Simeon Stylites." Pages 23–34 in *Change and Continuity in Syriac Christianity: Festschrift for H. J. W. Drijvers*. Edited by G. Reinink and A. C. Klugkist. Louvain: Peeters, 1999.
- — —. "On Holy Stench: When the Odor of Sanctity Sickens." Pages 90–101 in *Studia Patristica XXV, Ascetica, Gnostica, Liturgica, Orientalia*. Edited by M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold. Louvain: Peeters, 2001.
- — —. *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California, 2006.
- — —. "St. Ephrem on the Scent of Salvation." *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 109–28.
- Hasel, G. F. "כָּרַת *kārat*, כְּרִיתוֹת *k^eruṭōt*, כְּרִיתוֹת *k^eriṭuṭ*." Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. Translated by David A. Green. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 7. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995.
- Haupt, Paul. *Akkadische und Sumerische Keilschrifttexte nach den Originalen im Britischen Museum copirt und mit einleitenden Zusammenstellungen sowie erklärenden Anmerkungen*. Assyriologische Bibliothek 1. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1881.

- — —. “Einige Verbesserungen und Nachträge zu meinen Akkadischen und Sumerischen Keilschrifttexten.” Pages 267–84 in *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung und verwandte Gebiete*. Vol. 2. Leipzig: O. Schulze, 1885.
- Heessel, Nils P. “The Babylonian Physician Rabâ-Ša-Marduk. Another Look at Physicians and Exorcists in the Ancient Near East.” Pages 13–28 in *Advances in Mesopotamian Medicine from Hammurabi to Hippocrates. Proceedings of the International Conference “Oeil malade et mauvais oeil,” Collège de France, Paris, 23rd June 2006*. Edited by A. Attia and Gilles Buisson. Cuneiform Monographs 37. Boston: Brill, 2009.
- Heger, Paul. *The Development of the Incense Cult in Israel*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997.
- — —. *The Three Biblical Altar Laws: Developments in the Sacrificial Cult in Practice and Theology*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.
- Hehn, Johannes. “Hymnen und Gebete an Marduk.” *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 5 (1906): 279–400.
- Heidel, Alexander. *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of the Creation*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, Phoenix Books, 1963.
- Hepper, Nigel. “Trees and Shrubs Yielding Gums and Resins in the Ancient Near East.” *Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture* 3 (1987): 107–14.
- Herzfeld, Ernst. *Altpersische Inschriften*. *Archaeologische mitteilungen aus Iran* 1. Berlin: D. Reimer, 1938.
- — —. “Xerxes’ Verbot des Daiva-Cultes.” *Archaeologische mitteilungen aus Iran* 8 (1937): 56–77.
- Herz, Rachel S. “Scents of Time.” *Sciences* 40, no. 4 (2000): 34–40.
- Hillers, Delbert R. *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*. *Biblica et Orientalia: Sacra Scriptura antiquitatibus orientalibus illustrata* 16. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964.
- Hoffner Jr, Harry A. “Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites.” *Orientalia Roma* 49, no. 4 (1980): 283–332.
- Holladay, Carl. R. “Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible.” Pages 125–49 in *General Articles on the Bible, General Articles on the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus*. Vol. 1. 12 vols. *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Horowitz, Wayne. *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*. *Mesopotamian Civilizations* 8. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1998.

- Horvat, R. J., and S. D. Senter. "Identification of Additional Volatile Compounds From Cantaloupe." *Journal of Food Science* 52, no. 4 (1987): 1097–98.
- Houtman, C. "On the Function of the Holy Incense (Exodus XXX 34-8) and the Sacred Anointing Oil (Exodus XXX 22-33)." *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 4 (1992): 458–65.
- Howes, David. *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg, 2005.
- — —. "Notes on the Olfactory Classification and Treatment of Disease in Non-Western Societies." *Santé/Culture/Health* 4, no. 3 (1987): 5–18.
- — —. "Olfaction and Transition: An Essay on the Ritual Uses of Smell." *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 24 (1987): 398–416.
- — —. "Sensorial Anthropology." Pages 167–91 in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*. Edited by David Howes. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991.
- — —. *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- — —. *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991.
- Howes, David, and Marc Lalonde. "The History of Sensibilities: Of the Standard of Taste in Mid-Eighteenth Century England and the Circulation of Smells in Post-Revolutionary France." *Dialectical Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (1991): 125–35.
- Hunt, Patrick. *Poetry in the Song of Songs: A Literary Analysis*. Vol. 96. Studies in Biblical Literature. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.
- Hurovitz, Victor (Avigdor). "Salted Incense—Exodus 30,35; Maqlû VI 111-113; IX 118-120*." *Biblica* 68 (1987): 178–94.
- Illich, Ivan. "The Dirt of Cities, The Aura of Cities, The Smell of the Dead, Utopia of an Odorless City." Pages 355–59 in *City Cultures Reader*. Edited by Malcomb Miles, Tim Hall, and Iaian Borden. Urban Reader 3. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Jacobsen, Thorkild. "Religious Drama in Ancient Mesopotamia." Pages 65–97 in *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1975.
- James, F. D. "A Critical Examination of the Text of Isaiah Based on the Dead Sea Scrolls of Isaiah (DSIa), the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the Isaiah Texts of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius." Ph.D. diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1959.

- Jenner, Mark S. R. "Civilization and Deodorization? Smell in Early Modern English Culture." Pages 127–44 in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*. Edited by Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack. Oxford: University Press, 2000.
- Jensen, P. *Texte zur Assyrisch-Babylonischen Religion*. Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek Bd. 6, pt. 1. Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1915.
- Jestin, Raymond-Riec. "Textes religieux Sumériens." *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie Orientale* 52, no. 4 (1958): 193–202.
- Joannès, Francis. *Textes Babyloniens: Joannès, Darius Ier*, n.d. No pages. Online: <http://www.achemenet.com>.
- Jost, Walter, and Wendy Olmsted, eds. *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*. Blackwell's Companions to Literature and Culture 22. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- Kanafani, Alde. *Aesthetics and Ritual in the United Arab Emirates*. Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983.
- Keiser, Clarence Elwood. *Letters and Contracts From Erech Written in the Neo-Babylonian Period*. Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies, Yale University 1. New Haven: Yale University, 1918.
- Kent, Roland G. "The Daiva-Inscription of Xerxes." *Language* 13, no. 4 (1937): 292–305.
- King, Leonard W. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum*. Vol. 13. 50 vols. London: The Trustees, 1901.
- — —. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XV (50 Plates)*. Vol. 15. 50 vols. London: The Trustees, 1902.
- — —. *The Seven Tablets of Creation: Or, The Babylonian and Assyrian Legends Concerning the Creation of the World and of Mankind*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Luzac's Semitic Text and Translation Series 12. London: Luzac and Co, 1902.
- King, Leonard William. *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery Being "The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand."* *The Cuneiform Texts of a Group of Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations and Magical Formulae Edited With Transliterations, Translations and Full Vocabulary From Tablets of the Kuyunjik Collections Preserved in the British Museum*. London: Luzac & Co., 1896.
- King, Leonard W., R. Campbell Thompson, and E. Wallis Budge. *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great: On the Rock of Behistûn in Persia*. London: British Museum, 1907.
- King, Leonard W., and R. Campbell (Reginald Campbell) Thompson. *Behistun Inscription, Translated by Henry Rawlinson*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1907.

- Klauber, Ernst. *Politisch-Religiöse Texte aus der Sargonidenzeit*. Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1913.
- Knauft, Bruce. "On Percussion and Metaphor." *Current Anthropology* 20 (1979): 189–91.
- Knudtzon, Jörgen A. *Assyrische Gebete an den sonnengott für Staat und königliches Haus aus der Zeit Asarhaddons und Asurbanipal*. 2 vols. Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1893.
- Köcher, Franz. *Die Babylonisch-Assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen*. Vol. 1. Keilschrifttexte aus Assur 3. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963.
- — —. *Die Babylonisch-Assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen*. Vol. 1. Keilschrifttexte aus Assur 4. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1971.
- Kohler, J., and F. E. Peiser. *Aus dem Babylonischen Rechtsleben*. Vol. 2. 4 vols. Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1890.
- Kramer, Samuel Noah. "Inanna's Descent to the Nether World: Continued and Revised." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 5, no. 1 (1951): 1–17.
- Kurek-Chomycz, Dominik. "Making Scents of Revelation: The Significance of Cultic Scents in Ancient Judaism as the Backdrop of Saint Paul's Olfactory Metaphor in 2 Cor. 2:14-17." Ph. D. diss., Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2008.
- Kuschler, Friedrich. *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Assyrisch-Babylonischen Medizin*. Assyriologische Bibliothek 18. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich, 1904.
- Labat, René. *Le Poème Babylonien de la création*. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935.
- Læssøe, Jørgen. *Studies on the Assyrian Ritual and Series Bît Rimki*. København: Munksgaard, 1955.
- Lambert, W. G. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.
- — —. "Divine Love Lyrics From Babylon." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4, no. 1 (1959): 1–15.
- — —. "The Fifth Tablet of the *Era Epic*." *Iraq* 24, no. 2 (1962): 119–25.
- Lambert, W. G., and A. R. Millard. *Atra-Hasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1969.
- Lambert, Wilfred G. "Babylonian Linguistics." Pages 217–31 in *Languages and Cultures in Contact: At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm*. Edited by Karel van Lerberghe. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 96. Leuven: Peeters, 1999.

- — —. “The Problem of the Love Lyrics.” *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1975.
- — —. “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion.” Pages 3–13 in *The Seed of Wisdom, Essays in Honour of T. J. Meek*. Edited by W. McCollough. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1964.
- Lambert, Wilfred G., and Simon B. Parker. *Enuma Eliš: The Babylonian Epic of Creation: The Cuneiform Text*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966.
- Landsberger, Benno. *Der kultische Kalender der Babylonier und Assyrer*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Leipziger semitistische Studien 6. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1915.
- — —, ed. *Die Serie Ur - E - a = Nâqu*. Vol. 2. Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1951.
- — —. “Ein astralmythologischer Kommentar aus der Spätzeit Babylonischer Gelehrsamkeit.” *Archiv für Keilschriftforschung* 1, no. 2 (1923): 43–48.
- — —. *The Series HAR - Ra = Hubullu Tablets I - IV*. Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon 5. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1957.
- — —. *The Series HAR - Ra = Hubullu Tablets VIII - XII*. Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon 7. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1959.
- Landsberger, Benno, and Richard T. Hallock. “Sa Vocabulary.” Materialien zum Sumerische Lexikon 3. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955.
- Landsberger, Benno, and Erica Reiner, eds. *The Series HAR - Ra = Hubullu; Tablets XVI, XVII, XIX and Related Texts*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 10. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1970.
- Langdon, Stephen. “A Chapter From the Babylonian Books of Private Devotion.” *Babyloniaca* 3, no. 1 (1908): 1–31.
- — —. *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars*. Vol. 1933. The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy. London: Pub. for the British Academy by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1935.
- — —. *Babylonian Penitential Psalms to Which Are Added Fragments of the Epic of Creation from Kish in the Weld Collection of the Ashmolean Museum*. Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts 6. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927.
- — —. “Calendars of Liturgies and Prayers.” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 42, no. 2 (1926): 110–27.

- — —. *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*. Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 4. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912.
- — —. *Sumerian Grammatical Texts*. Vol. v. 12, no. 1. Publications of the Babylonian Section. Philadelphia: University Museum, 1917.
- — —. *The Babylonian Epic of Creation Restored From the Recently Recovered Tablets of Aššur*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1923.
- Largey, Gale Peter, and David Rodney Watson. "The Sociology of Odors." *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972): 1021–34.
- Lauringer, Jacob. "Esarhaddon's Succession Treat at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 87–123.
- Leichty, Erle. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)*. The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- Leith, Mary Jean Winn. "Divine Scents: God Doesn't Just See and Hear the Israelites, He Can Smell Them Too." *Bible Review* 19, no. 4 (2003): 8, 61.
- Lenzi, Alan, ed. *Reading Akkadian Hymns and Prayers. An Introduction*. Ancient Near East Monographs 3. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.
- Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University, 1986.
- Levy, Thomas Evan. "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine. The Chalcolithic Period." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 49, no. 2 (1986): 82–108.
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California, 1973.
- — —. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- — —. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II: The New Kingdom*. Vol. 2. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- — —. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III: The Late Period*. Vol. 3. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- — —. "Dua-Khety or the Satire on the Trades (1.48)." Pages 122–25 in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- — —. "Instruction of Any (1.46)." Pages 110–15 in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.

- — —. *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 52. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1983.
- — —. “The Dispute Between a Man and His BA (3.146).” Pages 321–25 in *Archival Documents From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 3. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- — —. “The Tale of Two Brothers (1.40).” Pages 85–89 in *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. Vol. 1. 3 vols. The Context of Scripture. New York: Brill, 1997.
- Lilja, Saara. *The Treatment of Odours in the Poetry of Antiquity*. Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 49. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1972.
- Livingstone, Alasdair, ed. *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*. State Archives of Assyria 3. Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1989.
- Lockshin, Martin I. *Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis: An Annotated Translation*. Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989.
- Longman, Tremper. *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1991.
- Low, Kelvin E. Y. “Ruminations on Smell as a Sociocultural Phenomenon.” *Current Sociology* 53, no. 3 (2005): 397–417.
- Lucas, Alfred. “Cosmetics, Perfumes and Incense in Ancient Egypt.” *Egypt Exploration Fund* 16 (1930): 41–53.
- Luckenbill, Daniel David. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Ancient Records. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1926.
- — —. *The Annals of Sennacherib*. University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 2. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1924.
- Lutz, Henry Frederick. “A Contribution to the Knowledge of Assyro-Babylonian Medicine.” *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 36 (1919): 67–83.
- — —. “A Recorded Deposition Concerning Presentment for Tax Payment.” *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 10, no. 10 (1940): 257–64.
- — —. *Early Babylonian Letters From Larsa*. Yale Oriental Series. Babylonian Texts 2. New Haven: Yale University, 1917.

- — —. *Neo-Babylonian Administrative Documents from Erech*. Vol. 1. University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 9. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1927.
- — —. *Selected Sumerian and Babylonian Texts*. Vol. 1, no. 2. Publications of the Babylonian Section. Philadelphia: University Museum, 1919.
- Macmillan, Kerr Duncan. "Some Cuneiform Tablets Bearing on the Religion of Babylonia and Assyria." *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 5 (1906): 531–712.
- Martin, François. *Lettres Néo-Babyloniennes*. Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études. IVe section, Sciences historiques et philologiques 179. Paris: H. Champion, 1909.
- — —. "Mélanges Assyriologiques." *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes* 34 (1902): 96–108.
- Martin, Guy, and Paul Laffort, eds. *Odors and Deodorization in the Environment*. Translated by Kathe M. Bersillon. New York: VCH, 1994.
- Matouš, Lubor, and Wolfram von Soden. *Die Lexikalischer Tafelserien der Babylonier und Assyrer in den Berlin Museen*. Berlin: Zu beziehen durch die Vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen, 1933.
- McCarthy, Dennis J. *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*. New ed. Analecta biblica 21a. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981.
- McEwan, Gilbert J. P. *Priest and Temple in Hellenistic Babylonia*. Freiburger altorientalische Studien 4. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1981.
- McKenzie, Dan. *Aromatics and the Soul: A Study of Smells*. New York: Paul B. Hoeber Inc., 1923.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1962.
- — —. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: Signet, 1964.
- Meek, Theophile James. "Cuneiform Bilingual Hymns, Prayers and Penitential Psalms. Autographed, Transliterated and Translated With Notes From the Original Tablets in the British Museum." *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 10, no. 1 (1968): iii – 127.
- Meier, Gerhard. *Die Assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû*. Vol. 2. Archiv für Orientforschung. Beiheft. Berlin: Im Selbstverlage des Herausgebers, 1937.

- — —. “Review of R. Campbell Thompson, A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology.” *Archiv für Orientforschung* 13, no. 1/2 (1939): 71–73.
- Meissner, Bruno. “Die Eroberung der Stadt Ulḫu auf Sargons 8. Feldzug.” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 34 (1922): 113–22.
- Merrill, Eugene H. “History.” Pages 89–112 in *Cracking the Old Testament Codes*. Edited by D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995.
- Meynet, Roland. *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 256. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998.
- Miller, William Ian. *The Anatomy of Disgust*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. “Rhetorical and New Literary Criticism.” Pages 615–33 in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*. Edited by J. W. Rogerson and Judith Lieu. New York: Oxford University, 2006.
- Mitchell, Nathan. “Smells and Bells.” *Worship or Orates Fratres* 72 (1998): 539–47.
- de Montaigne, Michel. *Essays*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Moore, Ellen Whitley. *Neo-Babylonian Business and Administrative Documents; With Transliteration, Translation and Notes*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935.
- Moran, William. “Assurbanipal’s Message to the Babylonians (ABL 301), With an Excursus on Figurative Biltu.” Pages 320–31 in *Ah, Assyria...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*. Edited by Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph’al. Vol. 33. Scripta Hierosolymitana. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991.
- Needham, Rodney. “Percussion and Transition.” *Man* 2 (1967): 606–14.
- Nelson, Sarah M., ed. *Ancestors for the Pigs: Pigs in Prehistory*. Vol. 15. MASCA Research Papers in Science and Archaeology. Philadelphia, PA: Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1998.
- Nemet-Nejat, Karen Rhea. *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. The Greenwood Press “Daily Life Through History” Series. Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1998.
- Neufeld, Edward. “Hygiene Conditions in Ancient Israel (Iron Age).” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 34 (1971): 42–66.

- Newsome, C. A. "The Book of Job." Pages 317–638 in *1 & 2 Maccabees, Introduction to Hebrew Poetry, Job, Psalms*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. Vol. 6. 12 vols. The New Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Nielsen, Kjeld. "Ancient Aromas: Good & Bad." *Bible Review* 7, no. 3 (1991): 26–33.
- — —. "Incense." *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David N. Freedman. Vol. 3. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- — —. *Incense in Ancient Israel*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 38. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986.
- Nissinen, Martti. *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Peter Machinist. Vol. 12. Writings From the Ancient World. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Nissinen, Martti, and Simo Parpola. *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources*. Vol. 7. State Archives of Assyria Studies. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998.
- Nötscher, Friedrich. "Babylonische Haus-Omina." Pages 132–48 in *Altorientalische Studien: Bruno Meissner zum sechzigsten Geburtstag am 25. April 1928*. 2 vols. Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft 4. Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1928.
- — —. *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) I*. *Orientalia* 31, 1928.
- — —. *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) II*. *Orientalia* 39-42, 1929.
- — —. *Die Omen-Serie Šumma Alu in Mele Šakin (CT 38-40) III*. *Orientalia* 51-54, 1930.
- Olmstead, A. T. *History of Assyria*. New York: C. Scriber's Sons, 1923.
- Ong, Walter J. *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History*. New Haven: Yale University, 1967.
- Oppenheim, A. Leo. "A Babylonian Diviner's Manual." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33, no. 2 (1974): 197–220.
- — —. *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964.
- — —. "Assyriological Gleanings IV." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 103 (1946): 7–11.
- — —. "Idiomatic Accadian (Lexicographical Researches)." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 61 (1941): 251–71.

- — —. *Letters from Mesopotamia: Official Business, and Private Letters on Clay Tablets from Two Millennia*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967.
- — —. *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East: With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book*. Vol. 46. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956.
- — —. "The Neo-Babylonian Preposition 'La.'" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1, no. 3 (1942): 369–72.
- Orwell, George. *The Road to Wigan Pier*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1937.
- Parpola, Simo. *Assyrian Prophecies*. Vol. 9. State Archives of Assyria. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997.
- — —. "Introduction." Pages xxiii – xxvii in *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Edited by Simo Parpola. State Archives of Assyria 10. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University, 1993.
- — —. *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. Part II: Commentary and Appendices*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. *Alter Orient und altes Testament* 5. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983.
- Parpola, Simo, and Kazuko Watanabe, eds. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. State Archives of Assyria 2. Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1988.
- Van Pelt, M. V., and W. C. Kaiser, Jr. "R[n]." Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.
- Pfeiffer, Robert H. *State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Official Assyrian Letters Dating From the Sargonid Period (722-625 B.C.)*. American Oriental Series 6. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1935.
- Pilch, John J. "A Window Into the Biblical World: Slow to Anger and Long of Nose." *Bible Today* 34, no. 5 (1996): 307–10.
- — —. "A Window Into the Biblical World: Smells and Tastes." *Bible Today* 34, no. 4 (1996): 246–51.
- Pinches, Theophilus G. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part VI (49 Plates)*. Vol. 6. 50 vols. Reprinted by the Trustees of the British Museum, 1959. London: Cambridge University, 1898.
- — —. "Notes Upon Some of the Recent Discoveries in the Realm of Assyriology, with Special Reference to the Private Life of the Babylonians." *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain* 26 (1894): 123–85.

- Porteous, Douglas. "Smellscape." *Progress in Human Geography* 9, no. 3 (1985): 356–78.
- Pritchard, James B. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3d, With Supplement. Princeton: Princeton University, 1974.
- Propp, William H. C. *Exodus 1-18*. Vol. 2. 25 vols. The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Rainey, Anson F. "The New Inscription from Khirbet El-Mudeiyineh." *Israel Exploration Journal* 52 (2002): 81–86.
- Rasmusen, Susan. "Making Better 'Scents' in Anthropology: Aroma in Tuareg Sociocultural Systems and the Shaping of Ethnography." *Anthropological Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1999): 55–74.
- Al-Rawi, Farouk N. H., and J. A. Black. "The Second Tablet of 'Išum and Erra.'" *Iraq* 51 (1989): 111–22.
- Rawlinson, Henry C. *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia: A Selection From the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria*. Vol. 2. 5 vols. London: Harrison, 1866.
- . *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia: A Selection From the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria*. Vol. 4. 5 vols. 2nd ed. London: Harrison, 1891.
- . *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia: A Selection From the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia*. Vol. 5. 5 vols. Repr. 1909. London: Harrison, 1880.
- . "The Persian Cuneiform Inscription at Behistun, Decyphered and Translated." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (1847): 1–349.
- Reiner, Erica. "First-Millennium Babylonian Literature." Pages 293–321 in *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: University Press, 1991.
- . "Plague Amulets and House Blessings." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19, no. 2 (1960): 148–55.
- , ed. *The Series 𒀠AR - Ra = 𒀠ubullu; Tablets XX-XXIV*. Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 11. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1974.
- Reisner, George Andrew. *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln Griechischer Zeit*. Berlin: W. Spemann, 1896.
- Reynolds, Frances, ed. *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon, and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-Šarru-Iškun From Northern and Central Babylonia*. State Archives of Assyria 18. Helsinki: Helsinki University, 2003.

- Rigg, Horace Abram. "Sargon's 'Eighth Military Campaign.'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 62, no. 2 (1942): 130–38.
- Rindisbacher, Hans J. *The Smell of Books: A Cultural-Historical Study of Olfactory Perception in Literature*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- Ritchie, Ian D. "The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11.3." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25, no. 87 (2000): 59–73.
- Ritter, Edith. "Magical-Expert (=ĀŠIPU) and Physician (=ASŪ). Notes on Two Complementary Professions in Babylonian Medicine." Pages 299–321 in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965*. Edited by Hans-Gustav Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen. Assyriological Studies 16. University of Chicago, 1965.
- Da Riva, Rocío. *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction*. Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 4. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008.
- Rothkrug, Lionel. "The 'Odour of Sanctity,' and the Hebrew Origins of Christian Relic Veneration." *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 8, no. 2 (1981): 95–134.
- San Nicolo, M. "Parerga Babylonica XII." *Archiv Orientalní* 6 (1934): 179–202.
- Schaudig, Hanspeter. *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen Samt den in ihrem Umfeld Entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Veröffentlichungen zu Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments 256. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001.
- Schilder, Annemiek. "Botrytis Bunch Rot of Grape (Botrytis Cinerea)," n.d. No pages. Cited 27 June 2014. Online: <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/grapeipm/bunchrot.htm>.
- Schmidt, Erich F. *Persepolis*. Vol. 2. 3 vols. University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 69. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953.
- Schollmeyer, Anastasius. *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš*. Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1912.
- Schroeder, Otto. *Keilschrifttexte Aus Assur Historischen Inhalts*. Vol. 2. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur 1. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1922.
- Scurlock, Jo Ann. "Physician, Exorcist, Conjuror, Magician: A Tale of Two Healing Professionals." Pages 69–79 in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*. Edited by Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn. Ancient Magic and Divination 1. Groningen: Styx, 1999.

- Scurlock, Jo Ann, and Burton R. Andersen. *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine: Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses*. Chicago: University of Illinois, 2005.
- Seeger, Anthony. *Nature and Society in Central Brazil: The Suyá Indians of Mato Grosso*. Cambridge: Harvard University, 1981.
- Seux, M. J. *Hymnes et Prières aux Dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*. Vol. 8. Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976.
- Siegel, James T. "Images and Odors in Javanese Practices Surrounding Death." *Indonesia* 36 (1983): 1–14.
- Simmel, Georg. "Culture of Interaction: Sociology of the Senses." Pages 109–20 in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. Edited by David Frisby and Mike Featherstone. London: Sage, 1997.
- Smith, G. Elliot. "Incense and Libations." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 4 (1917): 191–262.
- Smith, George. *The Chaldean Account of Genesis: Containing the Description of the Creation, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the Destruction of Sodom, the Times of the Patriarchs, and Nimrod, Babylonian Fables, and Legends of the Gods, From the Cuneiform Inscriptions*. New ed., rev. and corr. New York: Scribners, 1880.
- Smith, Mark M. *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 2006.
- Smith, Sidney. *The First Campaign of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, B.C. 705-681. The Assyrian Text, Edited With Transliteration, Translation, and Notes*. Eothen Series 2. London: Luzac, 1921.
- Soden, Wolfram von. *Die Lexikalischer Tafelserien der Babylonier und Assyrer in den Berlin Museen. II. Die Akkadischen Synonymenlisten*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Berlin: Zu beziehen durch die Vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen, 1933.
- Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. "Literary Criticism." Pages 105–6 in *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed., rev. and expanded. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.
- Speiser, E. A. "Akkadian Myths and Epics." Pages 60–72, 501–3 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by James B. (James Bennett) Pritchard. 3d, with supplement. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1974.

- Speleers, Louis. *Traduction, Index et Vocabulaire des Textes des Pyramides Égyptiennes*. Brussels, 1934.
- Sperling, David S. "Dinah, 'Innah, and Related Matters." Pages 73–93 in *Mishneh Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy and Its Cultural Environment in Honor of Jeffrey H. Tigay*. Edited by Nili Sacher Fox, David A. Glatt-Gilad, and Michael J. Williams. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- Starr, Ivan. *Queries to the Sun-god: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*. State Archives of Assyria 4. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University, 1990.
- Stoddart, D. M. "Human Odour Culture: A Zoological Perspective." Pages 3–17 in *Perfumery: The Psychology and Biology of Fragrance*. Edited by Steve Van Toller and George H. Dodd. New York: Chapman & Hall, 1988.
- Stoller, Paul. *Sensuous Scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997.
- — —. *The Taste of Ethnographic Things*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989.
- Stol, Marten. "Diagnosis and Therapy in Babylonian Medicine." *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 32 (1991): 42–65.
- Strassmaier, J. N. *Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529-521 v. Chr.)*. Babylonische Texte 8-9. Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1890.
- — —. *Inschriften von Darius, König von Babylon (521-485 v. Chr.)*. Babylonische Texte 10-12. Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1892.
- — —. *Inschriften von Nabonidus, König von Babylon (555-538 v. Chr.)*. Babylonische Texte 1-4. Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1889.
- Streck, Maximilian. *Assurbanipal und die Letzten Assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's*. Vol. 2. 3 vols. Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 7. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1916.
- Synnott, Anthony. "A Sociology of Smell." *Canadian Review of Sociology* 28, no. 4 (1991): 437–59.
- — —. *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Tallqvist, Knut Leonard. *Die Assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlû: nach den Originalen im British Museum*. Vol. 20, no. 6. Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae. Leipzig: A. Pries, 1895.
- Talon, Philippe. *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš*. State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 4. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2005.

- Thompson, R. Campbell. *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- — —. “Assyrian Medical Prescriptions for Diseases of the Stomach.” *Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie Orientale* 26, no. 2 (1929): 7–92.
- — —. *Assyrian Medical Texts From the Originals in the British Museum*. London: H. Milford, Oxford University, 1923.
- — —. “Assyrian Medical Texts II.” *Proceedings of the Society of Medicine (Section of the History of Medicine)* 19 (1926): 29–78.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Chest and Lungs.” *Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie Orientale* 31, no. 1 (1934): 1–29.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Ears.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 63, no. 1 (1931): 1–25.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Head.” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 24, no. 1 (1907): 1–6.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for Diseases of the Head.” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 24, no. 4 (1908): 323–53.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for the Head.” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 53, no. 4 (1937): 217–38.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for the Head—Concluded.” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 54, no. 1/4 (1937): 12–40.
- — —. “Assyrian Prescriptions for Treating Bruises or Swellings.” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 47, no. 1 (1930): 1–25.
- — —. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XVI (50 Plates)*. Vol. 16. 50 vols. Second Imprint. London: The Trustees, 1911.
- — —. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XVII (50 Plates)*. Vol. 17. 50 vols. London: The Trustees, 1903.
- — —. *Cuneiform Texts From Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum. Part XXII (50 Plates)*. Vol. 23. 50 vols. London: Harrison and Sons, 1906.
- — —. *Late Babylonian Letters: Transliterations and Translations of a Series of Letters Written in Babylonian Cuneiform, Chiefly During the Reigns of Nabonidus, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius*. Luzac’s Semitic Text and Translation Series 17. London: Luzac and Co, 1906.
- — —. *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations Against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and*

- Kindred Evil Spirits, Which Attack Mankind. Volume I: "Evil Spirits."* Luzac's Semitic Text and Translation Series 14. London: Luzac and Co, 1903.
- — —. *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations Against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, Which Attack Mankind. Volume II "Fever Sickness" and "Headache," Etc.* Luzac's Semitic Text and Translation Series 15. London: Luzac and Co, 1904.
- — —. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Repr. 1981. Oxford: Clarendon, 1930.
- Thureau-Dangin, François. *Une Relation de la Huitième campagne de Sargon (714 Av. J.C.). Textes cunéiformes*, Musée du Louvre, Département des antiquités orientales 3. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1912.
- Tigay, Jeffrey H. *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- van Toller, Steve, and George H. Dodd, eds. *Perfumery: The Psychology and Biology of Fragrance*. New York: Chapman & Hall, 1988.
- van der Toorn, Karl. *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia*. Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985.
- Tremayne, Arch. *Records from Erech, Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538-521 B. C.)*. Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 7. New Haven: Yale University, 1925.
- Tsai, Michelle. "Bar-B-You: What's the Smell of Burning Human Flesh?," March 26, 2007. No pages. Online:
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/03/barbyou.html.
- Tsevat, Matitiah. "Marriage and Monarchical Legitimacy in Ugarit and Israel." *JSS* 3 (1958): 237–43.
- Unger, Eckhard. *Babylon: Die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1931.
- Ungnad, Arthur. *Babylonische Briefe aus der Zeit der Hammurapi-Dynastie*. Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 6. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1914.
- — —. "Neubabylonische Privaturkunden aus der Sammlung Amherst." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 19 (1959): 74–82.
- Unterman, Jeremiah. "The (Non)Sense of Smell in Isaiah 11.3." *Hebrew Studies* 33 (1992): 17–23.
- Vannini, Phillip, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk. *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture: A Sociology of the Senses*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

- Vaux, Roland de. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Translated by Damian McHugh. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971.
- Violleaud, Charles. "De quelques textes divinatoires." Pages 197–222 in *Babyloniaca: études de philologie assyro-babylonienne* 3. Paris: Guethner, 1910.
- Vroon, Piet. *Smell: The Secret Seducer*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994.
- Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Washington, Harold C. *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope and the Hebrew Proverbs*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 142. Atlanta: Scholars, 1994.
- Waskul, Dennis D., and Phillip Vannini. "Smell, Odor, and Somatic Work: Sense-Making and Sensory Management." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 53–71.
- — —. "Smell, Odor, and Somatic Work: Sense-Making and Sensory Management." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 53–71.
- Watanabe, Kazuko. *Die Adê-Vereidigung Anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons*. Baghdader Mitteilungen 3. Berlin: Mann, 1987.
- Waterman, Leroy. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire*. University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 17-20. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930.
- — —. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part I Translation and Transliteration*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930.
- — —. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part II Translation and Transliteration*. Vol. 2. 4 vols. University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1930.
- — —. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part III Commentary*. Vol. 3. 4 vols. University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1931.
- — —. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire. Part IV Supplement and Indexes*. Vol. 4. 4 vols. University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 18. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1936.
- Watson, Duane Frederick, and Alan J. Hauser. *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography With Notes on History and Method*. Biblical Interpretation Series 4. New York: E. J. Brill, 1994.

- Watson, Wilfred G. E. "Some Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Song of Songs." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (1995): 253–71.
- Watts, James. "Ritual Rhetoric in Ancient Near Eastern Texts." Pages 39–66 in *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*. Edited by Carol Lipson and Roberta A. Binkley. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor, 2009.
- Weeks, Stuart. *Early Israelite Wisdom*. Oxford Theological Monographs. New York: Clarendon, 1994.
- Weidner, Ernst F. "Der Staatsvertrag Aššurnirâris VI. von Assyrien mit Mati'ilu von Bît-Agusi." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 8 (1932): 2–34.
- — —. "Ein Omenkommentar des Nabû-Zuqup-Kênu." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 21 (1966): 46.
- — —. *Gestirn-Darstellungen auf Babylonischen Tontafeln*. Sitzungsberichte / Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 254. Bd., Abh.2. Wien: Böhlau in Kommission, 1967.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. Vol. 5. New Haven: Yale University, 1995.
- Weippert, Helga, Klaus Seybold, and Manfred Weippert. *Beiträge zur Prophetischen Bildsprache in Israel und Assyrien*. Vol. 64. Orbis biblicus et orientalis. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985.
- Weippert, Manfred. "'König, fürchte dich nicht!': Assyrische Prophetie im 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr." *Orientalia* 71, no. 1 (2002): 1–54.
- Weissbach, F. H. "Achämenidisches." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 91 (1937): 80–87.
- — —. "Die dreisprachige Inschrift Darius Susa E." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 44, no. 1–2 (1938): 150–69.
- — —. *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*. Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 3. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911.
- Wellhausen, Julius. *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1886.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Word Biblical Commentary 1. Waco: Word Books, 1987.
- Westermann, Claus. *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*. Atlanta: Westminster John Knox, 1987.
- White, John Bradley. *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry*. Vol. 38. Society of Biblical Literature. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978.

- Wilson, John A. "Egyptian Oracles and Prophecies." Pages 60–72, 501–3 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3d, with supplement. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1974.
- Wilson, J. V. Kinnier. "Leprosy in Ancient Mesopotamia." *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie Orientale* 60, no. 1 (1966): 47–58.
- Winckler, Hugo. *Altorientalische Forschungen*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1893.
- Wiseman, D. J. "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon" 20/1. *Iraq* (1958): 1–99.
- Wolff, Klaus, Richard Allen Johnson, and Dick Suurmond. *Color Atlas and Synopsis of Clinical Dermatology*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Medical Pub. Division, 1992.
- Wolkstein, Diane, and Samuel Noah Kramer. *Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns From Sumer*. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Wright, Paul H. "The City of Larsa in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Study of Urban and Intercity Relations in Antiquity." Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1994.
- Wunsch, Cornelia. *Das Egibi-Archiv*. Cuneiform Monographs 20. Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000.
- — —. *Die Urkunden Des Babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk: zum handel mit naturalien im 6. jahrhundert v. Chr.* Cuneiform Monographs 3b. Groningen: Styx Publications, 1993.
- Yee, Gale. "The Book of Hosea: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." Pages 195–297 in *Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature, Daniel, The Twelve Prophets*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. Vol. 7. 12 vols. The New Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Zohary, Michael. *Plants of the Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982.