

INANNA AND DUMUZI: A SUMERIAN LOVE STORY

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The recent edition of the compositions concerned with the relations between Inanna and Dumuzi by Yitschak Sefati provides an occasion to revisit some important Assyriological questions concerning literature, ritual, and language. Some editorial problems raised by the diverse epigraphic conventions used to transcribe cuneiform texts in this edition, and several matters of detail, are also addressed.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

THE LABEL "LOVE POETRY" may raise some eyebrows when applied to the Sumerian compositions containing references to the relations between Inanna and Dumuzi, the so-called cycle of Dumuzi and Inanna (usually abbreviated DI). Some scholars would prefer "sexual lyric" or "sex poetry."¹ Nevertheless, this is probably the result of our Western bias. The tradition of love poetry that stems from the *trouvères*, *troubadours*, and *Minnesinger* of the Middle Ages and their understanding of "courtly love" shows little awareness of the bodies of the lovers.² This medieval tradition, eventually blended with partly Theocritean and Virgilian models of pastoral love, permeates, in one way or another, our whole concept of love in poetry, from *il dolce stil nuovo* (Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, etc.) to Romanticism. Even the generic umbrella under which we place love poetry as a distinctive genre, viz., lyric, seems to have had different meanings in different periods.³ Moreover, one can always object that our scholarly classification of ancient Near Eastern literary works according to Greco-Roman and Western genres forces our compositions into a Procrustean bed

on which they frequently appear to be quite uncomfortable.⁴ Nevertheless, in spite of all the possible pitfalls and shortcomings of generic labels, the term "love" does seem appropriate for the contents of most of these lyrics, whether this love is full of carnal passion, or as elusive as the mere hint of what may have perhaps been an ancient ritual.⁵

The so-called "sacred marriage" ritual poses more serious problems. It has been traditionally assumed that the cycle of lyric compositions focused on the relations between Inanna and Dumuzi reflects a ritual usually

This is a review article of: *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature*. By YITSCHAK SEFATI. Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Publications of The Samuel N. Kramer Institute of Assyriology. Ramat Gan: BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1998. Pp. 445, 44 plates. \$49.

¹ As in the title of the very important review article of Sefati's work by Steve Tinney, "Notes on Sumerian Sexual Lyric," *JNES* 59 (2000): 23–30.

² On courtly love, see, for instance, C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936), 1–43.

³ See A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), 230.

⁴ On genres and Mesopotamian literary traditions, see H. Vanstiphout, "Some Thoughts on Genre in Mesopotamian Literature," in *Keilschriftliche Literaturen*, 32 RAI, ed. K. Hecker and W. Sommerfeld (Berlin: Reimer, 1985), 1–11; P. Michalowski, "On the Early History of the *eršahunga* Prayer," *JCS* 39 (1987): 37–48 (esp. 39–42); S. Tinney, *The Nippur Lament* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1996), 11–25. A good example of the problems posed by assigning ancient literary works to later generic categories is provided by the so-called "autobiographies" of Ancient Egypt—see A. M. Gnirs, "Die ägyptische Autobiographie," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. A. Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 191–241. In the same volume see also W. Guglielmi, "Die ägyptische Liebespoesie," 335–47; and R. B. Parkinson, "Types of Literature in the Middle Kingdom," 297–312. Still, in the age of (post-)deconstruction, one can endorse R. D. Hume's statement in *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-historicism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 135: "we can construct our own contextual reading of a work in any genre."

⁵ For a recent treatment of ancient Near Eastern love poetry (from Mesopotamia to the Sasanians), see B. Musche, *Die Liebe in der altorientalischen Dichtung* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). A very exciting reading is offered by V. Haas, *Babylonischer Liebesgarten: Erotik und Sexualität im alten Orient* (Munich: Beck, 1999).

called by scholars "sacred marriage" or *hieros gamos*. As part of the celebration of the New Year from the second half of the third millennium to the beginning of the second, the king, representing Dumuzi, would have had—or, more likely, pretended to have—sexual intercourse with a woman (perhaps an *entu*-priestess) representing the goddess Inanna. Echoes of this ceremony survived in first-millennium texts that describe royal rituals and the *epithalamia* of, for instance, Nabû and Tašmētu in Assyria, and Nabû and Nanaya in Babylonia. Most of the details of this sacred marriage are unknown to us.⁶ As J. S. Cooper has pointed out, the arcane character of this ritual is not due only to temporal distance, but also to its inherent nature.⁷ Sefati (pp. 30–49) collects all the alleged evidence, to which one could only add some further mentions of priestesses spending the night in the god's bedchamber (*ki-na₂*) in Ur III texts from Lagaš.⁸ As with Nabû and Tašmētu, and Nabû and Nanaya in later periods, other possible "sacred marriage" rites have been proposed for earlier periods, especially involving the Moon-god, Nanna/Suen, and his high priestess at Ur.⁹ In spite of all of this more or less oblique

evidence, important doubts have been cast on the actual existence of such a rite.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the unclear and scanty evidence has to be explained in the light of the very nature of this ritual, whatever its actual performative mechanisms were. It is not an accident that in the case of ancient Greece the evidence for a *hieros gamos* is also scanty and unclear.¹¹

THE LANGUAGE OF INANNA

In his very detailed introduction, Sefati deals not only with the alleged historical and cultic background or *kernel* of these compositions, but also with stylistics (phraseology, construction, poetic structure, etc.) and with some linguistic points. The editor shows considerable skepticism about the nature of *eme-sal* as a women's language or *Frauensprache*.¹² As Sefati points out, *eme-sal* is attested in some compositions of very concrete genres: cultic songs performed by the gala-priests (Akkadian *kalû*), diverse texts containing Inanna's speech (myths, Inanna-Dumuzi cycle, etc.), and in some laments over the destruction of cities (those of Ur, Eridu, and Nippur). No text is written entirely in *eme-sal*, and there is no true consistency in its use—an otherwise "main dialect" text may present some scattered *eme-sal*. Even in texts

⁶ J. Renger and J. S. Cooper, "Heilige Hochzeit," *RIA* 4 (1975): 251–69; G. Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994), 130–38; B. Groneberg, *Lob der Ištar: Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin* (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 137–50. On the hierogamic rituals and their mythological and literary reflection in the ancient Mediterranean, see Ch. Auffrath, *Der drohende Untergang: "Schöpfung" in Mythos und Ritual im Alten Orient und in Griechenland am Beispiel der Odyssee und des Ezechielbuches* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 220–29, 559–72.

⁷ J. S. Cooper, "Sacred Marriage and Popular Cult in Early Mesopotamia," in *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East*, ed. E. Matshushima (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1993), 81–96.

⁸ See P. Steinkeller, "On Rulers, Priests, and Sacred Marriage: Tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship," in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East*, ed. K. Watanabe (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1999), 103–37 (esp. 133 n. 102). Also on the complex and ambiguous alleged evidence from Ur III, see W. Sallaberger, *Der kultische Kalender der Ur III-Zeit, I–2* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993), 210 n. 990, 291 n. 1358, 314; "Ur III-Zeit," in W. Sallaberger and A. Westenholz, *Mesopotamien, 3: Akkade-Zeit und Ur III-Zeit*, OBO 160/3 (Freiburg: Editions Universitaires, 1999), 155–56.

⁹ D. Charpin, *Le clergé d'Ur au siècle d'Hammurabi* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 198–99; J. Goodnick Westenholz, "En-ĥeduanna, en-Priestess, Hen of Nanna, Spouse of Nanna," in *DUMU-E₂-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*,

ed. H. Behrens et al. (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1989), 539–56 (esp. 547–48); I. M. Diakonoff [Дьяконов], Люди города Ура (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 267–327, 369–82; Th. Richter, *Untersuchungen zu den lokalen Panthea Süd- und Mittelbabyloniens in altbabylonischer Zeit*, AOAT 257 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1999), 379. Although probably not directly connected, a hierogamic ritual involving Šamaš seems to have been the center of a ceremony at the Ebabbar in Sippar in the first millennium; see E. Matshushima, "Le 'lit' de Šamaš et le rituel de mariage à l'Ebabbar," *ASJ* 7 (1985): 130–37.

¹⁰ R. F. G. Sweet, "A New Look at the 'Sacred Marriage' in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Corolla torontonensis: Studies in Honour of R. M. Smith* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1994), 85–104.

¹¹ W. Burkert, *Homo necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1983 [German ed., 1972]), 216, 232–35, 238, 245, 283–84; and *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985 [German ed., 1977]), 108–9.

¹² On *eme-sal* in general, see M. K. Schretter, *Emesal-Studien*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft 69 (Innsbruck: Universität Innsbruck, 1990). On Women's languages as "genderlects" (*Sexlekte*), see H. Glück, "Der Mythos von den Frauensprachen," *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie* 9 (1979): 60–95.

that can be labeled as *eme-sal* because of their genre, one sometimes finds very few *eme-sal* words. Perhaps the most important evidence to support the idea that *eme-sal* was a women's language is the fact that *eme-sal* features actually appear in the speech of real women in the "Dialogues Between Two Women" ("Two Women A" = Dialogue 4, and "Two Women B" [me-ta-am₃ am₃-di-di-in] = Dialogue 5, according to M. Civil's unpublished catalogue and edition).¹³ Nevertheless, in most cases the use of *eme-sal* still seems somehow determined by the genre of the text (lamentations, Inanna-Dumuzi cycle, etc.), since those compositions attributed to Enheduanna by the Sumerian tradition are not in *eme-sal*—although, regardless of the gender of their alleged author, generic *decorum* could have played the basic role in the choice of poetic language.

The gala-priests were lamentation priests or cultic performers linked to *eme-sal* material already in Old Babylonian Mari.¹⁴ These priests played the *balag* ("lyre" or "harp"), and recited compositions at funerals as well as diverse kinds of lamentations (as in Gudea St. B v 1–4).¹⁵ They are thought to have been eunuchs—gala is written UŠ.KU, the first sign also having the reading GIŠ₃ ("penis"), and the second one DUR₂ ("anus"), so perhaps there is some pun involved. In fact, gala is homophonous with gal₄-la, "vulva." However, in spite of all the references (especially in the Sumerian proverbs) to their alleged effeminate character, many administrative texts mention gala priests who had children, wives, and large families.¹⁶ There is even a Sumerian proverb that may

well rule out the possibility that the gala-priests were eunuchs: gala-e dumu-ni ha-ba-an-da-ra-ra uru^{ki} ma₃-gin₇ he₂-du₃ un ma₃-gin₇ he₂-ti, "a gala-priest hurled his son into the water: 'let the city build like me, let the people live like me!'" (SP 2,99).¹⁷ The mentions of gala-priests as fathers in Ur III administrative texts are more conclusive—for instance, lu₂-x dumu gala (MVN 6, 309 [ITT 4, 7319] rev. i 9); arad₂-mu dumu ad-da-bi gala (MVN 15, 189: 22); ¹engar dumu ur-li gala (BIN 5, 346: 24); etc. Furthermore, the phrase u₄ nam-gala-še₃ i₃-in-ku₄-ra (as in MVN 15, 142: 47'; Watson, BCM 1, 77: 8; etc.) marks the entry into a new status, or rather appointment to that cultic office; but it could hardly refer to any sort of castration ceremony, especially since such an appointment may have been temporary and castration seems quite irreversible. A variant of this expression occurs in a tablet from Dreheim (Šulgi year 47): ⁴Sul-gi-na-pi^š-ti 'mar-tu' u₄ nam-gala in-AK-a (OIP 115, 322 rev. 5). Nevertheless, W. Lambert argues that this evidence would not pose any problem, since the children of the gala-priests may have been adopted, as the *nadiātu* adopted heirs.¹⁸ That there were eunuchs in ancient Mesopotamia is quite possible, but that the gala-priests were eunuchs may be a modern, naive, and unwarranted assumption based on an old case of character assassination.¹⁹

I. Diakonoff and M. K. Schretter have placed *eme-sal* in the wider context of *Frauensprachen*.²⁰ As they have pointed out, *eme-sal* and the Chukchee women's language share some important features, since both are based chiefly on consonant substitution.²¹ For instance,

¹³ See also B. Alster, "Sumerian Literary Dialogues and Debates and Their Place in the Ancient Near Eastern Literature," in *Living Waters* (Fr. Løkkegaard), ed. E. Keck et al. (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1990), 1–16 (esp. 7–9).

¹⁴ See M. E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: The eršemma*, HUCAS 2 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1981), 4–6. On the gala-priests in general and their relation to *eme-sal*, see M. K. Schretter, *Emesal-Studien*, 124–36. On the existence of female gala-priests, see F. N. H. al-Rawi, "Two Old Akkadian Letters Concerning the Offices of *kala²um* and *nārum*," ZA 82 (1992): 180–85.

¹⁵ See J. A. Black, "Eme-sal Cult Songs and Prayers," *AuOr* (Fs. Civil) 9 (1991): 23–36. On the relationship between gender and genre, see J. S. Cooper, "Gendered Sexuality in Sumerian Love Poetry," in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 85–97.

¹⁶ On gala-priests in the third millennium, see I. J. Gelb, "Homo ludens in Early Mesopotamia," *StOr* (Fs. A. Salonen) 46 (1975): 43–76; Sallaberger, *Die kultische Kalender*, 149–50, 288, 298.

¹⁷ See B. Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer, I–II* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1997), 65, 371. For a different interpretation, see E. I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1959), 247–48, 310–11.

¹⁸ W. G. Lambert, "Prostitution," in *Außenseiter und Randgruppen: Beiträge zu einer Sozialgeschichte des Alten Orients*, ed. V. Haas, Xenia 32 (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1992), 127–58 (esp. 151).

¹⁹ On eunuchs in Ur III (amar-ku₅), see K. Maekawa, "Animal and Human Castration in Sumer, II: Human Castration in the Ur III Period," *Zinbun* 16 (1980): 1–55. On the problem of gender, its perception, and the performance of certain genres (especially laments), see Cooper, "Gendered Sexuality in Sumerian Love Poetry."

²⁰ M. K. Schretter, *Emesal-Studien*, 105–40; I. M. Diakonoff, "Ancient Writing and Ancient Written Language," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Th. Jacobsen*, ed. S. Lieberman, AS 20 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), 99–121.

²¹ Curiously enough, one can draw a typological parallel between many examples of morphemeless syntax in Sumerian

e-me-sal /z/ corresponds to standard Sumerian /d/ (u du “sheep” → e-me-sal e-zē₂), /b/ to /g/ (du g₃ “good” → ze₂-eb), etc. Moreover, e-me-sal presents some specific words that cannot be explained by consonantal correspondences (gašan, “lady,” instead of nin, etc.). In this respect, Sefati agrees with Th. Jacobsen’s approach to e-me-sal. In his review of M.-L. Thomsen’s Sumerian grammar, Jacobsen (*JAOS* 108 [1988]: 131) rejected the *Frauensprache* theory and argued that e-me-sal was “a style of Sumerian rather than an actual dialect.” This style would have been characterized by a “shift of articulation forward in the mouth.” However, no articulatory shift can explain the differences in lexicon. On the other hand, L. V. Bobrova and A. Militarëv have argued that e-me-sal could be a regional dialect, the dialect of a region especially associated with the cult of Inanna (the southernmost area of Sumer); but have failed to present any strong evidence to support their theory.²²

EDITING INANNA AND DUMUZI’S LOVE

The criteria used by the editor to define the corpus of Inanna and Dumuzi are exclusively thematic (pp. 17–29). Nevertheless, other criteria grounded in the curricular tradition and the history of the transmission of the corpus can be pertinent, as S. Tinney has shown in his recent review of this work (*JNES* 59 [2000]: 23–25). Furthermore, as Tinney points out, the actual organization and system of references used in this edition (DI A, DI B, etc.) is based on M. Civil’s unpublished edition of the corpus.

Sefati does not attempt any sort of poetic translation of these compositions, which seems appropriate given the scholarly nature of his work and its likely readership.²³ However, when one does not find poetry in translation, at least accurate renderings are expected. In that respect, Sefati’s choice of words is frequently too tame and delicate, losing most of the erotic flavor of

these texts. For instance, gal₄ is systematically translated as “nakedness,” instead of “vulva.” The use of an abstract noun (“nakedness”) does not transmit the essential meaning of the word in Sumerian, as one can see in Šu-Sîn A 20–21, where a more accurate and evocative translation would read:

Like her beer, her vulva is sweet, how sweet is her beer!

Like her mouth, her vulva is sweet, how sweet is her beer!

Jacobsen’s always beautiful translations exhibit a similar discomfort with anatomy, since he translates here “private parts.”²⁴ For the sake of scholarly taboo, perhaps some translators would be more comfortable using *pudenda muliebria*.

Sefati’s transliterations exhibit a sort of epigraphic optimism: some signs seemingly read by him can hardly be seen on the tablets. This is not to say that his reconstructions are erroneous, rather the opposite: they are excellent reconstructions, based on other witnesses, parallels, phraseology, etc. They are precisely that, *reconstructions*, but they are neither consistently nor conveniently indicated as such. Sefati uses asterisks for reconstructed signs and subscript dots for damaged and imperfectly written signs—the latter convention creates confusion between slightly damaged signs (marked with subscript dots) and partially broken or erased signs (indicated with half square brackets). Although these epigraphic conventions have been used by other Assyriologists in the past (especially W. H. Ph. Römer and J. Klein), they can be quite misleading. For instance, the subscript dots (a convention borrowed from Greek and Latin epigraphy) are especially inadequate for a logosyllabic writing system. Moreover, the concurrence of two markers creates confusions, as in line 1 of ms. A of Šu-Sîn C, where the editor reads im-*m[a-an-du₁], whereas on the tablet there is no trace of that ma.

In order to illustrate the editor’s somewhat optimistic readings, I will compare his transliterations with mine. I carefully collated some of the tablets at the University Museum in Philadelphia, especially two witnesses of DI A (A = CBS 10465 and B = CBS 8085), the only two sources of DI Y (A = CBS 4569 and B = UM 29-16-237), and one of Šu-Sîn C (A = N 3560). For instance, in DI A 1 ms. B, Sefati reads [šeš¹-e nin₉-ra mi₂ n[a-] (based on ms. A, one can easily reconstruct n[a-mu-e]), but a close reading would be better reflected as

and word-composition in Chukchee; see J. Krecher, “Morphemeless Syntax in Sumerian as Seen on the Background of Word-composition in Chukchee,” *ASJ* 9 (1987): 67–88.

²² L. V. Bobrova and A. Yu. Militarëv, “Towards the Reconstruction of Sumerian Phonology,” in *Lingvističeska rekonstrukcija i drevnejšaja istorija Vostoka. Čast. 1* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 96–105.

²³ Other recent translations of some of these texts can be found in Shin Shifra and Jacob Klein, *בימים הרחוקים ההם: אנתולוגיה משירת המזרח הקדום* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996), 333–47, 702–3; V. K. Afanasieva, *От начала начал: Антология шумерской поэзии* (St. Petersburg: Centr “Peterburgskoye Voskovedenie,” 1997), 131–37, 390–92.

²⁴ Th. Jacobsen, “Two *bal-bal-e* Dialogues,” in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of M. H. Pope*, ed. J. H. Marks and R. M. Good (Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1987), 57–63 (esp. 60).

Sefati:	DI A 6 ms. A:	nin ₉ gada-maḥ-e ḥi-li- ba ⁷ -e ⁷ -TE-A
	DI A 6 ms. B:	in-nin ₉ gada-maḥ-a ḥi-li 'ma-e ¹ -T[E.A]
	DI A 7 ms. A:	ḏinanna *gada-*maḥ-e ḥi-li ba ⁷ -e ⁷ -TE.A
	DI A 7 ms. B:	ḏinanna gada-maḥ-a ḥi-li ma-e-T[E ⁷ .A]
Rubio:	DI A 6 ms. A:	nin ₉ 'gada ¹ -maḥ ¹ -e ¹ ḥi ¹ -li ¹ [x x-T]E-A ¹
	DI A 6 ms. B:	in-nin ₉ gada- 'maḥ ¹ -a ḥi ¹ -li ¹ 'x x ¹ []
	DI A 7 ms. A:	ḏrinanna ¹ gada [x x] ḥi ¹ -li x-e ¹ -[T]E.A
	DI A 7 ms. B:	ḏinanna gada 'maḥ ¹ -a ḥi ¹ -li ¹ ma-e-T[E.A]

[šeš]- 'e nin₉-ra mi₂¹ 'x¹ [] (the initial šeš is clear on ms. A). Lines 6–7 of the composition provide a more striking example shown in the table above.

In other instances, the editor's notations are particularly inconsistent. In line 59 of DI Y, Sefati reads za-bar šu-dadag-*ga / ḥe₂-me-en in ms. A and za-bar šu-dadag-ga [x x x] in ms. B. Leaving aside the fact that the sign dadag (UD.UD) in ms. A has the second UD half-erased (UD. 'UD¹), the ga sign on ms. A is just missing the lines inside, but the editor writes an asterisk before it. However, in the same line on ms. B, there is absolutely no trace of ga left, but the editor reconstructs this sign and marks it with a mere subscript dot, when it should be in square brackets. Similarly, in line 58 of ms. B of the same composition, the sign transcribed as zaḡag by Sefati is completely erased and one can see only the break left by the vanished sign.

The previous remarks are not meant to detract from the detailed epigraphic work this edition offers. One might argue that signs readable a decade ago, when Sefati was working on these texts in Philadelphia, have now been eroded by merciless time. Nevertheless, the frequency and distribution of these phantom readings (though perfectly well justified if they were indicated as reconstructions) points to a sometimes inconsistent and even misleading use of epigraphic conventions.

NOTES TO SOME PASSAGES

P. 32: Concerning ḏlugal-URUXKAR₂, to the references quoted by Sefati, one should add especially G. Selz, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des altsumerischen Stadtstaates von Lagaš* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1995), 163–69; P. Pisi, "Il dio Lugal-URUXKAR^{ki} e il culto degli antenati regali nella Lagaš pre-sargonica," *Orientalis Antiqui Miscellanea* 2 (1995): 1–40.

DI A (pp. 120ff.): In lines 5–7, instead of SIA and TE.A one should possibly transcribe diri and kar. If the editor were to prefer transliterations rather than transcriptions, one would expect GA₂xKID₂ instead of dan₃ in lines 37ff. The editor's choice is motivated by his de-

sire to indicate that parts of diri and kar are broken in some manuscripts. However, such transliterations may cause the reader to think that the editor is proposing a special reading for those signs.

DI B (pp. 128ff.): In lines 28–29, instead of "my blossoming garden of apple trees" and "my fruitful garden of celtis-trees," one may translate "a garden of apple trees (is) my blossoming one" and "a garden of mes-trees (is) my 'fruit-bearer'"; see B. Groneberg, "Brust (irtum)-Gesänge," in *Munuscula Mesopotamica; Fs. J. Renger*, ed. B. Böck et al., AOAT 267 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1999), 182. Groneberg's literal translation of gurun il₂-la-mu as "Mein-die-Frucht-Erhebender" seems more effective (compare to DI E 4). In line 17, SAL-la should probably be read ga₄-la ("my one who for me raises the festive garment of the vulva").²⁵ Furthermore, in line 21 ga₄-la-ga₂ bi₂-im-mar seems a better reading.

DI C (pp. 133ff.): In lines 41ff., the reading of ḏba-U₂ as ḏba-ba₆ is supported by syllabic spellings such as ḏba-ba in Ur III administrative texts from Nippur (H. Sauren, ZA 59 [1969]: 28) and in a list of gods from Fāra (SF 1 xi 13; see Krebernik, ZA 76 [1986]: 179). See also G. Selz, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt*, 26.²⁶ This divine name aside, the reading ba₆ of U₂ is probably at-

²⁵ See Sefati himself, "An Oath of Chastity in a Sumerian Love Song (SRT 31)?" in *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology Dedicated to P. Artzi*, ed. J. Klein and A. Skaist (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, 1990), 45–63 (esp. 57).

²⁶ In third-millennium personal names, the alternation between ur-ba-ba (OSP 1, 131 iii 3; UET 3, 10, 11; TMH NF 1/2, 48, 11; 312, 3), ur-ḏba-ba (TMH NF 1/2, 11a, 4 et passim), and ur-ḏba-U₂ also supports the reading ḏba-ba₆, as well as the sequence e₂ ba-ba-ta, "from the temple of Baba" (YOS 4, 203, 5); for references, see H. Limet, *L'anthroponymie sumérienne dans les documents de la 3^e dynastie d'Ur* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968), 536; R. A. Di Vito, *Studies in Third Millennium Sumerian and Akkadian Personal Names* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993), 30; Sauren, ZA 59 (1969): 28.

tested in the spelling of another divine name, ^dab-U₂, a variant of ^dab-ba in ms. C (CT 24, 1ff., iii 17) of AN = ^dAnum (II 268), whereas mss. A (YBC 2401 iv 27) and B (CT 24, 20ff., iii 72) have ^dab-ba. Moreover, a god list from Assur (KAV 46 i 14') has [ba]-a-bu : ^dba¹-U₂, which would point to a reading bu₁₁ of U₂ within a later, probably Semiticized, reading tradition.²⁷ As Sefati recalls, A. Falkenstein argued that Inanna and Baba eventually merged in the Uruk pantheon, Baba becoming an epithet of Inanna.²⁸ However, such identification would make little sense if these lines are spoken by Inanna. For collations to ms. C of this composition, see Tinney, *JNES* 59 (2000): 27.

In his discussion of line 9 (p. 142), the confusion Sefati refers to must be between ŠIMxSIG₇ (= šembi), ŠIMxKUŠU₂ (formerly read as ŠIMxUH₃) and ŠIM (= šembi₂).

DI D (p. 151): Alster's copy of ms. B (NBC 10923; pl. V–VI) presents some divergences from the photographs (pl. XXI). In line 2 (NBC 10923 obv. 19), the copy has [-]¹x-še₃¹ while the photograph looks like [-d]e₃, and Sefati follows the photograph here. In line 3 (NBC 10923 rev. 1), the copy does not look at all like 'bar¹, and the photograph is unclear.

DI E (pp. 165ff.): Lines 2–4: Whether being well-watered like a lettuce (hi-iz^{sar}-am₃ a ba-an-du_g⁴)²⁹

is an image for the pubic hair covered by sexual secretions or not,³⁰ the actual erotic language in that passage may lie in the use of the word “mother” (ama), as in DI O, especially in line 23: “may you be a son who delights his mother” (dumu ama-a-ni ba-an-zil₂-zil₂-i h[e₂-me-en]). Oedipal connotations aside, the use of dumu as an appellative for a lover is also attested in other Sumerian compositions, such as *Nin me šar₂-ra* (141); see A. Zgoll, *Der Rechtsfall der En-ħedu-Ana im Lied nin-me-šara*, AOAT 246 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997), 433–35. The same usage occurs in Akkadian with *māru* (CAD M/1, 314b). B. Groneberg places these lines within the same tradition of erotic language—see “‘Brust’ (irtum)-Gesänge,” 182–83.

In line 2, ^{gis}kiri₆gi₆-edin-na seems better than ^{gis}kiri₆-MI-edin-na. Similarly, in DI I 1ff. (p. 195), one should read sila-a gi₆-edin-na instead of sila-a-MI-eden-na.

Arabic ḥass (H. Wehr, *Arabic-English dictionary*, ed. J. M. Cowan [third ed. Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1976], 238b; J. G. Hava, *Al-Faraid: Arabic-English Dictionary* [fifth ed., Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq, 1982], 166b) all meaning “lettuce”: see also J. E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 253–54. Pace Hoch, H. A. Hoffner (“Hittite and Ugaritic Words for Lettuce,” *JCS* 25 [1973]: 234), and W. G. E. Watson (“Non-Semitic Words in the Ugaritic Lexicon,” *UF* 27 [1995]: 543), Hittite ḫa-az-zu-wa-ni-iš and Ugaritic ḫsw(n) / ḫšw(n)—as well as Akkadian ḫazannu / azannu (CAD A/1, 526; AHW 92b, 338b)—do not mean “lettuce” but “garlic”: see M. Stol, “Garlic, Onion, Leek,” *BSA* 3 (1987): 58–59; G. del Olmo and J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugaritica, I* (Barcelona: AUSA, 1996), 201a.

³⁰ See Th. Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987), 94 n. 1. However, the same *topos* occurs in the lullaby edited by S. N. Kramer (line 24): ^{gis}kiri₆-mu hi-iz^{sar}-am₃ a im-mi-du_g, “my garden is well-watered like lettuce” (“u₅-a a-ū-a: A Sumerian Lullaby,” in *Studi in onore di E. Volterra, VI* [Milan: Giuffrè, 1971], 194. Jacobsen gives a different interpretation in an appendix to the same article, p. 203). Sefati, who does refer to PSD when discussing a —du_g⁴ (p. 168), seems to have overlooked this interesting parallel quoted by PSD (A/1, 9b). Incidentally, “like” does not need to go in brackets when translating -am₃, since the enclitic copula can be used instead of the equative suffix -gin₇, although this does not happen the other way around. See W. Heimpel, *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), 33–36; JAOS 101 (1981): 404a; M.-L. Thomsen, *The Sumerian Language* (Copenhagen: Akademisk, 1984), 276–77; and H. Vanstiphout, “Some Notes on ‘Enlil and Namzitarra,’” *RA* 74 (1980): 70.

²⁷ See also Richard L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists*, AN: ^dA-nu-um and AN: ^danu šā amēli, TBC 3 (New Haven: Yale Babylonian Collection, 1998), 99, 173–74. Litke argues that both spellings, ^dba-U₂ and ^dba-ba, would reflect the same name, /bawā/ or /bawū/, as /awa/ or /awū/ would hide behind the spellings ^dab-U₄ and ^dab-ba. Although the forms with intervocalic /w/ might well be the underlying representations of these names, it seems more simple to think that we are dealing with the usual phonological patterns of many very early Mesopotamian theonyms and toponyms; on this, see G. Rubio, “On the Alleged Pre-Sumerian Substratum,” *JCS* 51 (1999): 3.

²⁸ A. Falkenstein, “Eine Hymne auf Šušîn von Ur,” *WO* 1 (1947): 43–50 (esp. 49–50).

²⁹ hi-iz or hi-is is clearly a Semitic loanword in Sumerian: Akkadian ḫassū (CAD H 128b; AHW 321a, 1560a); Syriac ḫassā (abs.) / ḫastā (det.), pl. ḫassē (J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1903], 150a); Aramaic ḫassā or ḫasā (with dageš according to G. H. Dalman, *Aramäisch-Neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch* [third ed., Göttingen: E. Pfeiffer, 1938], 154b; but without dageš in M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [1903, rpt. 1971, New York: Judaica], 485b);

DI G (pp. 177ff.): A new ms. of this composition has been identified and published by Tinney, *JNES* 59 (2000): 28–30.

DI H (p. 186): Line 15 presents some problems. The copy (*TMH* NF 3, 25 obv. 15) has ur_3 -ra whereas Sefati reads dagal-la. Moreover, a verbal form such as $mu-di-ni-ib-di'-di'$ would be completely ungrammatical, since di is a non-finite stem of dug_4 .

DI P (pp. 219ff.): If line i 24a is placed before i 24, then the dative in i 24 (^{d} dumu-zi ki-ig-ga-ag₂ ^{d} mu-ul-lil₂-la₂-ra, “to Dumuzi, the beloved of Enlil”) would correspond to the dative verbal prefix in i 25 (ama-mu . . . mu-na-kal, “my mother cherishes him”). In iii 31, one should read sud-ra₂ instead of su₃-du. In his commentary to i 19 (p. 229), the editor argues that a restoration [$muš_3$]-ma-za would connect this term to $muš_3$ -ma-za-mu in Ugu-mu 41. However, a term for a part of the face seems not to fit the context of

a line with u_4 -za l. Also, it is not clear that the damaged indented line after i 19 contains any gloss ($muš_3$ x x), since glosses here are either in phonetic orthography or in Akkadian. In ii 30, the restoration ḫa-ra-⟨an-⟩ ur_{11} -ru based on line ii 29 in ms. A is unnecessary, since the latter is not grammatical (in any case, the pronominal prefix expected here would be /b-/).

SF (pp. 324ff.): On the use of the pronominal prefix /b-/ in lines 43–60b, see P. Attinger, *N.A.B.U.* 1996 no. 110. This seems to have been misunderstood by M. Geller, *Or.* n.s. 67 (1998): 92, but see also Attinger, *N.A.B.U.* 1998 no. 41 (p. 43).

In spite of some minor disagreements concerning primarily details of translation and editing conventions, we should all thank and praise Y. Sefati for having made these compositions available to the scholarly public in an enjoyable volume containing a remarkable wealth of information.