Transtextual stylization of Neo-Assyrian accounts of war

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Abstract

This paper studies the transtextual features of accounts of war and descriptions of enemies in Assyrian royal narrative texts. It first offers a discussion of the relevant theoretical background, mainly the works of Gérard Genette, and then outlines a methodology for consistent analyses of transtextual features in the studied corpus. The main part of the paper consists of case studies, diachronically ranging from Tiglath-Pileser III to Esarhaddon. These case studies aim at analyzing the poetics and effects of transtextual arrangements. Here, the paper mainly looks at allusions to the epos of Gilgameš and the enūma eliš. The non-mytho-epical topos of the enemies' ruler's flight on a lone mare, attested in a few early Neo-Assyrian texts, is traced back to its pictorial origins. Finally, the paper highlights the importance of literay allusions when textually stylizing both enemies and Assyrian king engaged in acts of warfare.

Keywords

Intertextuality, Transtextuality, Assyrian Royal Narrative Texts, Neo-Assyrian Empire

1. Introduction

Studying the Neo-Assyrian accounts of war against neighbouring and other foreign powers, one quickly notices that quite a number of these rely on either a) generic narrative elements traditionally belonging to the so-called "architext", i.e., the poetic parameters of Assyrian royal narrative texts, or b) inter- or hypertextual stylizations of the respective scene. For an effective decipherment of both types, one should turn to a specific methodology of transtextual analysis that allows researchers to discern between generic elements on the one hand, and proper allusions to and citations of literary works on the other. The works of French professor of literature Gérard Genette provide the theoretical background for such an approach.[1] Genette understands textuality, or rather: transtextuality as "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts",[2] and consequently describes it as the sum of five distinct, yet overlapping discourses, namely architextuality, intertextuality, hypertextuality, paratextuality and metatextuality.[3] For this paper, only the first three items are of interest.[4]

2. Theoretical background and methodology

Architextuality[5] stands for the defining parameters of a text class (the so-called 'architext') as well as for the relationship of an individual text to its architext. The establishment of any architext begins with the formation of a distinct 'idiolect', a specific pool of figures of speech and expressions that characterize a text class. During this process, it is common for parts of already established idiolects from other text classes to be taken over and reused as an extendable basis for forming a text class's own idiolect. Furthermore, the continuous reproduction of a specific constellation of three text-constitutive factors, namely form, mode and content, leads to the establishment of text classes and genres. Here, form comprises both the linguistic setup or linguistic form of a text as well as the so-called "narrative form". Mode means the form of representation of a text: for example, pictorial, dramatical, diegetic, acoustic or others. Finally, content refers to the plots, themes, subjects and objects of a text class. Additionally, architextuality refers to any kind of formative processes regarding text classes and genres. Broadly speaking, architextuality is "linking each text to the various kinds of discourse of which it is a representative".[6]

Intertextuality[7] means the "actual presence of one text within another"[8] and comprises the literary forms of citation and allusion. Genette, and therefore this paper, understands a citation only as the complete congruence between the text citing and the text cited. Everything else is to be qualified as an allusion to an earlier text that was produced by means of poetic transformation. An allusion itself is a reference to an older text which for its effect requires the recipient to have at least a sketchy knowledge of or, even better, a distinct potential to identify the text or specific text passage alluded to.

1 Genette 1980, 1988, 1992, 1997a, 1997b.

2 Genette 1997a, p. 1.

3 Genette 1997a, pp. 1-10 and *passim*.

4 Paratextuality generally refers to the "framework" of a text – motto, title, preface, publishing house etc. Since these features are extremely difficult to trace in the context of Assyrian royal narrative texts, there is little use for this category. For a detailed study of paratextuality see Genette 1997b. Metatextuality generally refers to the poetics of commentary texts, i.e., to the poetics of "texts about texts" (cf. Genette 1997a, p. 4). Since there are no cuneiform commentaries pertaining to Assyrian royal inscriptions or epics attested (cf. Frahm 2011), and the texts discussed in this paper do not qualify as commentaries themselves, the category is simply not applicable. Admittedly, there are some "commentary-like" instances in Assyrian royal narrative texts, which are mostly glosses that provide detail on local variations of place names or personal names (cf. Tiglath-Pileser I 01 [= A.0.87.1] ii 25-26 on the PN Kili-Teššup = Errupi; "Sargon's Eighth Campaign" 172 on the region of Subi being alternatively called 'land of the Manneans' by the Urarteans). However, these instances hardly qualify as proper commentaries, i.e., as texts that discuss older texts.

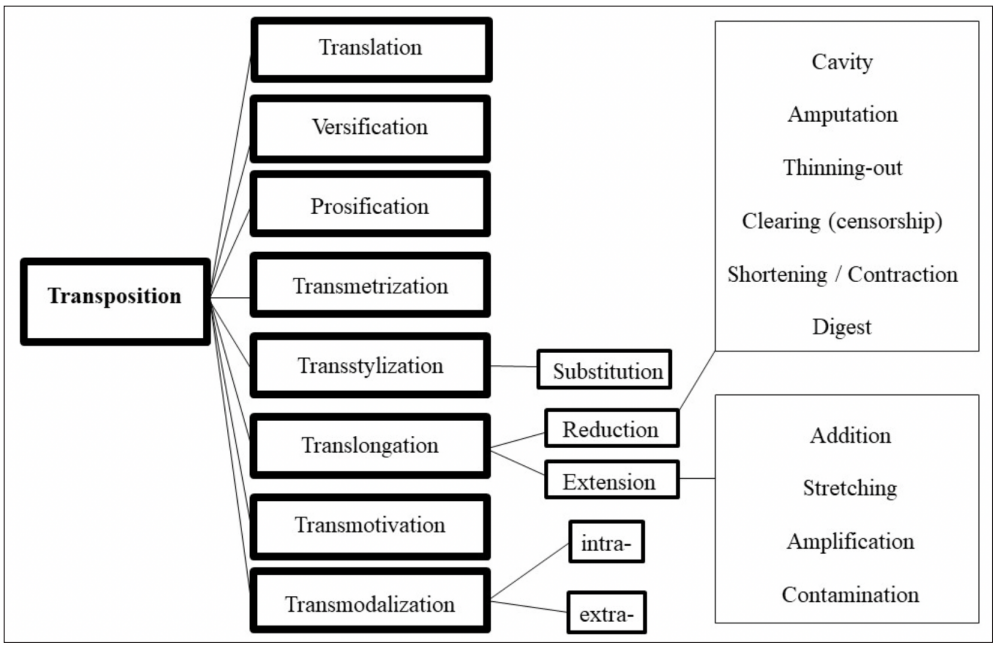
5 Section follows Genette 1992.

6 Genette 1997b, p. xix.

7 This section follows Genette 1997a, pp. 1-3.

8 Genette 1997a, pp. 1-2.

Figure 1



Hypertextuality,[9] lastly, refers to "any relationship uniting a text B (which is called the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (called the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary." A hypertext is generally created by either a transformation (or chain of transformations) or a mimesis of its hypotext ('emulation'). Genette provides a very detailed analysis of techniques of poetic transformation, yet his approach to mimesis-created emulations is a bit scanty. This selective, exemplary overview of the most important techniques for creating a so-called transposition, a hypertext modelled as a transformation of its hypotext in a "serious" register, should give a good impression of his rigorous approach to the issue (fig. 1, *my drawing*).

Based on this theoretical framework, I have developed a methodology for analysing primarily Middle and Neo-Assyrian royal narrative texts. The methodology described below seeks to supplement older, generally less theory-based approaches to the poetics of Neo-Assyrian royal literature by offering a consistent framework for transtextual analyses.[10] The approach originally consists of five steps,[11] but only the first three of them are of importance for this paper.

1) Recognition of transtextualities: Any recognition of a transtextual phenomenon relies heavily on the literary knowledge of the recipient.[12] In general, one should turn to lexica and registers of poetic tropes and figures of specific genres like Michael Streck's compendium on the poetic imagery and figurative language ('Bildersprache') of Mesopotamian epics for additional help and guidance.[13] Transtextual research requires one to constantly reread Mesopotamian literature of all genres and types besides the texts one is researching.

[9] This section follows Genette 1997a, pp. 5-10, 24-30 and *passim*.

[10] See, in selection, e.g. Fales 1981a (ed.), 1981b, 1982, 1991, 1999-2000; Grayson 1981; Hurowitz 2009, 2013; Hurowitz, Westenholz 1990; Kravitz 2003; Liverani 2013, 2016; Ponchia 2000, 2005; Pongratz-Leisten 2015, esp. pp. 258-270 and 290-321; Tadmor 1981, 1997; Weissert 1997; Zawadzki 2014. On Old and Middle Assyrian inscriptions see Chang 1981; Galter 1997, 1998, 2002-2005.

[11] The two steps left out are 4) creation of a textual network and 5) cultural-poetic comparison. For details please see my forthcoming monograph "Untersuchungen zur transtextuellen Poetik assyrischer herrschaftlich-narrativer Texte" which will appear as part of the SAAS series.

[12] Hallet 2006, p. 54; Broich 1985, p. 33; Helbig 1996, pp. 14-15; Genette 1988, pp. 135-154.

[13] Streck 1999.

Regarding Assyrian Royal Narrative Texts, a sound knowledge of mytho-epics will be quite helpful. Additionally, one should also familiarize oneself with what is commonly dubbed "scientific" literature, such as lists or medical texts, as well as with religious texts, especially hymns and prayers.

2) Architextual analysis: The first step after the initial assessment of a transtextually suspicious text is an investigation into its architextual framework. With this, one mainly aims at preventing a misinterpretation of generic elements that are specific to the text class as allusions or, even worse, as citations. If the architextual investigation can eliminate every suspicion, there is no need to continue further. However, if any peculiarities remain, one proceeds to the next step.

3) Inter-/Hypertextual Analysis: The third step aims at an evaluation of the inter- or hypertextual selectivity, meaning an assessment of whether one is dealing with a citation or an allusion. Should there be a complete congruence between hypo- and hypertext, the studied phenomenon qualifies as citation. If, on the other hand, one can determine a suspicious passage is not a citation, but an allusion instead, the transformations made to the hypotext must be pointed out as clearly as possible. Studying this aspect, one should coherently use either Genette's terminology or comparable descriptive tools. Of course, Genette's repertoire needs some tweaking here and there depending on the object of research, but it is important to stress the need for a largely unified or at least easily communicable set of structural analytical tools for transtextual research.

Armed with the just-outlined theoretical and methodological tools, we can finally turn our attention towards the analysis of some texts. For this, we are next going to look at some prominent Neo-Assyrian, mostly Sargonid pieces, focusing on their descriptions of enemies and narrative passages depicting Assyrians waging war on them. As we will see, there is a distinct tendency to handle inter- and hypertextuality in a specific way, depending on the region described or the (presumed) audience targeted.

3. Case studies from the corpus of Neo-Assyrian royal narrative texts

Let us start with one of Assyria's most prominent rivals during the first millennium BC, the Urartian kingdom.[14] Established as a narrative sub-discourse within the Assyrian royal inscriptions since Middle Assyrian times,[15] stories about Assyro-Urartian wars surge in prominence in first millennium texts. An impressive example of this is SAA 3 17 (STT 43), an early Neo-Assyrian heroic poem presumably about Shalmaneser III fighting Urartu.[16] While this text clearly shows traits of an innovative heroic narrative portrayal of Assyrian kings in fashion under Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, it does not include any obvious inter- or hypertextual references to mytho-epics. Yet, as the next example will show, it is likely that some seeds of the later narrative discourse on the Urartian matter were sown under these just-mentioned kings.

Tiglath-Pileser III is known for his reestablishment of a strong monarchy and the stabilization of the Assyrian heartland after the temporary shifts in power witnessed after the death of Shalmaneser III as well as for being the first territorial expansionist since the middle of the ninth century BC.[17] Besides that, his royal inscriptions win first prize in being the most dull and dry proponents of their genre. Nonetheless, they feature the first textual condensation of a prominent topos for the derisive and demeaning description of a conquered enemy: the victim's flight on a lone mare.[18] It is applied to the Urartian king Sarduri, who fled the Kummuḫḫean killing field in 743 BC after having lost this decisive battle against the Assyrians:

[14] See, most recently, Kroll et Al. 2012 with further readings.

[15] The oldest attestation of an Assyro-Urartian conflict known today is Shalmaneser I's inscription A.0.77.1, ll. 27-46 (RIMA 1).

[16] On the question of SAA 3 17's main protagonist, cf. Lambert 1961 and Reade 1989.

[17] See, most recently, Siddall 2013 with further readings; cf. Fuchs 2008, Postgate 2007, Blocher 2001 and Mattila 2000

[18] Frahm 1998, pp. 159-160; on the matter of humour in Assyrian royal inscriptions, see also, most recently, Madreiter 2017.

T-P III 35 i 33′-34′[19]

33′ ^{Id}15-BÀD ^{KUR}URI-*a-a e-de-nu-*[*uš-šu ina*] [^{MÍ}ANŠE].KUR.RA ⌜U$_5$⌝*-ma*

34′ GE$_6$*-iš ip-pá-riš-ma*

33′ [...] Sarduri of the land Urartu rode off alo[ne on a ma]re (and)

34′ escaped during the night.

As already recognized by Oppenheim[20] and Kravitz,[21] the same topos was also employed later in TCL 3+ (commonly known as 'Sargon's Eighth Campaign'),[22] where it served in the narration of Rusa's flight from the battlefield at Mt. Waush. The two descriptions are quite similar:

TCL 3+ 140[23]

140 *a-na šú-zu-ub* ZI^{MEŠ}*-šu* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR*-šú e-zib-ma i-na* ^{MÍ}ANŠE.KUR.RA^{MEŠ} *ir-kab-ma miḫ-rit um-ma-ni-šú in-na-bit*

140 To save his life, he (= Rusa) abandoned his chariot, mounted a (lone) mare and rode off in the face of his own army.

However, the oldest textual attestation of this topos can be found in the inscriptions of Shamshi-ilu:

A.0.104.2011 6′ (RIMA 3)

6′ [... *e-zib k*]*a-ra-šu-uš ina e-din-né-e si*[*]*-si-i e*[*-li*$^{?}$...]

6′ [Argishti abandoned] his camp (and) with a single horse he dis[appeared ...]

The enumerated examples demonstrate that the topos of the "flight on a lone mare" is both common by the time of Sargon II, and usually attributed to Urartian rulers. Yet its very first attestation is still older than the inscription of Shamshi-ilu just quoted, and shows us that the discussed topos is indeed intermedial in origin. There is a certain bronze band from the Balawat-Gates of Shalmaneser III, band VIII, that already depicts an enemy ruler fleeing on a lone horse. The scene on the belt portrays the (alleged) capture of the city of Uppume.[24] Notably, the fleeing opponent is therefore not Urartian, but Ukkean – presumably Anḫitte, who already previously had to abandon his royal city Kullimeri and take refuge in Uppume. That the equid he rode off on indeed is a mare can be inferred easily from a comparison of it with the Assyrian warhorse featured in the upper register of the same band (fig. 2).[25]

Let us move forward to TCL 3+ ('Sargon's Eighth campaign'). In this piece, the foreign landscape traversed by the Assyrian army is depicted recurrently in ways that elevate the whole scenery to Gilgamesh-like levels of heroic challenge. A rather impressive, yet not overly complicated hypertextual example for this connects TCL 3+ 18-19 with Gilgamesh tablet IX, 37 and 40-41. The pre-text, or rather hypotext, reads:[26]

Gilgamesh tablet IX, 37 + 40-41

37 *ša ša-di-i še-mu-šú ma-ś*[*u-*(*um*)*-ma*] [...]

40 ***e-lu*(*-*)*šu-nu*** *šu-pu-uk* AN*-e i*[*n-da*$^{?}$*-a*$^{?}$]

41 *šap-liš a-ra-le-e i-rat-su-nu* ⌜*kaš-da-át*⌝

37 The mountain's name was "tw[in"] [...]

40 **Above they (?) / Their upper parts (?)** are l[eaning] against the base of heaven,

41 Below their breast reaches the netherworld.

[19] Follows the edition and translation of Tadmor and Yamada in RINAP 1. For the reconstructed text parts, cf. RINAP 1 39 22 and RINAP 1 41 20′.

[20] Oppenheim 1960, p. 139, n. 15.

[21] Kravitz 2003, p. 83 with n. 14.

[22] Pieces belonging to TCL 3 but stored in Berlin are VAT 8634, VAT 8698 a-c and VAT 8749.

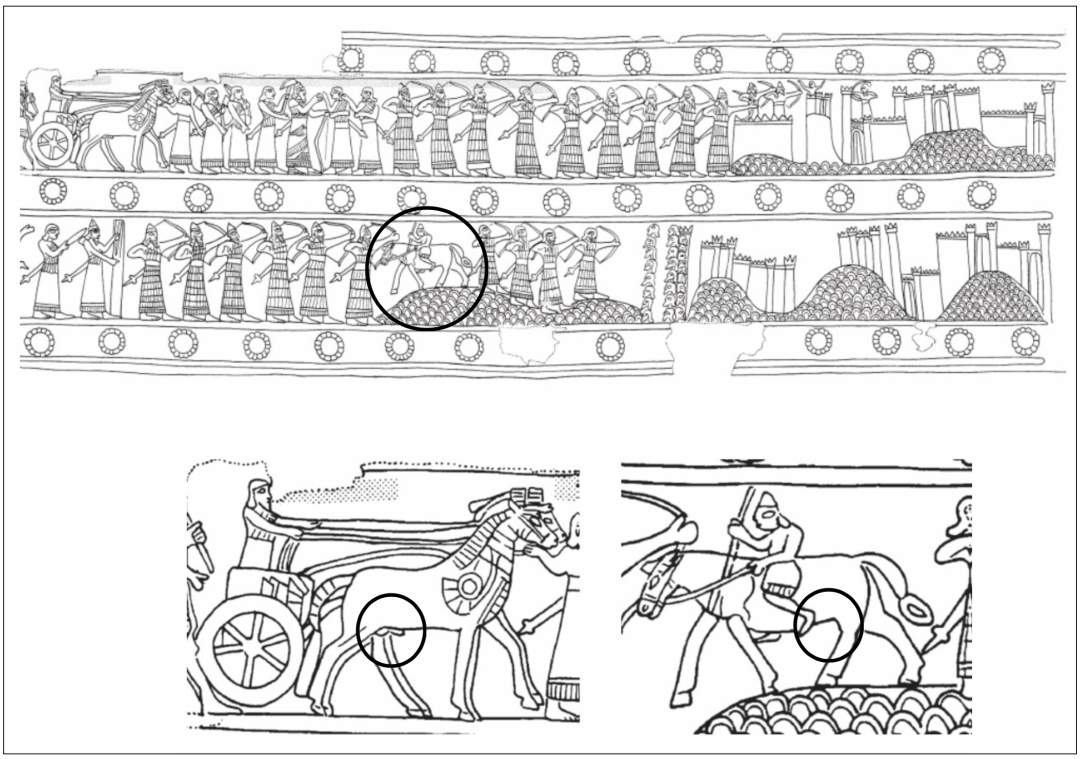
[23] Thureau-Dangin 1912, pp. 24-25; English translation by Foster 1993 (^{3}2005), p. 798.

[24] For an analysis of the band's pictorial programme, see Schachner 2007, pp. 51-52.

[25] Illustration taken from Schachner 2007, p. 298 [pl. 8] (drawing by Cornelie Wolff). Furthermore, my colleague Gina Konstantopoulos pointed out to me that in Assyrian art stallions usually are depicted in an upright, tense posture while mares are not. Also, note how the posture of the mare mirrors the rider's slumped and dejected posture.

[26] Edition and translation follow largely George 2003, pp. 668-669.

FIGURE 2



TCL 3+, the hypertext, i.e., the text alluding, has this transformed to:[27]

TCL 3+ 18-19

18 KUR*Si-mir-ri-a* ŠU.SI KUR-*i* GAL-*tu ša ki-ma še-lu-ut šu-kúr-ri zaq-pat-ma* UGU *ḫur-ša-a-ni šú-bat* d*Be-lit-*DINGIRMEŠ *ša-qa-at re-e-ši*

19 *ša e-liš re-ša-a-ša ša-ma-mi en-da-ma šap-la-nu šur-šú-ša šuk-šud-du qe-reb a-ra-al-li*

18 Simirria is a great mountain peak (lit. "mountain finger") that thrusts up like a spear-blade, and raising the (= its) head above the mountain ranges, the seat of Bēlet-ilī

19 whose two heads are leaning against the skies above, and whose root is reaching the netherworld down below.

Before we can go into detail, we need to emend Gilg. IX, l. 40 from *e-lu*(-)*šu-nu* to *e-lu-ú* SAG_{II} (= *rēšā*)-*šu-nu*. There are a couple of reasons to do so: First, there is only one witness to the discussed line, a Neo-Assyrian manuscript from Nineveh[28] that exhibits some further elisions of signs and other scribal errors. Second, although *elu* could be read as "upper side, topside", an understanding of emended *e-lu-ú* as *elû* ("above", *eli*+locative *-u*) is much more practical and far better attested too.[29] Thus we do not need to deal with a rather disturbing motivic and idiolectal incoherence in an otherwise well-attested, traditional meristic trope. Having done this preparatory emendation, one can easily detect an impressive structural correspondence between the two sentences. Two major transformations were made: First, a chiastic rearrangement of the last section of the hypotext's sentence, with the hypertext placing the hypotext's third to last word *arallû* "the

[27] Cf. a more poetic translation in FOSTER 1993[^{3}2005], p. 792.

[28] GEORGE 2003, pp. 668-669.

[29] The semantics exhibited in the corrupt original remain largely untouched by those changes.

Netherworld" as *qereb arallî* "the middle of the netherworld" at the end of its own sentence; second, and quite strikingly, a chiastic operation including both a reduction and an extension of the hypotext. While the hypotext gives *šupuk šamê* "fundaments of heaven" and *arallû* "netherworld", the hypertext inverts this sequence to *šamāmi* "heavens" and *qereb arallî* "middle of the netherworld". It also shows us that the hypertext took over the rhythmic pattern of the hypotext as well, although slightly rearranged.[30] Both texts exhibit a row of five initial amphibrachs, but then the hypertext changes the hypotext's sequence of three trochees and two amphibrachs into a sequence of amphibrach-trochee-amphibrach-two final trochees.

Gilg. tablet IX 40 *elû <rēšā>-šunu šupuk šamê in[dā-ma]*

A A A A A
x / x x / x x ' / x x / x x / x

[41]šapliš arallê irat-sunu kašdat

T T T A A
/ x / x / x x / x x ' / x

TCL 3+, l. 19 *ša eliš rēšā-ša šamāmi endā-ma šaplānu*

A A A A A
x / x x / x x / x x / x x / x

šuršū-ša šukšudu qereb arallî

A T A T T
x / x / x x ' / x / x / x

It seems reasonable that the long rows of heavy amphibrachs in both texts anticipate the gravity of upcoming tasks and events for their protagonists. Conversely, this rhythmic correspondence can be perceived as one of the strongest arguments for the previously made emendations.

Having set the tone for a generally heroic tale, TCL 3+ proceeds to give a detailed, intertextually rich account of the war against Rusa. In l. 133, Sargon II and his brother Sin-aḫa-uṣur are fighting Urartean soldiers and their king Rusa II like Gilgamesh fought lions, thus implying a brotherly relationship comparable to that of Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Nonetheless, all glory falls to Sargon, the king, who boasts:[31]

TCL 3+ 133

133 *ki-i* ^{GIŠ}*šil-ta-ḫe ez-zi i-na* ŠÀ-*bi-šu amqut-ma*

133 I fell upon him (lit. 'in his midst') like a furious arrow.

A very similar description can be found in Gilgamesh IX, l. 17 (paralleled in X, 96), where the epic's protagonist recounts his battle with the lions on the way to Utnapishtim:[32]

Gilg. tablet IX 17 (|| tablet X 96)

17 *ki-ma šil-t[a-ḫi i-na b]i-ri-šú-nu im-qut*

17 Like an arrow he fell among them.

The hypertext, that is, the text alluding, takes over the main expression *kī šiltaḫḫi maqātu* from the text alluded to (or: hypotext), yet replaces one part of the pre-text (*ina libbi-šu* instead of *ina bīri-šunu*) while amplifying another (addition of *ezzu*).

When Sargon is victorious over his enemies, their reactions are usually described in standard phrases also encountered in other royal narrative texts of the first millennium BC. There is one instance, however, where TCL 3+ clearly alludes to the Babylonian epic of creation *enuma elish* (*ee*) in doing so. The mytho-epic describes the frightened Tiamat in tablet IV 90 as follows:[33]

***ee* tablet IV 90**

90 *šur-šiš ma-al-ma-liš it-ru-ra iš-da-a-šú*

90 All her lower members trembled root-like.

[30] On rhythm in Akkadian poetry, see Helle 2014, who is followed here.

[31] Translation follows Foster 1993 ([3]2005), p. 798.

[32] Edition and translation follow George 2003, pp. 668-669.

[33] Edition and translation follow largely Lambert 2013, pp. 90-91, who translates *šuršiš* as "beneath her" instead of the solution suggested above.

TCL 3+ 174, likewise, refers to enemies in a similar condition:[34]

TCL 3+ 174

174 (...) *ki-ma šur-uš kib-ri* ÍD *ir-bu-ba* SUḪUŠ-*šú-un*

174 (...) their lower extremities tottered like roots on a riverbank.

Specific mechanisms of transformation were used to achieve TCL 3+'s allusion: first, a grammatically equivalent syntactical substitution (comparison expressed in a subordinate *kīma*-clause construction rather than with the help of an adverbial terminative), then an amplifying addition (the riverbank as the growth place of the roots used as object of comparison), and another substitution in regard to the verb (*rabābu* "to give way, collapse" instead of *tarāru* "to tremble"). One could add further that the hypertext's use of the logogram SUḪUŠ instead of the syllabic writing *iš-da-a-šu* "her lower extremities" encountered in the hypotext might have served an archaizing or traditionalist motif, but this cannot be inferred from one example alone. The shaking of some enemies' lower extremities re-occurs in TCL 3+ 290 (*ki-šit-ti* KUR*ar-ma-ri-ia-li-i na-ge-e i-te-e-šu-nu e-mu-ru-ma it-ru-ra iš-da-a-šu-un*). Notably, this line also seems to refer to *ee*, and unlike l. 174 it shows both usage of *tarāru* as well as a syllabic spelling of *išdu*.[35] However, the allusion here is cast more loosely, since it employs only the same idiomatic expression as *ee* does while skipping the root-simile.

The closing intertextualities are provided by a quite innovative royal inscription commonly dubbed 'Esarhaddon's apology', now edited anew as Esh. 1 (RINAP 4).[36] In sum, Esh. 1 clearly differs from older, more "regular" royal inscriptions and shows clear traits of so-called 'genre contamination'. To be more precise, the text can be addressed as belonging to the specific subtype of so-called 'unbalanced genre chimeras'. According to Genette, the term 'genre chimera' designates a hypertext that blends specific aspects of hypo- and hypertext, meaning, for example, a blending of the hypotext's content with the idiolect of the hypertext or of both texts' architexts or the like. A genre chimera earns the designation "unbalanced" when one of the elements mingled together still dominates over the other.[37] Such is the case for Esh. 1 i, 70-73, which reads:[38]

Esh. 1 i, 70-73

70 *el-la-mu-u-a ina* KI-*tim* KUR*Ḫa-ni-gal-bat gi-mir qu-ra-di-šú-un* MAḪMEŠ

71 *pa-an ger-ri-ia ṣab-tu-ma* ***ú-ša-ʾa-lu*** GIŠ**TUKULMEŠ*-šú-un***

72 *pu-luḫ-ti* DINGIRMEŠ GALMEŠ ENMEŠ*-ia is-ḫup-šú-nu-ti-ma*

73 *ti-ib* MÈ*-ia dan-ni e-mu-ru-ma* ***e-mu-ú maḫ-ḫu-tíš***

70 [B]efore my arrival in the territory of the land Ḫanigalbat all of their crack troops

71 blocked my advance; **they were sharpening their weapons.**

72 Fear of the great gods, my lords, overwhelmed them,

73 (and when) they saw my mighty battle array, **they went insane.**

Here, standard idiolectal elements belonging to the architext of Assyrian royal narrative texts (marked in grey) were deliberately contaminated with two chiastic-arranged quotations (bold) from *enuma elish* IV, ll. 88 and 92, as already noted by Hurowitz 2009 (fig. 3):[39]

[34] Translation follows largely Foster 1993[^{3}2005], p. 800.

[35] I thank Robert Whiting for his very helpful remarks regarding this passage.

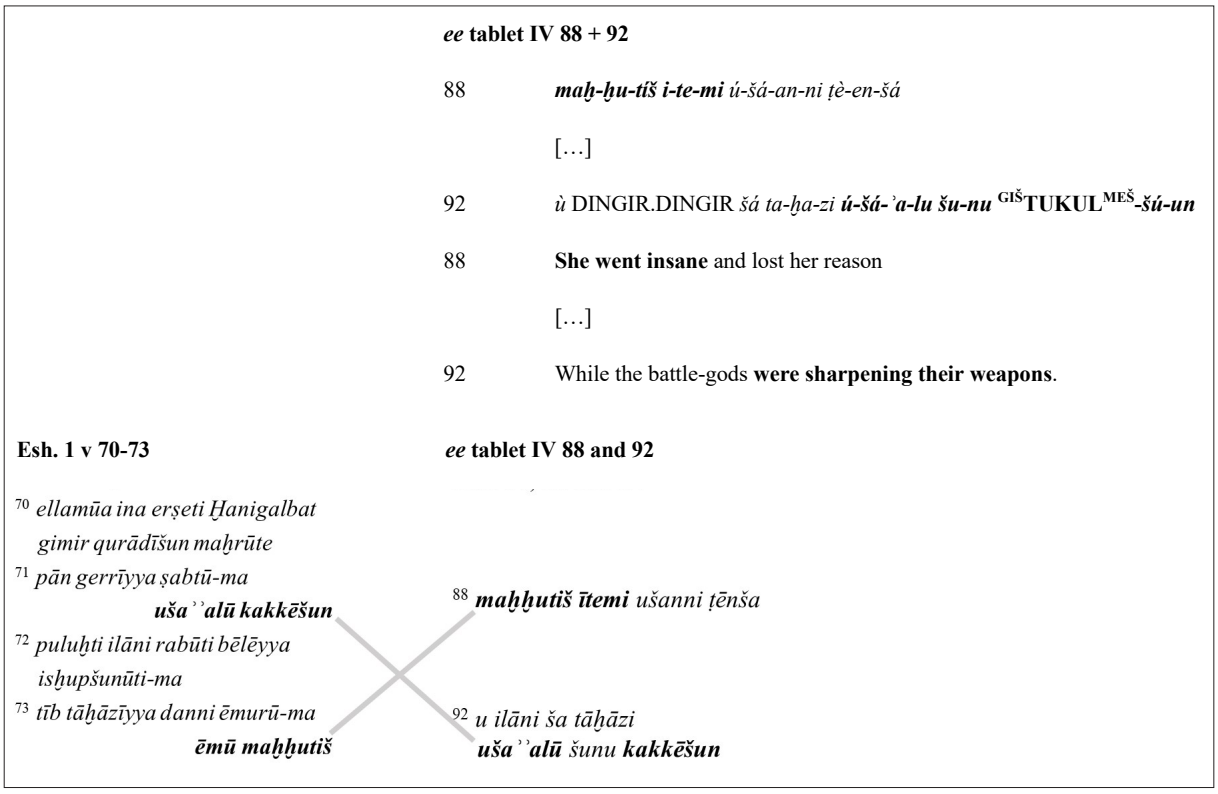
[36] Leichty 2011, pp. 9-26; cf. Knapp 2015, pp. 301-336 and Knapp 2016.

[37] Genette 1980, pp. 258-259.

[38] Edition and translation follow Leichty 2011, p. 13.

[39] Hurowitz 2009, pp. 133-136. Edition and translation follow largely Lambert 2013, pp. 90-91.

Figure 3



Concerning the first half of the example, the temporal expression "before my arrival" was already in use under Sargon II and Sennacherib,[40] while the topos of enemies blocking the road can be traced back even further, to the Middle Assyrian period, where it is attested for the first time in an inscription of Shalmaneser I (A.0.77.1 60-63). The last part of the first section of Esh. 1's formulation delivers the information that the enemies are already whetting their blades in anticipation. Although this topos is also attested in LKA 63, a heroic poem praising Tiglath-Pileser I.,[41] 'Esarhaddon's apology' connects it with the mythological sphere by quoting *ee* tablet IV 92. Allusions to *ee* were already made in the texts of Esarhaddon's father Sennacherib.[42] Furthermore, Sennacherib also used the topos of enemies sharpening their weapons (Senn. 22 iii 1; Senn. 22 v 62; Senn. 23 ii 78 and v 52), yet not in the extended form as in Esh. 1. Unlike in LKA 63 and in Sennacherib's texts, Esh. 1 utilized the citation of the lines of the *ee* as an extensive solution to architextual elements that already were mere literary commonplaces at that time. Likewise in the second half of our example: Enemies frightened by the aural and visual power of the advancing Assyrian army usually take flight to save their lives.[43] Esh. 1 replaces that traditional outcome with a second quotation from *Ee*, now portraying the throne-pretender's

[40] Attestations listed in CAD E, p. 101 s.v. *ellamu*.

[41] For LKA 63 see Hurowitz, Westenholz 1990; cf. Lambert 2013, p. 476.

[42] Cf. the reference to "evil *gallû*"-demons in inscriptions Senn. 22 v 18 and Senn. 23 v 10 (RINAP 3/1). That the Sennacherib texts were quoting *ee* was already shown by Weissert 1997, pp. 193-194.

[43] This topos is first attested in inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I (A.0.87.1 iii 12-17, 66-67, and v 36), and was used by Neo-Assyrian rulers preceding Esarhaddon as well (Tiglath-Pileser III: T-P III 18 7 [RINAP 1]; Sargon II: TCL 3+ 248; Khorsabad Annals 302; Sennacherib: many examples, e.g., Senn. 1, 26; Senn. 15 v 30'; Senn. 16 iv 55-56; Senn. 17 iv 2-3; Senn. 18 iii 15'-17' and v 25'-27' [RINAP 3/1]; cf. also a similar topos in one of the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, that is, A.0.102.6 i 19). On the *šemû-rūqu* paradigm in Assyrian royal inscriptions, see Richardson 2017.

enemies as going mad – just as Tiamat did in her battle with Marduk. The architext of Assyrian royal narrative texts clearly remains dominant in the discussed part of Esh. 1. The discussed passage thus perfectly fulfils all the requirements of Genette's concept of an unbalanced genre chimera.

Esh. 1 not only features the narration of the protagonist's accession to the Assyrian throne, but also includes geographically ordered accounts of the by-then king's successful military endeavours. Esh. 1 gives the following summary description of the conquered enemy Levantine rulers:[44]

Esh. 1 v 6

6 *pa-gar qu-ra-di-šú-un ina la qe-bé-ri ú-šá-kil zi-i-bu*

6 Without burial, I let the vultures eat the bodies of their warriors.

A bit later in the text, in the building report regarding the armory of Nineveh, it is noted that Esarhaddon also felled trees in the Sirara and Lebanon mountain ranges and had them transported to Nineveh (Esh. 1 v 73 – vi 1). The Sirara and Lebanon mountain ranges are described as protected by the giant Humbaba in the fifth tablet of the epic of Gilgamesh. In combination with the names Sirara and Lebanon occurring in the building report, Esh. 1 v 6 can easily be identified as alluding to the threat uttered by Humbaba against Gilgamesh in Gilg. tablet V 94:[45]

Gilg. tablet V 94 (|| tablet V 178)

94 *lu-šá-k*[*il* U]ZU^{ME}*-šú i*[*ṣ-ṣ*]*ur ṣar-ṣa-ri na-ʾi-ri a-re-e u zi-i-bi*

94 I will feed his flesh to the 'locust' birds, the ravening eagles and vultures!

The first and the last word of the hypotext's sentence were fused together to form the last section of the hypertext, leaving out two of the three birds mentioned in the hypotext. The verbal form used to describe the act of letting a bird devour someone's flesh was both transformed (from a first sg. precative to a first sg. D-stem preterit) and extended by the addition of the specification "without burial" (a so-called 'hypotyposis', a prolonged dwelling on a narrative topic). The words "his flesh" were replaced with the term "the bodies of his enemies" in the hypertext. In theory, this intertextuality would have the apology somehow portraying Esarhaddon as a contemporary Humbaba – after all, the epical giant's actions are clearly ascribed to the Assyrian king here. One can only conclude that this must be a region-dependent, in the true, flesh-tearing, sense of the word, sarcastic twist: The Levantine rulers are punished by the Assyrian king in the same manner as the epical would-be protector of their forests threatened Gilgamesh.

Lastly, the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon are densely packed with intertextual connections to the epic of Erra.[46] Following the attitude outlined by Porter for Esarhaddon's general concessionary and respectful approach towards the Babylonians and their culture,[47] it is quite reasonable to suspect the same for the implementation of the Erra epic in Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions. They portray the destruction of Babylon by Sennacherib as comparable to the havoc caused by Marduk's departure from Babylon, and align the conciliatory actions undertaken by Esarhaddon with the renewal of the city as described in the mytho-epic. Notably this clever usage of the Babylonian tradition is, again, region specific for there are only very few allusions to the Erra epic in the whole corpus of Esarhaddon's inscriptions that do not fall into a Babylonian context.[48]

[44] Edition and translation follow largely Leichty 2011, p. 21.

[45] Edition and translation follow George 2003, pp. 606-607.

[46] Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions alluding to the epic of Erra: Esh. 104, ll. 34-42; Esh. 105 i, 37 – ii, 6; Esh. 106 i, 10-26; Esh. 108 ii, 1′-11′; Esh. 111 i, 11′-13′; Esh. 113, ll. 8-19; Esh. 114, i, 19 – ii, 5; Esh. 116 obv., 6′-9′ and 13′-14′. Passages of the epic of Erra alluded to: Erra I, 13-14; Erra I, 102-103 (= IIb, 14); Erra I, 123; Erra I, 132; Erra V, 40.

[47] Porter 1993.

[48] E.g., Esh. 1 iii, 83 and Erra I, 27.

4. Summary conclusion

This overview should have given some insight into the potential of transtextual research into Assyrian royal narrative texts. The Assyrian strategy of intertextually stylizing crucial narrative parts of royal inscriptions and related texts added significantly to their semantics, and allowed for tapping into various literary traditions just as the situation required it. Specific narrative units appear to be bound to certain subjects, as could be seen in the example of the topos of the flight on a lone mare. Intertextuality could also be employed to stylize a foreign landscape as a literary premonition of the deeds of the Assyrian king and his army to come, as for example in TCL 3+'s description of Mount Simirria. The Sargonid royal narrative texts are much more dynamic than earlier proponents of their genre. This can exemplarily be noticed in the innovative usage of a by-then already established specific quotation from *Enuma elish* in Esh. 1. The same text also provided an example of the region-specific usage of hypotexts, namely the cynical Gilgamesh quotation aimed at the subjugated Levantine rulers. Similarly, the epic of Erra was alluded to almost exclusively in the Babylonian inscriptions of Esarhaddon. Notably, both the usage of chiasms in Sargon's Eighth Campaign and Esh. 1 as well as the region-specific usage of hypotexts merits further study. Yet, these questions can only be answered in a comparative approach, which would exceed the limitations of this paper.

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