

7 Appendix

Summary 7.1 Poetry and Wisdom: Rhetorical Devices in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and in the *Babylonian Theodicy*. – 7.1.1 Rhetorical Figures in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. – 7.1.2 Rhetorical Figures in the *Babylonian Theodicy*.

7.1 Poetry and Wisdom: Rhetorical Devices in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and in the *Babylonian Theodicy*¹

As previously noted in this study, the *Great Hymns and Prayers* deviate from traditional Akkadian prayers and hymns, such as the Old Babylonian hymns. While they retain the themes and motifs typical of Akkadian hymns and penitential prayers, they exhibit originality in both style and content, featuring a richer use of rhetorical devices, and a learned, sometimes obscure vocabulary² closely linked to the lexical and commentary tradition. Moreover, they sometimes display quasi-philosophical thoughts reminiscent of expressions and

¹ All the passages cited in this study are taken from the latest edition of *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy*, available on the *eBL* platform and prepared by Häntinen 2021 and Heinrich 2022, respectively, with translations by B. Foster.

² Note, for example, the complex language of *Marduk2* and the several *hapax legomena* of the *Nabû Prayer*; note also the concise, epigrammatic style of the *Nabû Prayer* and *Marduk1* (see e.g. ll. 176-7 of the *Nabû Prayer*, and ll. 66-77 in *Marduk1*, see Fadhil, Jiménez 2019, 167 and 170, cf. Oshima 2011, 147, 162-3).

themes found in late wisdom texts, such as *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and the *Babylonian Theodicy*.

This appendix offers a concise poetic analysis of the poems *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy*. The rhetorical figures observed in these two compositions mostly overlap with those found in the *Great Hymns and Prayers*. However, some differences can also be observed. While the *Great Hymns and Prayers* rely on numerous figures of sound, repetition, syntactic figures and figures of meaning, fitting into the broader framework of religious rhetoric, the wisdom poems analysed here rely mostly on parallelism, which is a typical poetic device of wisdom literature.³

Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the *Theodicy* features relatively few figures of sound, while *Ludlul* includes several cases of alliteration and numerous instances of assonance and consonance. Syntactical rhetorical figures are also identifiable in both poems, including inversions of the standard subject-object-verb order and chiasms. Both texts exhibit a remarkable richness and originality in their use of metaphors and similes, with *Ludlul* surpassing the *Theodicy* in the number and variety of these literary devices.

The reason for selecting *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy*, rather than other wisdom texts that also contain rhetorical figures, e.g. *Counsels of Wisdom* or the *Dialogue of Pessimism*, is the exceptionally high degree of lexical complexity and poetic richness they exhibit. Indeed, the language used in *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy* features a scholarly

3 Donald (1966, 315) notes that in Akkadian literature “The proportion of parallelism is considerably higher in reflective wisdom poetry than in narrative epic poetry.” The reason for this preference could lie in the conceptual clarity expressed by parallelism, which, therefore, lends itself well to the ethical illustrations found in wisdom texts. This expressive clarity can be achieved by juxtaposing two expressions of the same thought in order to refine it – as in synthetic and synonymous parallelism – or by contrasting two opposing thoughts, as in antithetic parallelism. Antithetic parallelism seems to be especially used in biblical wisdom poetry (especially in Proverbs, see Krasovec 1984, 17-18), and is also employed in Akkadian wisdom literature, although to a lesser extent (cf. Krasovec 1984, 8). Indeed, antithetic parallelism is employed to emphasise differences rather than merely reinforcing a specific concept, by juxtaposing two contrasting elements. In this sense, antithetic parallelism is particularly useful for emphasising righteous behaviour as opposed to unjust conduct, or for portraying a wise character in contrast to a foolish one. Cf. Bricker 1995, 502-3 on the use of parallelism in Proverbs, who remarks as follows: “The purpose of a proverb stated antithetically is to emphasize the importance of making good choices, to show the results of living in obedience to Yahweh and according to the principles of wisdom as opposed to the negative consequences on the one who makes poor choices”. The use of antithetic parallelism as a stylistic tool to effectively illustrate the path of moral conduct is also found in the *Šamaš Hymn*. Despite taking the form of a hymn and consequently being part of the corpus of *Great Hymns and Prayers*, it features an extensive wisdom section largely characterised by antithetic parallelisms, as mentioned in chapter 1 of the present work. For the role played by parallelism in Akkadian literature, cf. also de Zorzi 2022, who comments on the analogical thinking expressed by parallelism in several Akkadian literary texts, including *Ludlul*, the *Theodicy* and the *Šamaš Hymn*.

vocabulary, akin to what is found in the *Great Hymns and Prayers*.⁴ Moreover, both texts, like *Marduk2*, have a commentary, a distinction that, to the best of our knowledge, is not shared by any other wisdom text.⁵ Furthermore, the richness and abundance of wordplays, imagery, and sound effects found in *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy* are not as prominent, or at least not to the same degree, in other wisdom texts, as evidenced by previous studies on the poetic characteristics of these two compositions.⁶

While *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy* are highly sophisticated texts, copied extensively in the scribal curriculum (*Ludlul*) and cited in literary catalogues (the *Theodicy*),⁷ it is evident that, precisely because they are neither hymns nor prayers, they belong to a different literary genre than the *Great Hymns and Prayers*. However, it is worth considering that *Ludlul*, which is characterised by a structure similar to that of Akkadian prayers (see *infra*), exhibits a much greater stylistic resemblance to our texts, when contrasted with the *Theodicy*, which is a ‘pure’ wisdom text.

This analysis seeks to identify several rhetorical strategies shared by the *Great Hymns and Prayers* and the two selected wisdom compositions, while also highlighting several differences. By outlining the rhetorical devices employed in *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy* and comparing them with those observed in the *Great Hymns and Prayers*, a

⁴ Some exceptionally rare words are used exclusively in the *Great Hymns and Prayers* and in *Ludlul* and the *Theodicy*, as for instance the difficult technical term *amīru*, signifying ‘obstruction of the ear’, found in *Ludlul* III, l. 85 and in the *Ištar Prayer*, l. 75 (see Chapter 3); or the learned term for god *qadmu*, which appears in *Theodicy*, lines 39, 251, and 276, as well as in the *Ištar Prayer*, l. 113. The vocabulary of *Ludlul*, containing numerous references to the field of medicine, has led some scholars to hypothesise that the context in which this poem might have originated is that of the *āšipūtu*, on this see Annus, Lenzi 2010 xvi-xviii and 2023, 241-3. As indicated by the acrostic woven throughout the composition, the author of the *Theodicy* was an exorcist priest. It is likely that the *Theodicy* was not as widely known as *Ludlul*, given the scarcity of scholarly manuscripts that preserve it; in fact, the *Theodicy* is noticeably absent in the texts used in first-millennium Babylonian scribal education, cf. Gesche 2001, 806-20. Furthermore, the lexicon employed in the *Theodicy* is so intricate that it makes a widespread dissemination of the text highly improbable. The text’s difficulty, in addition to its learned vocabulary, is also due to the strict use of meter, which partly compels the poet to use an epigrammatic style, often hard to understand (on the vocabulary used in the *Theodicy*, and on its peculiar metrical homogeneity, see Jiménez 2028, 125-6). From the combination of these elements, namely the almost complete absence of the *Theodicy* in scholarly manuscripts, the complexity of the lexicon, and the strict adherence to the metric scheme, it can be assumed that the poem’s audience was confined to a narrower circle of intellectuals, see Oshima 2014, 143, and cf. also Jiménez 2018b, 126, who concludes that the *Theodicy* “was a text reserved exclusively for initiates”.

⁵ Frahm 2011, 119-20; for the commentary on *Marduk2*, see Jiménez 2017c.

⁶ See for example Annus, Lenzi 2010, XXVIII-XXXIV; Lenzi 2023; Groneberg 1996. Cf. Izreel 1992 for some phonetic figures in *Theodicy*.

⁷ The name of the author of *Theodicy*, Saggil-kina-ubbib, appears in the List of Kings and Scholars. For a discussion on this aspect, see Oshima 2014, 123-5.

deeper comprehension of the meaning of these texts is possible. This approach also illustrates how the textual genre can shape a piece stylistically. Moreover, this study is of significance not only for the study of Akkadian literature, but also for that of ancient poetry as a whole. The following list of rhetorical figures in the poems of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and of the *Babylonian Theodicy* is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it is meant to serve as an initial step for more extensive comparative examinations of literary genres, as well as analysis of the nuanced interplay between literary genre and style.

7.1.1 Rhetorical Figures in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

Ludlul bēl nēmeqi is a wisdom composition preserved exclusively in first-millennium manuscripts, but probably composed at the end of the second millennium BCE.⁸ This text, structured in five chapters, explores the suffering inherent in the human condition. The poem begins with an extensive hymn of praise to Marduk, followed by a narrative section in which the protagonist of the poem, Šubši-mešrē-Šakkan, recounts his personal adversities in the first person. After fruitlessly attempting to understand the source of his afflictions, the righteous sufferer experiences prophetic dreams that foretell his future deliverance. Ultimately, in chapter 4, Marduk shows mercy by rescuing the sufferer. The composition concludes with a hymn of praise dedicated once again to Marduk, thus echoing the introduction. The poem therefore exhibits a ring structure.

As observed by Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul* bears a striking resemblance in both content and style to Akkadian prayers, particularly the incantation prayers.⁹ In fact, the text partially adheres to the typical structure of Akkadian *šullas*, including, as mentioned above, an hymnic opening, a lament in the main body of the text, and a concluding hymn. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that this wisdom poem exhibits, particularly in its opening and closing sections, the same poetic language and rhetorical structures that we have identified in relation to the *Great Hymns and Prayers*. These include ‘lyrical repetition’, assonance, alliteration, and rhyme. Besides these sound devices, the *Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* also features numerous metaphors and similes, and above all, parallelism. Parallelism is indeed the most evident rhetorical figure in this poem, displayed in different types, e.g. synonymous, antithetic, synthetic; furthermore, it can involve two lines or two halves of a line.¹⁰

⁸ See Annus, Lenzi 2010, xvi-xix and Oshima 2014,

⁹ See Lenzi 2015 and 2023, 300-32.

¹⁰ Cf. Annus, Lenzi 2010, xxx-xxxiv.

7.1.1.1 Phonological Figures in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

The *Ludlul* poem showcases several instances of alliteration, assonance and consonance. Some verses include rhymes, but they are always of the grammatical types. *Ludlul V* is distinguished by numerous occurrences of homoioteleuton. Phonetic devices are more often concentrated in one of the two hemistichs, than distributed throughout the entire verse. Below is a list of examples.

7.1.1.1.1 Alliteration

I, l. 55 (/š/):

⁵⁵*šarru šir ilī šamšu ša nišišu*

⁵⁵The king, incarnation of the gods, sun of his peoples.

II, l. 24 (alliteration of /t/ in the first hemistich; assonance of /u/ in the second):

²⁴*teslītu tašīmatī niqû (u) sakkû'a*

²⁴Supplication to me was the natural recourse, sacrifice my rule.

II, l. 50 (alliteration of /m/ in the first hemistich; assonance of /u/):

⁵⁰*muršu munnišu elīya innešra*

⁵⁰Debilitating disease was let loose upon me.

III, l. 78 (alliteration of /n/ in the second hemistich; assonance of /a/, /u/ and /e/):

⁷⁸*û'a ai nê'u u nēšes'*

⁷⁸"Woe!" "Alas" "Spare us!" "Begone!"

IV, l. b+1 (alliteration in the second hemistich):

^{b+1}*ana gāmer abāri umāšī umaššil*

^{b+1}He made my physique strong as a champion athlete's.

Further alliterations are found, e.g. in *Ludlul V*, l. 10 (repetition of the initial phoneme IM), 73 (repetition of initial /m/); *Ludlul III*, l. 8 (repetition of initial /m/).

7.1.1.1.2 Consonance

I, l. 107 (repetition of /m/):

¹⁰⁷*kīma summi adammuma gimir ūmīya*

¹⁰⁷I moaned like a mourning dove all my days.

II, l. 44 (repetition of /m/, assonance of /a/):

⁴⁴*immušā-ma immā šalamtiš*

⁴⁴He pared my nails, which were like the overgrowth of an outcast.

IV, l. c+1 (repetition of /š/ and /p/ in the second hemistich):

^{c+1}*kīma nakimti šūšī ušappira šuprāya*

^{c+1}He pared my nails, which were like the overgrowth of an outcast.

7.1.1.1.3 Assonance

II, l. 87 (repetition of the vowels /a/, /u/ and /i/ between the hemistichs, note the consonance obtained through the repetition of the dental consonants /t/ and /d/):

⁸⁷*arkat bubūtī katim ur'u[d]ī*

⁸⁷My hunger was chronic, my gullet constricted.

III, l. 3 (repetition of the vowel /e/ in the first hemistich):

³*[en]nessu ezzetu abūbu-ma [...]*

³His [pun]ishment furious, the deluge [...].

7.1.1.1.4 Homoioteleuton

I, l. 34:

³⁴*ana kī gaššu kakkašu kabattašu mušniššat*

³⁴As brutal his weapons, so life-sustaining his feelings

Note also the assonance of the vowels /a/ and /u/ in this line.

II, l. 35:

³⁵*ša ina libbīšu mussukat eli ilīšu damqat*

³⁵What in one's own heart seems abominable could be good to one's god!

7.1.1.1.5 Rhyme

I, ll. 52-4 (ABCB):

⁵¹*dalhā tērētū'a nuppuhā uddakam*

⁵²*itti bārī u šā'ili alaktī ul parsat*

⁵³*ina pī sūqi lemun egerrū'a*

⁵⁴*attīl-ma ina šāt mūši šuttī pardat*

⁵¹My omens were confused, they were contradictory every day,

⁵²With diviner and dream interpreter my way forward was unresolved.

⁵³What I overheard in the street portended ill for me,

⁵⁴When I lay down at night, what I dreamt was terrifying.

I 80-1 (AA):

⁸⁰*sūqa abâ'a-ma turrušā ubānātu*

⁸¹*errub ēkalliš-ma iṣabburā inātu*

⁸⁰As I went through the streets, I was pointed at,

⁸¹I would enter the palace, eyes were narrowed at me.

7.1.1.2 Syntactic Figures in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

Ludlul exhibits numerous parallelisms of various types, including synthetic, antithetic, synonymous and interrogative parallelisms. These are developed within a single line, couplet or stanza. While most of the observed parallelisms are of the synthetic type,¹¹ there are also many synonymous parallelisms.¹² The antithetic parallelisms are relatively few.¹³ Some parallelisms are also of the grammatical type (e.g. V, ll. 12-14 and V, ll. 18-20).¹⁴ There are few interrogative parallelisms

11 Synthetic parallelisms were observed in the following lines: **I**: 51/52; 9/10; 13/14; 43/44; 45/46; 52/52; 57/58; 59/60; 61/62; 71/72; 73/74; 75/76; 77/78; 79/80; 81-83; 84/85; 86/88; 89-90; 91/92; 99/100; 101/102; 103/104; 111/112; 120. **II**: 4/5; 6/7; 8/9; 12/13; 19/20; 21/22; 25/26; 29/30; 51/52; 53-55; 56/57; 60/61; 62/63; 64/65; 71/72; 73/74; 75/6; 77-79; 86/87; 88/89; 91/92; 93/94; 95/96; 97/98; 99-101; 102/103; 106/107; 108/109; 110/111; 112/113; 117/118; 119/120. **III**: 69/70; 71/73; 80-83; 84/85; 86/87. **V**: 9-11; 39/40; 54-55; 56-58; 75-76; 77-79.

12 Synonymous parallelisms were observed in the following lines: **I**: 29/30; 47; 105/106; 107/108; 109-110; 113/114; 115/116; 117/118; 119/120. **II**: 14/15; 16/18; 23/24; 27/28; 58/59; 61; 62; 66/67; 68/69; 70; 84/85; 104/105; 114/115. **III**: 7/8; 9/10; 74/75; 76-79; 88-89; 90/91; 92/93; 94/95; 96/97; 98/99; 100/101. **IV**: a+1/ a+2; **V**: 12-14; 18-20; 30-33 // 34/36; 37/38; 60/61; 106/107; 113/114.

13 Antithetic parallelisms: **I**: 5/6; 7/8; 15/16; 17/18; 19/20; 21/22; 23/24; 25/26; 33/34; 93/94; 95/96; 97/98. **II**: 34/35; 39; 40; 41-42; 44/45; 46/47.

14 For a clear explanation of grammatical parallelism, see Annus, Lenzi 2010, xxxi.

(I, ll. 35-6 and II, ll. 36-8). In *Ludlul*, we can also observe the use of another syntactic figure: repetition. Repetition especially appears at both the beginning and end of the composition, that is, in sections characterised by a hymnic tone. The text starts with a 'lyrical repetition', namely two couplets featuring the delayed introduction of the name of Marduk; note also the 'lyrical repetition' in ll. 9-12, wherein a chiasmus adds poignancy and poetic quality to the passage (l. 10 *rittuššu rabbat* / l. 12 *rabbat rittuššu*); furthermore, in the fifth chapter, there occurs a series of repetitions and enumerations that evoke the typical litany-like quality often found in hymns and prayers.¹⁵ For instance, consider ll. 1-4 of *Ludlul* V, where the term *bēlī* is reiterated at the beginning of each line, followed by verbal forms ending with the suffix *-ni*. This repetition of *bēlī* at the beginning of each line can also be described as an instance of anaphora. Some repetitions occur in *Ludlul* III as well, where a narrative passage occurs, showing some similarity with narrative texts and epic (see e.g. the phrase in l. 21 *ašnī-ma šunata ana[ttal]*, "a first time I had a dream" and l. 29 *ašluš-ma šunata anaṭtal*, "a second time I had a dream", which appears similar to the formula used to introduce the dreams of Gilgameš in SB *Gilgameš* IV).

Among the syntactic features observable in this poem, instances of word order inversion can also be included. However, true cases of hyperbaton (understood as the separation between the subject and its predicate through the insertion of other words) seem to be absent.¹⁶ Instead the placing of the verb in a non-final position, often penultimate (here under *Anastrophe*) can be found. Often, moreover, verbs are placed at the very opening of the verses, in first position ('fronting'). Only two examples of anastrophe have been provided in the present study, since it is such a common feature in Akkadian poetry that it does not warrant special attention. However, it should be noted that it is attested numerous times within the current poem.

¹⁵ For an example of litanies and repetitions in hymns and prayers, see for example the repeated phrase in *Queen of Nippur, mamman ul ile*'i (mentioned in chapter 5, § 5.2.4.1.2), and the closing section of the *šuilla* prayer Ištār 2, where the word *ahulap* is repeated across ll. 27-30, 45-50, cf. Zgoll 2003, 43-4. Litany-like passages are also commonly attested in first-millennium Akkadian incantations, see Schwemer 2014, 274. As observed by Schwemer (2014, 274), phonetic figures, especially the repetition of formulas, allow for the emphasis of discourse and the creation of a meditative and solemn atmosphere. This type of language is particularly suited for the recitation of religious texts and the performance of incantations.

¹⁶ For a definition of Hyperbaton, see Plett 2010, 194; cf. Jiménez 2017, 282, with fn. 717 for the use of this device in Akkadian literary texts.

7.1.1.2.1 Parallelism in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

Synonymous Parallelism

I, ll. 29-30:

²⁹*ēlu ap[kallu] mimma libbi ilī ibarri*

³⁰*manāma i[na ilī] alaktašu ul ide*

²⁹Sage lord, he divines the gods' inmost thoughts,

³⁰None among the gods can comprehend his ways.

II, l. 61 (in one line):

⁶¹*labāna itiqū urammū kišāda*

⁶¹They wrenched my nape tendons, they made my neck limp.

Synthetic Parallelism

I, ll. 43-4:

⁴³*iddānni ilī šadāšu ilī*

⁴⁴*ipparku ištari ibēš aḫita*

⁴³My own god threw me over, he disappeared,

⁴⁴My goddess deserted, she vanished away.

Antithetic Parallelism

I, ll. 5-6:

⁵*ša kīma ūmi meḫē nāmū uggassu*

⁶*u kīma mānīt šēreti zāqšu ṭābu*

⁵Whose anger, like a raging tempest, is a desolation,

⁶But whose breeze is kind as the breath of morn.

7.1.1.2.2 Repetition in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

'Lyrical Repetition', i.e. Delayed Introduction

I, ll. 1-4:

¹*ludlul bēl nēmeqi ila muštāla*

²*eziz mūši muppašir urri*

³*marduk bēl nēmeqi ila muštāla*

⁴*eziz mūši muppašir urri*

¹I will praise the lord of wisdom, solicitous god,

²Furious in the night, pacified by day:
³Marduk! Lord of wisdom, solicitous god,
⁴Furious in the night, pacified by day.

III, ll. 35 and 38 (repetition with *variatio* in verbal forms):

³⁵*iqbâ aḥulap magal šūnuḥ-ma*
³⁵She said, "Mercy on him! He has suffered greatly!"

³⁸*iqbû aḥulap magal šum[rus-ma]*
³⁸They said, "Mercy on him, he has suffered greatly!"

7.1.1.2.3 Anastrophe

II, l. 58 (fronting of the stative and finite verb in penultimate position):

⁵⁸*paḥrû-ma ramānšunu ušaḥḥazû nullâti*
⁵⁸They convened and urged themselves on with villainous talk.

II, l. 62 (fronting of the finite verb):

⁶²*errub bītuššu rebû itamma*
⁶²I'll take over his household! Vows the fourth.

7.1.1.3 Semantic Figures in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

The poem of *Ludlul* is extremely rich in metaphors and similes. The majority of these figures revolve around natural imagery, encompassing animals and natural phenomena. Additionally, images that draw from objects and human characters can be observed. There are relatively few metaphors, which mostly concern verbal forms (e.g. I, ll. 48, 105-6; II, ll. 75-9, 86), that is, the verb is used to describe an action or state that is different from its usual or conventional meaning, allowing for a deeper and more imaginative expression of the intended message.¹⁷ The merisms attested in the *Ludlul* poem consist of both standard pairs of contrasting words (night/day, god/goddess, servant/maid),¹⁸ and rarer merismatic pairs (brother/friend).¹⁹

¹⁷ For a thorough study on metaphors, included verbal metaphors, see Lakoff 1980.

¹⁸ This is the so called 'polar word-pair' type, the most commonly attested in the semitic literatures, cf. Watson 1986, 323; Longman III 1991, 464-6.

¹⁹ See Wasserman 2003, 84-85.

In addition, a noticeable pun occurs at the end of *Ludlul* I (see below); a few enumerations can be observed, all in the last chapter (ll. 56, 62-3, 65). A form of enumeration, developed over several lines, is the long list of names of the different gates appearing in *Ludlul* V (ll. 42-53).

7.1.1.3.1 Similes

Similes in *Ludlul* are expressed both with the particle *kīma/kī* and with the poetic terminative suffix *-iš*.²⁰

Animals

I, l. 20:

²⁰(u) *kī araḥ būri ittanashāra arkīšu*

²⁰Like a cow with a calf, he keeps turning around watchfully.

Human beings

II, l. 42:

⁴²*ina pīt purīdi ušarrap lallariš*

⁴²In a heartbeat he moans like a professional mourner.

Nature

IV, l. 81:

⁸¹*issuḥ [k]īma nalši mū[š]i elīya uštess[i]*

⁸¹He withdrew like dew of night, he removed it far from me.

Inanimate objects

II, l. 68:

⁶⁸*lānī zaqra ībutū igāriš*

⁶⁹They toppled my lofty stature like a wall.

²⁰ The similes attested in the poem with the terminative suffix *-iš* are 20 over 42.

7.1.1.3.2 Metaphors

Nature

I, l. 7:

uzzuššu lā maḥār abūbu rūbšu
In his fury overpowering, his rage the deluge.

II, l. 120:

ša qerbi mūdê šamassun īrim
The sun of those close and who knew me was covered over.

Inanimate objects/*abstracta*:

I, ll. 84-5:

⁸⁴*ina pīya naḥbalu nadī-ma*
⁸⁵*u napraku sekir šaptīya*
⁸⁴A snare was laid over my mouth,
⁸⁵And a bolt was locking my lips.

I, ll. 105-6:

¹⁰⁵*ūmu šutānuḥu mūšu gerrānu*
¹⁰⁶*arḥu qitayyulu idirtu šattu*
¹⁰⁵Sighing the day, lamentation the night,
¹⁰⁶Moroseness the month, the year despair.

II, l. 79 (verbal):

⁷⁹*mašâ-ma namušīšâ šēpāya*
⁷⁹My feet began to forget how to move.

7.1.1.3.3 Pun

I, l. 120:

¹²⁰*arḥu innammaru inammira šamšī*
¹²⁰A new moon will appear, my sun will shine!

This is a paronomasia, since the wordplay is produced through the similarity of sound between the two different verbs (*amāru* and *nawāru* respectively).

7.1.1.3.4 Enumeration

V, l. 62:

⁶²[*sippī ši*]gara mēdela dalāti

⁶²["To the threshold, the bolt] socket, the bolt, the doors.²¹

7.1.1.3.5 Merismus

I, ll. 84-5:

⁸⁴ana aḥī aḥī itūra

⁸⁵ana lemni (u) gallê itūra ibrī

⁸⁴My brother became a stranger to me,

⁸⁵My friend became malignant, a demon.

I, ll. 89-90:

⁸⁹šūpīš ina puḥri iruranni ardī

⁹⁰amtī ina pān ummāni ṭapiltī iqbi

⁸⁹My slave cursed me openly in the assembly (of gentlefolk),

⁹⁰My slave girl defamed me before the rabble.

III, l. 7:

⁷[u]rra u mūša ištēniš anas[sus]

⁷I was gro[an]ing day and night alike.

III, l. 8

⁸uttu munattu malmališ šumr[ušāni]

⁸Dreaming and waking [I was] equally wretched.

7.1.1.4 Morphological figures in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

Few rhetorical figures that involve the repetition of the same morpheme within a verse (epanalepsis),²² or between two verses (an-

²¹ The same sequence is attested in the Nabonidus' Ebabbar Cylinder, see the note on this line in Häntinen 2022.

²² For the definition of epanalepsis, see Marchese 1978, 82-3.

adiplosis and epanadiplosis),²³ are present. The device of polyptoton is apparently attested only once, but several instances of *figura etymologica* could be identified.

7.1.1.4.1 Anadiplosis

II, ll. 23-4:

²³*aḥsus(-ma) ramānī supê (u) teslīta*

²⁴*teslītu tašīmatī niqû (u) sakkû'a*

²³I, for my part, was mindful of prayer and supplication,

²⁴Supplication to me was the natural recourse, sacrifice my rule.

7.1.1.4.2 Epanalepsis

II, l. 2:

²*assahḥar-ma lemun lemun-ma*

²As I turned round about me, it was more and more terrible.

7.1.1.4.3 Epanadiplosis

In *Ludlul* III, ll. 35-6, we can observe a form of epanadiplosis, where in the morpheme *iqbâ* is repeated both at the beginning and at the end of the first hemistichs in each line:

³⁵*iqbâ aḥulap || magal šūnuḥ-ma*

³⁶*lā tapallaḥ iqbâ || ušaškin [...]*

³⁵She said, "Mercy on him! He has suffered greatly!"

³⁶"Fear not!" said she, he has caused [a limit] to be set.

Incidentally, also note the consonance in *aḥulap* and *tapallaḥ*.

23 For the device of epanadiplosis, i.e. the repetition of the same morpheme at the beginning and at the end of a verse or set of verses, see Marchese 1978, 82.

7.1.1.4.4 Polyptoton:

IV, ll. i+9-1+10:

ⁱ⁺⁹[...] ... **bullu**tu šakin ... [...]
¹⁺¹⁰[(...) **uball**]iṭanni šēress[u ...]
ⁱ⁺⁹[...] reviving, [...] was placed
¹⁺¹⁰[... he rev]ived me, [...] his punishment.

7.1.1.4.5 Figura Etymologica:

II, l. 102:

¹⁰²kal ūmi **rēdū ireddā**[nni]
¹⁰²All day long tormentor would torment [me].²⁴

7.1.2 Rhetorical Figures in the *Babylonian Theodicy*

The *Babylonian Theodicy* is a wisdom dialogue divided into stanzas, which deals with ethical and theological problems. Two friends discuss the existence of divine justice, presenting opposing arguments. The most notable stylistic feature of this composition is that each stanza begins with the same syllable, forming an acrostic. The fact that the same sign is repeated at the beginning of each stanza, and not necessarily the same sound (e.g. KI for *ki* as well as for *qi*₂, BI for *bi* as for *pi*₂), suggests that the *Theodicy* was intended to be primarily read, rather than recited aloud.²⁵

Indeed, the written nature of this composition could be supported by the relative scarcity of sound figures. In contrast to *Ludlul*, in fact, there appear to be few alliterations, rhymes, assonances or consonances in the poem of the *Theodicy*. The predominant rhetorical figure is clearly parallelism, while other figures of meaning, such as metaphor or simile, are relatively few, and for the most part expressed not through the particle *kī/kīma*, but with the terminative suffix *-iš*.

²⁴ Other *figurae etymologicae* are, e.g. in *Ludlul* II, l. 19; *Ludlul* III, ll. 39, 47; *Ludlul* IV, l. c+1.

²⁵ While it is true that the poem seems to adhere closely to Akkadian meter, as evidenced by the vertical lines marking the feet of each verse in some manuscripts, this aspect does not necessarily contradict the likelihood of its primarily reading-based use. In fact, the meticulous graphical marking of the metric structure in certain sources could suggest an intention to visually convey it to the reader, possibly serving as an aid for comprehending such a difficult text. On the written nature of the *Theodicy*, see Izre'el 1992, 160; cf. Oshima 2014, 143.

Other figures occurring in the *Great Hymns and Prayers* are rare, such as enjambement (which is, however, scarce in Akkadian literature overall), with only one occurrence. Anadiplosis and epanalepsis are entirely absent, and there are no instances of repetitions. The absence of certain figures, such as the ‘lyrical repetition’, is not surprising, given that it is a rhetorical device commonly employed in religious poetry (hymns and prayers), particularly in the opening section of the text devoted to invoking the addressed god (i.e. the *laudes* section, see Chapter 1 for the typical structure of Akkadian hymns and prayers).

The absence of repetitive patterns and the distinctive structure of the text as a philosophical dialogue prevent it from displaying the litany-like form that is typical of hymns and prayers, or the ‘formulaic’ aspect characteristic of epic texts.

7.1.2.1 Phonological Figures in the *Babylonian Theodicy*

There are few alliterations in the *Theodicy*, while a considerable number of consonances and some assonances are found. In most cases, phonetic devices concern only one hemistich, and not the entire verse. As in *Ludlul*, and throughout Akkadian literature, the rhymes in the *Theodicy* are grammatical in nature. However, there are several instances of homeoteleuton, mostly produced through the repetition of pronominal suffixes.

As can be seen from some of the following examples, the present composition is rich in wordplay, more precisely, in paronomasia, which involve phonetic ambiguity. Many consonances can be observed in these cases.

The inference drawn from a close examination of this composition and the analysis of its phonetic elements suggests that although certain phonetic devices are undeniably evident, the author’s predominant focus was centred on the initial acrostic. Perhaps additional phonetic figures would have distracted the audience from appreciating the acrostic. More likely, the text was primarily intended to be read rather than recited, and the phonetic figures would have been less noticeable in any case.

7.1.2.1.1 Alliteration

l. 200 (repetition of /k/ in the first hemistich and of /n/ in the second; a consonance is obtained, through the repetition of the velar consonants /k/ and /q/ in the entire verse)

²⁰⁰*kaššāta kullat nēmeqi nišī tamallik*

²⁰⁰You are masterful, you teach the people all wisdom.

l. 281 (repetition of /š/ in the first hemistich):

²⁸¹*šarhiš ša šarī idabbubū dumqīšu*

²⁸¹Solemnly they speak well of a rich man.

l. 172 (repetition of /t/, both at the end, in the middle and at the beginning of some words, thus producing cases of alliteration and consonance):

¹⁷²*aš-šī[būti ta]kšuda tukultak[a lū mannu]*

¹⁷²[You] reached old age, in whom did you put your trust?

Other cases of alliteration are found, for example, in ll. 81 (/t/), 204 (/š/), 140 (/b/).

7.1.2.1.2 Consonance

l. 68 (repetition of velars /k/ and /q/):

⁶⁸*illu nussuqu milikka damqu*

⁶⁸Most particular friend, your advice is excellent.

l. 79 (repetition of /t/):

⁷⁹*kitta tattadû ušurti ili tanāšu*

⁷⁹You have cast off truth, you have spurned divine design.

l. 218 (repetition of /š/):

²¹⁸*rēšu našši baši šabūšu*

²¹⁸His head is held high, he gets what he wants.

l. 288 (repetition of /r/, /s/ and /m/, mostly in the first hemistich):

²⁸⁸*rēšam-(ma) namrāša amur lū tīdi*

²⁸⁸Help me, see (my) distress, you should be cognizant of it.

7.1.2.1.3 Assonance

I. 207:

²⁰⁷*[kašrūt]i edlūti upattâ (ana) pānīya*

²⁰⁷He opened my eyes to [knot]ty and impenetrable things.

Note here the assonance created by the repetition of the vowels /u/ and /a/, along with the consonance produced by the rapid succession of the dentals /d/ and /t/ and the labial /p/. Furthermore, *kašrūti* and *edlūti* represent a case of homoiptoton (a type of homoioteleuton).²⁶

I. 62:

⁶²*gillat nēšu īpušu petâssu ḥaštu*

⁶²For the atrocities the lion committed, a pit yawns for him.

The assonance produced by the repetition of /a/ and /u/ in the second hemistich is emphasized through the homoioteleuton in the first (*nēšu īpušu*).

II. 127-32:

This series of lines presents a repetition of assonant words at the beginning of the verse: ([u]btelli, [u]ptenni, [u]ptešsid, [u]pteḥḥir).

7.1.2.1.4 Homoioteleuton

I. 238:

²³⁸*šaggāšu kakkašu iredḏišu*

²³⁸The weapon of his deathblow is coming up behind him.

I. 252:

²⁵²*ina šapal ašpaltīya kitmusāku anāku*

²⁵²It is I who must (now) bow before my inferior.

²⁶ “The use in a sentence or verse of various words in the same case and with similar case endings”, so Lanham 1991, 82.

l. 253:

²⁵³*inâšanni aḥurrû šarû u šamḥu*

²⁵³The riffraff despises me, as do the rich and proud.

l. 287:

²⁸⁷*rēmēnâta ibrī nissata šite''ē-(ma)*

²⁸⁷You are sympathetic, my friend, be considerate of (my) misfortune.

7.1.2.1.5 Rhyme

The opening lines of the present composition rhyme with each other (ll. 1-6), since they all display the pronominal suffix *-ka* at the end of the verse (*luqbika, lušannika, karšukka, ludlulka, malāka, ištika*). It is difficult to determine whether this type of rhyme is intentional, or is a mere linguistic feature which should not be interpreted as a stylistic choice.

The same rhyme is found in ll. 45-7 and in ll. 177-9, again produced by the use of the suffix *-ka* in final position. Similar grammatical rhymes can be observed across ll. 31-2 (*nes[ânni]* and *rūq[anni]*), cf. ll. 295-6. Further grammatical rhymes, obtained through the repetition of the suffix *-šu*, are found in ll. 218-19, 246-7, 281-2.

7.1.2.2 Syntactic figures in the *Theodicy*

The poem of the *Theodicy* includes a variety of parallel lines, encompassing synthetic, antithetic and synonymous parallelisms. These are developed both in couplets as well as within individual lines, sometimes also extending to groups of three lines or more. Although most observable parallelisms in the text are synthetic in nature²⁷ and antithetic parallelisms appear relatively rarely,²⁸ it is the very structure of the text that embodies a form of antithetic parallelism. A few

²⁷ Synthetic parallelisms are found in the following lines: 9/10; 14/15; 21/22; 23/24; 27/28; 29/30; 31/32; 34/35; 39/40; 48-53; 59-64; 67/68; 70/71; 72/73; 74/75; 76/77; 78/79; 80/81; 82/83; 130/131; 133/134; 135/136; 139/140; 141/142; 158/159; 160-163; 212/213; 214; 235-238; 265/266; 285/286; 287/288; 292; 293/294; 295/296.

²⁸ Antithetic parallelisms are found in the following lines: 181/182; 183/184; 185/186; 221-224; 246/247; 249/250; 260/261; 262/263; 267/268; 269/270; 271/272; 273/274; 281-284. Synonymous parallelisms are few, namely in lines: 16/17; 25/26; 36/37; 43/44; 45/46; 54/55; 204/205; 206/207; 216/217; 233/234; 279/280.

interrogative²⁹ and grammatical parallelisms are also found.³⁰

Indeed, through the continuous juxtaposition of arguments between the righteous sufferer and the devoted friend, an antithesis is created that characterises the entire composition. This emphasises the distinction between just and wicked behaviour, thereby offering clarity regarding the preferred course of action.³¹ Ultimately, the righteous sufferer concedes that his misfortunes are a result of his sinful conduct, pledging to worship the gods and thereby embracing the counsel of the pious friend.

In the *Babylonian Theodicy*, while the verses displaying parallelisms form the majority, repetitions are notably absent.

In addition, as is typical of Akkadian literary texts, variations in the standard syntactic order of the sentence are observed: the text exhibits instances of hyperbaton and inversion of noun and adjective. It is plausible that, at least in some cases, these inversions serve metric purposes, specifically to ensure the final trochee (see e.g. l. 279, *etgura dabāba*).

One enjambement occurs in ll. 276-9, wherein the subjects of the phrase (Enlil, Ea and Mami) are separated from the verbal form (the stative *šarkū*, which opens l. 279, thus gaining a position of emphasis).

7.1.2.2.1 Parallelism

Synthetic Parallelism

In one couplet (ll. 9-10):

⁹*aḥurrākū-ma zārû'ā šīmatu ubtil*

¹⁰*agarinnu ālittu itâr kurnūgi*

⁹I was the youngest child when fate carried off him who begot me,

¹⁰She who brought me into the world departed to the land of no return.

29 Interrogative parallelism occur in the following lines: 5-7; 164/165; 177/178; 251/252.

30 Note, for example, the grammatical parallelism in ll. 265-6, where all the hemistichs open with an imperative verbs, and end with nouns bearing genitive suffixes. The following couplet (267-8) displays a grammatical parallelism as well, since both verses share the same syntactic structure (third person plural verb + object + relative clause + object).

31 The *Babylonian Theodicy* does not intend in fact to express a nihilistic sentiment contrasting with orthodox religious doctrine. Instead, it underscores tradition by means of the contrast between the two interlocutors. On the meaning of the *Babylonian Theodicy* and its value as a reinforcement of standard doctrine, see Oshima 2014, 135-43, with references to previous interpretations. On the antithetical nature of the *Theodicy*, and of another famous wisdom dialogue, although parodic, i.e. the *Dialogue of Pessimism*, cf. Krašovec 1984, 8.

Across multiple lines (ll. 48-53):

⁴⁸[a]kkānu serrēmu ša iṭpupu šumuḥ šamm[i]

⁴⁹ak-kabtī pakki ilī uzunšu ibši

⁵⁰aggu lābu ša itakkalu dumuq šīri

⁵¹ak-kimilti ilṭī šuṭturi ubil maṣṣassu

⁵²ak-kabtī bēl pāni ša uṣṣubūšu naḥāšu

⁵³aqrâ ṣārira iḥiṭ ana māmi

⁴⁸The on[ager], the wild ass, that had its fill of lush wild grasses,

⁴⁹Did it have a care for the weighty wisdom of the gods?

⁵⁰The savage lion that fed himself from the choicest meat,

⁵¹Did it bring its flour offerings to appease a goddess's wrath?

⁵²As to the rich magnate whose prosperity keeps increasing,

⁵³Did he weigh out precious gold to the mother goddess?

In one line (l. 214):

²¹⁴[riddī te]mēš šumma taṭpil

²¹⁴You have spurned propriety, you have besmirched (every) code.

Antithetic parallelism (ll. 246-7)

²⁴⁶ina qereb dunnī rami bukuršu

²⁴⁷ilakkid labbiš rabī aḥi uruḥšu

²⁴⁶While his firstborn sprawls in bed,

²⁴⁷The eldest son sprints ahead like a lion.

Synonymous parallelism

ll. 16-17:

¹⁶nadnū-ma abbūni illakū uruḥ mūt[i]

¹⁷nāra ḥubur ibbirū qabū ultu ull[a]

¹⁶Our fathers are given up that they go death's way,

¹⁷They will cross the river Hubur, as is commanded from of old.

7.1.2.2.2 Hyperbaton

l. 245:

²⁴⁵išaddad ina miṭrati zārū eleppa

²⁴⁵A father hauls a boat up a channel.

l. 250:

²⁵⁰*išarrak terdennu ana katî ti'ûta*

²⁵⁰The younger son makes provision for the destitute.

Note in both cases the position of the verb, placed at the beginning of the line for emphasis. Further examples of fronting (or anastrophe) occur in ll. 267-73.

Examples of anastrophe are also provided by the inversion of the standard order of substantive and adjective, that is, the adjective precedes the substantive instead of following it, such as in l. 262 *lil-lu māru pānâ i'allad*, "The first child is born a weakling", or in l. 277 *šarḫu zulummar kāriš tiṭṭišin*, "Majestic Ea, who pinched off their clay".

7.1.2.3 Semantic Figures in the *Theodicy*

The composition exhibits numerous examples of metaphors and similes, drawn from the natural and the human world. All the similes, except one at l. 286, are conveyed through the terminal suffix *-iš*.

Several merisms of the 'polar word-pair' type are used. A possible paronomasia occurs in ll. 31-2, where the words *kūru* and *kurumtu* (probably a *status constructus* of a rare byform of *kurummatu*) appear at the beginning of the lines.

7.1.2.3.1 Similes

Animals

l. 228 (context broken):

²²⁸*[b]ūliš*

²²⁸Beastlike.

l. 247:

²⁴⁷*ilakkid labbiš rabî aḫi uruḫšu*

²⁴⁷The eldest son sprints ahead like a lion.

Human beings

l. 139:

¹³⁹*bēra kīdī raqêš lurtappud*

¹³⁹I will roam about the far outdoors like a fugitive.

I. 233:

²³³*šadla šurri ite[me ḥašikk]iš*

²³³He of wide comprehension has become like a deaf man.

I. 249:

²⁴⁹*ina sūqi zilulliš iṣayyad aplu*

²⁴⁹The heir strolls the streets like an idler.

I. 283:

²⁸³*šarrāqiš ulammanū dunnamâ amēla*

²⁸³They malign a poor man as a thief.

Nature

I. 37:

³⁷*[sa]miš (m)urqaka nussuqa t[umaššil]*

³⁷You render your choicest reasoning like a mountebank.

I. 58:

⁵⁸*ginâtâ-ma ammatiš nesi milik ili*

⁵⁸If you are indeed fixed as the earth, the reasoning of the gods is far beyond (you).

Inanimate objects

I. 230 (broken context):

²³⁰*pūḥiš*

²³⁰Like a stand-in.

I. 286:

²⁸⁶*šarbābiš ušḥarammūšu uballūšu kīma lāmi*

²⁸⁶They make him go numb with fear, they snuff him out like an ember.

7.1.2.3.2 Metaphors

Nature

l. 56:

⁵⁶*gišimmaru iṣ mašrê*, “O date palm, wealth-giving tree [referred to the pious sufferer]”.

l. 57 (broken context):

⁵⁷*illuk ...*, “Gem of ... [referred to the pious sufferer]”.

l. 232:

²³²*šad he[galli] iteni[š? hišib]šu*

²³²A mountain of pl[enty], its [yield] has withered [referred to the reasoning of the sufferer].

7.1.2.3.3 Merismus

l. 11:

¹¹*abī u bāntī izibū'innī-ma bal(i) tārū'a*

¹¹My father and mother left me with no one to care for me!

l. 164 (broken context):

¹⁶⁴*māra u mārta luba'['i? ...]*

¹⁶⁴Shall I seek son and daughter [...] [the same pair occurs in ll. 158-9].

7.1.2.4 Morphological figures in the *Theodicy*

In the Babylonian *Theodicy* one polyptoton can be noticed, involving the verb *amāru*, which appears first as a stative, and almost immediately afterwards in the preterite: in the second hemistich of l. 288 one reads *amur lū tīdi*, “you should be cognizant of it” and in the second hemistich of l. 290 *zamar ul āmur*, “I have not seen help or succor for an instant”. Note, furthermore, the consonance occurring within l. 290, produced by the repetition of the phonemes /m/ and /r/.