Naming the gods: traditional verse-making in Homer and Old Babylonian Akkadian poetry

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Abstract: This is an investigation of character-naming expressions in early Greek (ca. eighth–sixth c. BC) and Old Babylonian Akkadian narrative poetry (ca. nineteenth–seventeenth c. BC). It compares the mentions of Zeus and Enlil (the Babylonian chief god) in *Iliad* Book 8 and OB *Atra-hasis*, and proposes a three-layered classification system based on degrees of traditionality. The system involves metre and repetition parameters, and accounts for the techniques through which poets in both traditions made the mention sound venerable and ancient. Control cases include other characters in the *Iliad* (Diomedes, Hector) and OB Akkadian poetry (Isthar, Ea). The resulting figures are commensurate for the two traditions, supporting the hypothesis of a similar degree of orality-literacy interaction. The article seeks to offer a model for fine-grained cross-cultural literary criticism and verse study.

Keywords: Homer, Babylonian epic, oral-derived texts, formulaic structures, comparative poetics, divine epithets

1. Oral transmission of Near Eastern poetry to the Aegean

Comparison between surviving ancient Near Eastern poetry (Sumero-Akkadian *viz.* Mesopotamian, Hurro-Hittite, Ugaritic and Hebrew) and the early Greek epic tradition has been developing substantially over the past few decades.[1] The hypothesis of direct or indirect reception of preserved Near Eastern poems by Homer is regarded with increasing caution,[2] and several scholars consider a broader, analogical perspective to be more productive.[3] Because, however, the quality and quantity of similarities is such that a degree of interaction between poetic traditions (as opposed to individual works) is beyond doubt, the question of transmission remains open.

It has long been surmised that the cross-over took place largely by oral means, probably in southeastern Anatolia and Cyprus during the Early Iron Age (ca. 1050–700 BC).[4] Literary contact involving the oral phase of Greek epic is suggested by the fact that several shared motifs appear to be profoundly ingrained in the traditional mechanisms of composition that Homer—i.e. the putative author(s) of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—had inherited, and shared with contemporary poets (Mondi 1990: 150–1; Ballesteros 2021a). Though polygenesis certainly happened, studying similarities in poetic craft can also show that analogous underlying parameters existed that might have facilitated literary transmission between bilingual singers of oral poems (Ballesteros 2021a).[5]

This article is part of an ongoing project about structures of orality in early Greek and Babylonian (Akkadian) epic. It offers a comparison of the verse-making technique underlying the mentions of the chief gods Enlil and Zeus in the *Epic of Atra-hasis* (first attested in the eighteenth century BC) and Homer's *Iliad* (dated to the eighth/seventh century BC). Further Akkadian poetry of the same period and other Homeric characters besides Zeus are included as control cases. I will first discuss how Assyriologists have tackled the question of orality in narrative poetry (§2); after setting out parameters for the present attempt (§3), I

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[1] Especially Burkert (1991, 1992); West (1997a); Haubold (2002, 2013); Kelly (2008); López-Ruiz (2010, 2014); Metcalf (2015); Currie (2012, 2016); Bachvarova (2016); Clarke (2019); Rutherford (2020); Ballesteros (2021a); articles in Kelly and Metcalf (2021); Davies (2023). On Greek and Egyptian literature, see Rutherford (2016).

[2] Advocates of reception include Burkert, West, Currie, Bachvarova, Clarke, Davies (preceding footnote); Lardinois (2018, 2021). The texts most frequently invoked as sources are the Babylonian *Gilgamesh* for Homer (for a recent critique, see Matjevic 2018) and, for Hesiod, the Hurro-Hittite *Song of Emergence* (see Rutherford 2018; 2020: 144–62).

[3] On 'genealogical' vs. 'analogical' comparisons see the Introduction to Kelly and Metcalf (2021); on comparative approaches to ancient mythologies see Pace (2018: 19–70); on recent analogical perspectives, see Haubold (2013, 2020, 2021); Metcalf (2015, 2018); Bowie (2021); Kelly (2021); Ballesteros (2021b, 2023); Calini (2023).

[4] For example Mondi (1990: 150–51); West (1997a: 590–610); Ballesteros (2021a: 1–2 nn. 3, 7). According to Bachvarova (2016), Mesopotamian themes influenced Greek epic via Syro-Anatolian mediation in the Bronze and Early Iron Ages; for criticism, see Metcalf (2017); Gilan (2018, 2021); also Yakubovich (2017).

[5] On bilingual singers, see West (1997a: 606–9); Bachvarova (2016: 46–49) and *passim*.

will turn to my case-studies and preliminary conclusions (§4–5).

Oral transmission cannot have happened between Old Babylonian (OB: ca. 2000–1595 BC) and Homeric composers (eight/seventh c. BC), separated by almost a thousand years, and a direct line need not have existed between the Akkadian and the Greek traditions. Yet several features of the earliest OB evidence endured into the first millennium. Akkadian epic of the second and first millennia BC features pre-eminently in the continuum of literary forms connected to performance that spanned the major literary cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East. It is the most longstanding and best preserved. Its products, including *Gilgamesh*, radiated westward from the second millennium BC, and it is with Akkadian poetry that most Near Eastern literary parallels to early Greek epic have been drawn (West 1997a; Bachvarova 2016; Ballesteros 2021a). As outlined below (§2), compelling contextual reasons commend the OB tradition as an excellent place to start this investigation.

While comparative work may thus help us substantiate the oral transmission hypothesis, it will also enrich analogical understanding of the literary cultures under scrutiny. Given the limited scope of the examined Akkadian corpus and its temporal and spatial distance from the Greek, however, this article will set the question of transmission aside, concentrating instead on establishing comparative parameters for future research. But it is well to keep in mind the broader context.

2. Traditional aurality in Old Babylonian Akkadian literature

Recent work on Mesopotamian poetic orality has been sporadic and methodologically uncoordinated, despite excellent individual contributions.[6] Karl Hecker's (1974) *Habilitationsschrift* remains the most complete study of the compositional style of Akkadian epic. For Hecker, the monotonous aspects of traditional diction are residues of a past orality, and this remains the prevailing view (e.g., Cooper 1992; George 2003: 19–22 on the emergence of OB *Gilgamesh*). More unsettling is Hecker's notion that critics should set those traditional aspects aside to reach the originality of the Akkadian poet (1974: 185). He is certainly right that the 'composition in performance' model does not fit the Babylonian scribal context. [7] But this need not mean that structures of repetition reflected literary/scribal convention. Defining the compositional role of formulaic structures—that is to say, where precisely they fall in the spectrum ranging between 'stock-in-trade of illiterate poets' and 'aesthetic devices learnedly utilized by literate authors'—remains very difficult even in Homeric stud-

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[6] Civil (1999); Carr (2005: 40–46); Haul (2009); Wilcke (2012); Johandi (2015). Note the important ongoing work on Sumerian liturgical lamentations: Delnero (2015, 2020); Mirelman (2020); Gabbay and Mirelman (2020).

[7] Hecker (1974: 65) refers to Bowra (1952) rather than to Parry and Lord.

ies, the cradle of oral-formulaic theory (see Friedrich 2019; Ready 2019; Rodda 2021). It is widely accepted, however, that they are a function of the recitation, or singing, of the texts. Among Assyriologists, the focus on performance was established in the 1992 collection on *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural?*, but the task has not been pursued, neither in the study of formulaic patterns nor through comparison.[8]

The *Atra-hasis* epic (hereafter *Atr.*), and OB Akkadian poetry in general, constitute excellent case studies.[9] One reason is that this poetry was ostensibly composed for performance, as evidenced, e.g., by the closing lines (OB *Atr.* 3.viii.18–19): 'Of the Flood to all the peoples / I have sung: listen!'. It seems unlikely that the poet is here expressing an aspiration to widespread diffusion by using a conventional, figurative denotation of poetry as 'song'.[10] Scholars have analysed *Atr.* as shaped through musical movements, that is 'fugal features' (Kilmer 1996). The evidence for musical specialism connected to poetry is particularly abundant for the eighteenth century BC, within and outside temples and royal palaces.[11] Much poetry makes direct reference to kings such as Hammurabi (see below §5), illuminating a system interlacing institutional patronage, poetry and music.[12]

A second factor, besides performance, is the unknown pre-history of OB Akkadian poetry. To explain the formation of OB *Gilgamesh*, Andrew George attributes a decisive role to oral folk poetry in vernacular Akkadian.[13] The linguistic morphology of much OB Akkadian poetry presents features absent from standard OB Akkadian prose. Once described as defining the 'hymno-epic' dialect of Akkadian in a historico-geographical sense (von Soden 1931, 1933), this is a *Kunstsprache* that could not have been devised by an individual poet.[14] The analogy with the Homeric language, itself never spoken, and with debated regional roots, is an obvious one.[15] Unlike Homer's, however, Akkadian poetic language has not been shown

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[8] Vogelzang and Vanstiphout (1992). This 'performance' turn was not unanimously accepted: Michalowski (1992); George (1994). See Metcalf (2015: 143–50) on written vs oral-mnemonic poetic conceptions in Babylonia and Greece.

[9] *Atra-hasis'* edition: Lambert and Millard 1969; see also Shehata (2001); add Spar and Lambert (2005) and George (2009) (= OB *Atr.* Schø., a new source in the Schøyen Collection); Wasserman (2020) on the Flood narrative (essentially OB Tablet III).

[10] Similar passages in OB Akkadian poetry: Shehata (2010: 201–11). Reference to performance (especially at the closing of poems): Foster (1991); West (1997a: 593–600); Shehata (2010); on *Enūma eliš* 7.144–58 see Gabriel (2014: 84–97); Reynolds (2021: 63–68). On the 'let me sing' topos, see Metcalf (2015: 130–37); Carter (this volume) on Chaucer.

[11] Ziegler (2007, 2011, 2013); Pruzsinszky and Shehata (2010); Shehata (2010, 2018). Musical rubrics: Shehata (2009); on the institution of *mummu*, in charge of official musical training: Michalowski (2010: 201–3); Pruzsinszky (2010: 113); Shehata (2010: 212–20).

[12] Long-term (late-fourth and third millennium) perspective on public music festivals: Kutzer (2018); third-millennium Ebla: Tonietti (2018); Ur III: Pruzsinszky (2007, 2010, 2011, 2013); Isin-Larsa: Ludwig (1990); Metcalf (2015: 18–22; 2019); Peterson (2021).

[13] George (2003: 21): 'the spontaneity of the poetry'; cf. 24, 47; (2009: 5): 'the plain, unadorned style found in Gilgamesh and other narratives, which may speak for a popular, oral origin rather than a scholarly one.'

[14] Hess (2010, 2020); Lambert (2013: 34–44). An updated study is lacking: there is none in Vita (2021); see Streck (2021: 1024–26). On *Atra-hasis*, see Lambert and Millard (1969: 29–30). For OB *Gilgamesh* (Pennsylvania and Yale tablets), see George (2003: 162) (hymno-epic language traits are less pronounced).

[15] For the Greek epic *Kunstsprache*, see Heubeck (1981); Janko (1982); Horrocks (1997); Wachter (2015 (2000): 67–71;

to have evolved through generations of illiterate singers. At present, the analogy highlights that the poetic tradition preceding our texts deserves attention.

These are strong grounds to investigate traditional markers of orality in OB Akkadian texts, whose compositional structures demand to be read bearing their performative dimension in mind. Comparison with Homer proves instructive.

3. A comparative approach to traditional naming

How should one conduct that comparison? Formulae are an obligatory starting point. The 'Parryan' noun-epithet formula (e.g., 'and in reply to him spoke swift-footed Achilles') is an expression conveying 'a given essential idea' (Achilles in the nominative); crucially, Homer would use one and only one expression when willing to communicate that idea under a given 'metrical condition' (Parry 1971 (1928): 13). Exceptions exist, but the 'essential ideas' covered by 'formulaic expressions' are so numerous, and the system shows such pervasiveness ('extension') and such a strict connection with metre ('economy'/'thrift'), that it cannot conceivably have been invented by Homer himself. Noun-epithet formulae, therefore, must be traditional expressions. Indeed, Parry (1971 (1928): 24–36) showed that Apollonius and Vergil do not apply the system, thus not qualifying as 'traditional' poets.

That 'traditionality' here implies the illiterate oral composition of the Homeric epics, a conclusion at which Parry and Lord arrived through the South-Slavic analogy, has not been demonstrated (Lord 1960).[16] Three aspects are central for present comparative purposes. First, the systematic recurrence of a given repeated expression in discernibly identical metrical contexts is a sign of traditionality (though not necessarily of illiterate composition). Second, comparison with living oral traditions supports the idea that the traditional character of certain poetic features should be associated with oral composition, whether preceding or contemporary with our written sources. Foley (1990, 1991) influentially coined the adjective 'oral-derived' to describe this phenomenon, though one must remember that oral phases of composition do not necessarily precede a given written version, and for this reason among others, a different label—'performance-directed'—seems preferable (see also below §5). Third, the attempts at extending Parry's approach and conclusions to cases beyond noun-epithet expressions illustrate the fundamental role of variation, compositional freedom, and idiosyncratic usage of traditionality. They can offer insights into the poets' artful deployment of their inherited formulaic stock.

2012); Haug (2002); Willi (2011); Jones (2012). Hess (2010: 101) draws the analogy.

[16] On the formula, see Edwards (1986, 1988); Finkelberg (2004); Beck (2018); Friedrich (2019). On South-Slavic poetry as post-traditional, see Čolaković (2019).

Noun-epithet phrases that strike Homeric readers as stylistically familiar are frequent in Akkadian narrative poetry, as they are in several other traditions (Hecker 1974: 162–8). In Greek epic, the shaping of traditional expressions for stereotypical character-naming is inextricably intertwined with the nature of the hexameter, a very flexible but appreciably regular verse. Akkadian metre shows no such regularity. Diachronic variation is considerable, but Akkadian verse appears to be organized according to accentual peaks (of varying number), often displaying the *parallelismus membrorum* based on alliterative patterns that is typical of other Semitic poetry (such as Ugaritic, Hebrew, Arabic).[17] Poetic lines do not present a fixed number of syllables, nor any regular quantitative alternation. Thus, however tied to metrical factors (below §4.2), Akkadian noun-epithet formulae do not play the same compositional role as they do in Greek epic. For instance, there is no comparable Parryan 'extension' of the formulaic system, no comparable range of 'ideas' expressed through metrically-determined noun-epithet formulae. Nevertheless, early Greek and Akkadian noun-epithet expressions functioned as performance-directed elements in similar manner. Both were regarded as traditional by composers and audiences, and played a comparable aesthetic function in evoking a venerably ancient poetic universe.[18]

Given the differences in metre and in the related traditional texture of the two traditions, this comparison is not centred on noun-epithet formulae, but more broadly on the names of traditional characters, with a view to classifying the types of proper noun expressions ('mentions') based on degrees of traditionality. I propose a spectrum of name-mention traditionality comprising three categories:

> **T = traditional**: most likely formulaic/traditional (*viz.* inherited from the tradition, stylistically fixed, comparatively 'frozen')
>
> **TB = tradition-bound**: based on recognisable traditional patterns ('flexible'), but less likely to have been inherited, as far as we can tell from available data
>
> **NF = non-formulaic**: no discernible widespread (*viz.* presumably traditional) structure behind the mention (save the metre)

This is a spectrum enabling a comparative discourse which respects the traditional rules of each corpus.[19] As Homerists routinely remark, our surviving texts account for a fraction of the traditional poetry that was once current in writing and orally. Certainty is precluded as

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[17] Wisnom (2015) compares Old English alliterative verse. On Akkadian metre, see also Helle (2014), building on von Soden (1981, 1984); Hecker (1974: 101–54) and West (1997b); also Buccellati (1990) and Wasserman (2003: 158–62).

[18] E.g., Parry (1971 (1928): 127): archaicizing formulae demonstrate 'nobility and grandeur' On formulae and other structures as *partes pro toto* evoking the tradition, see Foley (1991: 1–59). On traditionality and group solidarity, see Ready (2018: 114–21).

[19] Ready (2018) classifies Homeric similes within a traditionality spectrum; Beck (2018) considers Odysseus' name-epithet formulae in a semantic spectrum of contextual appropriateness.

to whether an expression repeated twice is traditional or not (Hainsworth 1993: 16–17; Di Benedetto 1998; Currie 2016). Equally important, poets display a vested aesthetic interest in making an innovation sound traditional, which evidently contributes to further blurring the boundaries between our categories.[20] Homeric poets or audiences may or may not have conceived of a certain formulation as traditional, but there is an extent to which one can expect to be able to tell if it was indeed so. Yet it is imperative to search carefully for the indigenous parameters governing the traditional expression of poetry.

4. Naming the gods

This case-study, then, concerns the mentions of Enlil in *Atra-hasis* and of Zeus in *Iliad* Book 8. About 60% survives of the OB poem, which totalled approximately 1250 lines (Foster 2005: 228). Since the *Atra-hasis* lines are roughly between one-half and two-thirds the length of a hexameter, this is an acceptable match for the 565 hexameters constituting Homer's Book. In the two texts, the two chief gods can justifiably be said to be protagonists: both are the most frequently named, and both drive the narrative through their initiative. Zeus is mentioned 34 times, and I count 38 mentions of Enlil (I exclude cases where Zeus is only mentioned patronymically (*Kroniōn*, *Kronidēs*, 4x T, 2x NF), and *Atr.* OB 1.131, 133 ≈ 143, 145 and 2.vi.22 because these lines are too damaged, but include the repeated lines *Atr.* OB [2.ii.39–42]). The percentage result of the comparison is as follows:

Tab. 1:   Mentions of Zeus in *Iliad* 8 and Enlil in *Atra-hasis*.

	T	TB	NF
Zeus in *Il.* 8 (34)	67.5% (23)	12% (4)	20.5% (7)
Enlil in OB *Atr.* (38)	58% (22)	18.5% (7)	23.5% (9)

Before drawing conclusions on these percentages, which seemingly indicate analogous tendencies (prevalence of **T**), control cases will require examination (§4.3). First, however, I will discuss the components of each category.

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[20] See especially Scodel (2002) and Ready (2018: 55–127). Thus Homeric imitation (as opposed to allusion) may not be manifestly advertised: Ballesteros (2020).

4.1. Zeus

Let us start with Zeus.[21] The vast majority of the 23 instances classified as 'traditional' (**T**) are noun-epithet expressions (17):

Tab. 2:   Noun-epithet expressions (Zeus in *Il.* 8).

Lines	Expression	Case, position	Occurrences	Other
8.22	Ζῆν' ὕπατον μήστωρ' 'highest counsellor Zeus'	acc., before masculine caesura	2x Hom.	cf. *Il.* 17.339*
8.38, 469	νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς 'Zeus the cloud-gatherer'	nom., after hephthemimeral caesura	35x *epos*	
8.141	Κρονίδης Ζεύς 'Zeus, son of Cronus'	nom., before bucolic diaeresis	5x *epos*	[Hes.] fr. 234.2 M-W perhaps **TB**: Κρονίδης + Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα μήδεα εἰδὼς (5x *epos* after masculine caesura)
8.170	μητίετα Ζεύς 'Zeus the shrewd'	nom., after bucolic diaeresis	36x *epos*	
8.206	εὐρύοπα Ζῆν 'Zeus of vast voice'	acc., after bucolic diaeresis	4x *epos*	cf. 8.442

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[21] In the following tables, (*) directs the reader to the ensuing discussion. 'Hom.' includes *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. '*epos*' includes *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Hesiod's *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and fragments; fragments of the Cyclic poems; and *Homeric Hymns*. Data are taken from *TLG* searches. Hexameters consist of six *metra* or feet, which can take a dactylic or spondaic form, except the last, which can be spondaic or trochaic (long + short) but not dactylic. Dactyls are feet where two short syllables follow a long one (—◡◡); spondees are sequences of two long syllables (——). Introduction to the Homeric hexameter: Nünlist (2015), who follows, as I do, the system of Fränkel (1960); trithemimeral caesura = Fränkel's A4, masculine = B1, feminine = B2, hephthemimeral = C1, bucolic diaeresis = C2. Caesurae occur when a semantic pause caused by word-end does not coincide with the end of the foot; diaereseis when it does.

Lines	Expression	Case, position	Occurrences	Other
8.210	Διὶ Κρονίωνι 'to Zeus, son of Cronus'	dat., after feminine	7x *epos*	before feminine caesura 4x *epos*
8.236	Ζεῦ πάτερ 'father Zeus'	voc., first dactyl	34x *epos*	*
8.250	πανομφαίῳ Ζηνί 'to Zeus of all the oracles'	dat., before hephthemimeral caesura	1x *epos* + Sim. *Ep.* 52.2	Cf. [Hes.] fr. 150.12*
8.352, 427	αἰγιόχοιο Διός 'of Zeus the aegis-bearer'	gen., before hephthemimeral caesura	17x *epos*	
8.384	Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο 'of the aegis-bearer Zeus'	gen., after hephthemimeral caesura	35x *epos*	
8.387	Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο 'of the cloud-gatherer Zeus'	gen., after feminine caesura	11x *epos*	
8.397, 438	Ζεὺς δὲ πατήρ 'but/and father Zeus'	nom., 4x before trithemimeral caesura	*epos*	
8.442	εὐρύοπα Ζεύς 'Zeus of vast voice'	nom., after bucolic diaeresis,	28x *epos*	cf. 8.206
8.460	Διὶ πατρί 'to Zeus the father'	dat., before feminine caesura	8x *epos*	*22x epos other positions**

Unless otherwise indicated, all occurrences are in the specified case and metrical position. Adherence to traditional metrical positions is thus considerably strict. The high number of realizations of the essential idea 'Zeus' shows the importance of possessing an ample

search corpus: none of the expressions is repeated more than twice in Book 8, and it would be impossible to distinguish traditionality without the rest of *epos*. In fact, 8.22 and 8.250 highlight that indeterminacy. The repetition of Ζῆν᾽ ὕπατον μήστωρ᾽ 'the highest counsellor Zeus' at Hom. *Il.* 17.339 is unique in *epos*; we cannot exclude that the poet repeated an expression of his own devising, consciously or not. What seems certain is that, even if the phrase was consciously repeated (which should not be granted by default), the poet wanted the expression to sound traditional, since the two contexts cannot be meaningfully connected as evoking an intratextual allusion. An equally venerable and traditional connotation was doubtless attributed to πανομφαίῳ Ζηνί 'to Zeus of all the oracles', evoking Zeus' role as the ultimate prophetic source. Considering the epic corpus alone, its status as a traditional expression in Parry's sense would be questionable: its only other occurrence comes in the genitive case ([Hes.] fr. 150.12 M.-W.). But an identical occurrence in an epigram attributed to Simonides (fifth century BC) may strengthen the possibility (*AP* 6.52 = 61 *FGE* = *Ep.* 55.1–2 Sider: Οὕτω τοι, μελία ταναά, ποτὶ κίονα μακρὸν / ἧσο, Πανομφαίῳ Ζηνὶ μένουσ᾽ ἱερά· 'Now thus, slender spear, against the great column / rest, and be sacred to Zeus of all the oracles'). Again, an intertext seems unlikely.[22] Finally, the 'father Zeus' type (here 8.236, 397, 438, 460) may appear to sit uncomfortably among noun-epithet expressions. The monosyllabic nature of the noun (in the nominative and vocative) and the Latin and Sanskrit cognates *Juppiter* and *Dyauṣpitṛ* encourage one to take it, if not as a single word (cf. the convenient division at Ζεὺς δὲ πατήρ 'but/and father Zeus'), at least as behaving like a 'metrical word', in which case it should be treated as **NF** 'isolated' names (see below).[23] However, the fact that the dactylic vocative Ζεῦ πάτερ, out of several possibilities, appears only at the beginning of the verse, is a clear indication of traditionality (contrast, e.g., the dative Διὶ πατρί: 30x *epos*, 16x verse-end, 8x before feminine caesura, 6x after hephthemimeral). Taken as a whole, these examples evidence the vastness of the inherited formulaic repertoire, as well as the flexibility allowed by the hexameter—certainly not a surprising result for Homerists, but one which is important for the comparative purpose of defining the traditional ways of naming Zeus.

One way to deploy and evoke tradition is, thus, to use noun-epithet expressions. The second, which accounts for about a quarter of the **T** instances (6/23), consists in a phrase repeatedly found in the same metrical position and coupling the name Zeus with verbal or nominal expressions generally themselves recurrent in the corpus (Tab 3):

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[22] 'If there is any point to the epithet here, it is now lost' (Sider 2020: 202). Even if the epigram is Hellenistic, this is a generic epicism, not a reference to Homer. The metrical position argument, however, has less force here: it seems hardly possible to make that long spondaic sequence ($\cup - - - \cup$) fit elsewhere in a hexameter or pentameter.

[23] In 'metrical words' or 'Wortbilder', proclitics, enclitics, and prepositions cohere with their referent: Fränkel (1960: 142–47). This is a moot point among Akkadian metricists: West (1997b: 182–83); Helle (2014).

Tab. 3: Further traditional mentions (Zeus in *Il.* 8).

Lines	Expression	Position	Occurrences	Other
8.143	Διὸς νόον 'the mind of Zeus'	after feminine caesura	9x *epos*	5x Διὸς νόον αἰγιόχοιο* (cf. below **TB** 8.375)
8.216	Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν 'Zeus granted glory'	after hephthemimeral caesura	4x *epos*	Ζεὺς κῦδος 10x *epos*, cf. **T** 8.141; but κῦδος ἔδωκεν only thus.*
8.364	αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ Ζεύς 'but Zeus me (acc.)'	after bucolic diaeresis	2x *Il.*	*Od.* 23.352 after first-foot diaeresis
8.493, 517	Διΐ φίλος/οι 'dear to Zeus'	before bucolic diaeresis	17x *Il.*	also voc. sing. and masculine acc. sing.*
8.526	Διί τ' ἄλλοισίν τε θεοῖσιν 'to Zeus and the other gods'	after masculine caesura	4x Hom.	

Like noun-epithet formulae, these standard phrases may well convey the 'essential idea' of 'Zeus' (e.g., Διὸς νόον 'the mind of Zeus' = 'Zeus'), which, however, does not deny the expression's referential resonance (power determinacy and disclosure; Kelly 2007: 172–3). Some phrases work as epithets in their own right (Διΐ φίλος). Yet as they tend to connect the noun to specific concepts or actions, they often articulate more complex semantics than noun-epithet formulae do, thus enriching the syntagmatic possibilities of naming. They can be subjected to combinatory flexibility and flanked by noun-epithet phrases, as exemplified by Ζεὺς κῦδος (8.216), recurring in the half-line Κρονίδης Ζεὺς κῦδος ὀπάζει at 8.141 ('Zeus the son of Cronos is affording glory', itself recurring at *Il.* 21.566). To say 'x gives/was giving glory' in the present or imperfect tense, poets would use ὀπάζω 'grant' (rather than δίδωμι 'give' as in 8.216, aorist). κῦδος ὀπάζει(/ν) is itself a frozen expression recurring 11x *epos* at line end (3x with Zeus as subject). At root, these are all clearly recognizable

as frozen expressions strictly tied to certain metrical positions. Like Parry's noun-epithet formulae, they are unlikely to have been coined by the author of the *Iliad*.

Further down the spectrum of traditionality, one encounters expressions identifiable as tradition-bound (**TB**). Their precise shape is unparalleled in the corpus, but composed of certain features that the audience would recognise as epic and traditional.[24] These are generally traditional epithets or other frozen expressions in specifically reshuffled combinations. I count four of them for Zeus in *Iliad* Book 8:

Tab. 4:   Tradition-bound mentions (Zeus in *Il.* 8).

Lines	Expression	Traditional background	Other
8.2	Ζεύς (…) τερπικέραυνος 'Zeus who delights in thunder'	Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος after hephthemimeral caesura 4x Hom.	*
8.287	Ζεύς τ' αἰγίοχος καὶ Ἀθήνη 'Zeus who bears the aegis and Athena'	αἰγιόχοιο Διός before hephthemimeral caesura 17x *epos*; Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο line-end 35x *epos*. Cf. above (**T**) 8.352/427, 384.	Perhaps **T**, cf. *Od.* 15.245: Ζεύς τ' αἰγίοχος καὶ Ἀπόλλων.
8.375	Διὸς δόμον αἰγιόχοιο 'the house (acc.) of Zeus who bears the aegis'	Διὸς ⏑⏑ αἰγιόχοιο after hephthemimeral caesura 14x *epos*	Cf. above 8.143 (**T**)
8.412	Διὸς δέ σφ' ἔννεπε μῦθον 'and she told them Zeus' word'	Διὸς δ(έ) … only after feminine caesura 17x *epos*.	

The evidence is insufficient to decide whether a given **TB** expression was in fact traditional or just made to look so. One cannot exclude that the powerful hyperbaton at *Il.* 8.2 (see below) was well known among groups of singers and considered common property. This is perhaps more likely in the case of Ζεύς τ' αἰγίοχος καὶ Ἀθήνη (8.287), given the Odyssean parallel. The case of Διὸς δόμον αἰγιόχοιο (8.375) likewise displays a degree of indeterminacy, since other Διὸς ⏑⏑ αἰγιόχοιο expressions are widespread in *epos* (notably Διὸς νόον

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[24] Note, however, that in the case of Hector and in *Atra-hasis* I classify as potentially **TB** a few items recurring two or three times; I do so when it seems very possible (at least) that the item was devised and then repeated by the poet. Naturally, there is no way to know for certain.

αἰγιόχοιο, cf. on 8.143).

Nevertheless, the evidence does permit grouping these instances together, at least notionally, because they are unique in a corpus vast enough to allow for other types of expressions to recur up to 35 times. The case of 8.412 brings us closer to our final category, the non-formulaic instances (**NF**) displaying no hints at a traditional status. What differentiates Διὸς δέ σφ' ἔννεπε μῦθον from **NF** cases is the relevance of the metrical position: Διὸς δ(έ) recurs only after the feminine caesura, though its metrical shape would allow for several other possibilities. This suggests that its recurrence was intimately tied to dactylic half-lines (hemiepes) of the type most famously represented by *Il.* 1.5 (also *Od.* 11.297, *Cyp.* fr. 1.7, cf. *Il.* 20.15): Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή 'and Zeus' plan was being accomplished' (see Allan 2008; Currie 2016: 1–4; Edmunds 2016).

NF instances, then, display the noun alone or in prepositional phrases, with no discernible traditional *viz.* widespread structure behind the occurrence, save for the metrical constraint (as opposed to the consistent metrical positions defining **T**). I count seven of them for Zeus in *Iliad* Book 8:

Tab. 5: Non-formulaic mentions (Zeus in *Il.* 8).

Lines	Expression	Other
8.140, 251	ἐκ Διός 'from Zeus'	3x before bucolic diaeresis (including 8.140 and 251); 19x *epos*
8.242	ἀλλὰ Ζεῦ 'but, O Zeus'	Ζεῦ (voc.) 54x *epos*; in this position only in 4x *epos* αἲ γὰρ Ζεῦ invocations
8.249	πὰρ δὲ Διὸς βωμῷ 'beside Zeus' altar'	only here in *epos*
8.424, 428	Διὸς ἄντα 'against Zeus'	only here in *epos*
8.444	Διὸς ἀμφίς 'around Zeus'	

At first sight, there is nothing obviously differentiating ἀλλὰ Ζεῦ 'but, O Zeus' at 8.242 from Ζεῦ πάτερ 'father Zeus' (8.236 voc.) which was classified as **T**. The latter's recurrence 34 times in the same metrical position makes all the difference. Similarly, with ἐκ Διός 'from Zeus': it recurs 19 times in the corpus, but in several different positions, meaning it

was not particularly tied to any of them, though there is a prevalence after bucolic diaeresis (see Kelly 2007: 168–9 for the referential resonance of this expression). Nevertheless, it bears repeating that this is a 'spectrum' of traditionality, and the available evidence is frequently not sufficient for strongly informed opinions. The matter is particularly acute with the 'metrical words' of the 'father Zeus' type which (unlike Ζεῦ πάτερ) recur sporadically, such as Ζεὺς δὲ πατήρ 'but Zeus the father' (**T**, see above). One should not exclude that an expression like Διὸς ἄντα 'against Zeus' (**NF**) was in fact common, especially considering the importance of Olympian conflict in the tradition (e.g., Yasumura 2011; Pucci 2018; Ballesteros, forthcoming). What seems certain is that the poet, by emphasizing the expression through the short-distance repetition, made it sound traditional (*Il.* 8.423–8):[25]

> ἀλλὰ σύ γ' αἰνοτάτη, κύον ἀδεὲς, εἰ ἐτεόν γε
> τολμήσεις <u>Διὸς ἄντα</u> πελώριον ἔγχος ἀεῖραι.
> Ἢ μὲν ἄρ' ὣς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη πόδας ὠκέα Ἶρις,   425
> αὐτὰρ Ἀθηναίην Ἥρη πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν·
> ὢ πόποι αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος, οὐκέτ' ἔγωγε
> νῶϊ ἐῶ <u>Διὸς ἄντα</u> βροτῶν ἕνεκα πτολεμίζειν·

> But most dread are you, you shameless dog, if truly
> you will dare to raise your mighty spear <u>against Zeus</u>.'
> And having said so swift-footed Iris went away   425
> but Hera then said word to Athena:
> 'O dear, daughter of Zeus who bears the aegis, no more shall I allow
> that we two should fight for mortals' sake <u>against Zeus</u>;

I shall return to borderline cases, but it is first worth looking at Enlil's naming in OB *Atra-hasis*.

4.2. Enlil

Given the nature of Homeric poetry, epithets proved reliable witnesses to identify traditional (**T**) mention-types for Zeus. Noun-epithet expressions are also prominent with Enlil, constituting almost half of the identified **T** instances. The formula *qurādu Enlil* 'the warrior Enlil' (or, in the genitive, *qurādi Enlil*) recurs 10x in OB *Atra-hasis*, and it always concludes the line (1.8 [≈ 125 = 137], 69, 92, 112, 2.v.27, vi.32, 3.vi.5, vi.12). The difference with the Homeric practice is striking: none of the Zeus noun-epithet expressions recurs as many times in the equivalent space of Book 8; and *Atra-hasis* does not present a variety of epithets comparable to that in Homer. A Parryan explanation for this would also be the simplest: it comes down to the complexity of the hexameter, which obliged generations of poets to devise many

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[25] *Il.* 8.420–4 athetized by Aristarchus, 8.421–4 by West. But see Kelly (2007: 398–99).

ways (i.e. traditional expressions) to accommodate the rhythm and facilitate oral versifi-
cation. Akkadian poets simply did not need to do so. Why is it, then, that *qurādu/-i Enlil*
always comes at the end of the line? The answer probably is that this epithet was tradition-
ally bound to larger-scale traditional forms, in which the noun-epithet came at the end.
This is certainly the case in eight out of the ten OB *Atr.* occurrences. Three times it comes
in the formulaic verse *mālikšunu/-kunu qurādu Enlil* 'their/your (pl.) counsellor, the warrior
Enlil' (cf. 3.viii 11 *atta mālik ilī rabûti* 'you, counsellor of the great gods' and OB *Anzû* 1.2 =
SB 1.85); and five times it occurs when Enlil is the addressee in the speech-introduction
couplet of the type (OB *Atr.* 1.111–12 = 3.vi.11–12, cf. 1.91–2, 2.vi.31–2):

> *Anu pâšu īpušamma*
> *issaqar ana qurādi Enlil*

> Anu made his mouth ready,
> he spoke to the warrior Enlil

Study of these couplets in *Atra-hasis* discloses one traditional rule dictated by the metre,
namely that the speaker does not receive an epithet, whereas the addressee always does.
As one anonymous reviewer perceptively suggests, 'presumably this rule follows from the
balanced structure of the OB verse: the speaker's name is followed by several verbs and
nouns that convey the act of speaking, leaving no room for an epithet, whereas the ad-
dressee is introduced only by a brief preposition, which allows the poet to supplement the
name with an epithet and thereby to balance the couplet.'

The rule permits identifying a second type of **T** naming of Enlil (5x OB *Atr.*), when he is the
speaker in speech-introduction couplets and thus comes without an epithet (OB *Atr.* 1.85,
105, 2.v.22, 2.vi/vii (?) [= Schø. ii.16'], 3.vi.41).[26] Here, the name is repeatedly connected to
a traditional turn of phrase and qualifies as **T** despite standing without an epithet (compare
Tab. 3 above). One similar case is *Enlil illakā dimāšu* 'Enlil, his tears were flowing down' at
1.167, where the phrase *illakā dimāšu/-ša* is stereotypical in Akkadian poetry (Hecker 1974:
78–9; George 2003: 836; Jiménez 2017: 94–7; Ballesteros 2021a: 19–20; add Schø. *Atr.* iv.10').
Tellingly, it came to interact with an equivalent expression in the Hurrian tradition that
we now find in the Hittite version of *Gilgamesh* and in Hurro-Hittite poetry: 'tears flowing
forth like canals', a formulaic simile not found in the Akkadian *Vorlage* (Klinger 2005: 119–
20). This is important evidence exemplifying the kind of transfer or adaptation that is
possible when two poetic idioms come into contact that share an underlying traditional
poetic syntax (cf. Ballesteros 2021a; forthcoming; above §1).

The one exception to the 'epithet-less speaker' rule is the fifth occurrence of *qurādu Enlil* in

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[26] On speech-introductions in Akkadian poetry, see Sonnek (1940); Hecker (1974): 174–80; Vogelzang (1990).

speech-introductions. Here the narrative pace is unusually compressed and does not allow for the full standard couplet of speech-introduction (2.v.24–7):[27]

⌜še⌝-na [ina? ma]-⌜ri⌝ li-ib-[bi-ku-nim]
li-[še-ri]-⌜bu⌝-ni a-na ma-aḫ-⌜ri⌝-[ia]   25
⌜še⌝-na [ina?] ma-ri i-ib-bi-ku-⌜ni⌝-[iš-šu]
is-sà-qar-šu-nu-ši qu-ra-du ᵈ[en-líl]

'Let them br[ing to me] the two [comrades]
Let them [come] before me.'   25
The two comrades were brought [to him],
And the warrior Enlil spoke to them

A closer look shows that the breaking of the rule is drawn by another traditional tendency. To understand better the poetic technique behind these lines, we need to look at the third **T** way of naming Enlil, namely quatrains. A traditional quatrain can be defined as one composed of two successive couplets (distichs) that are identical except for any grammatical adjustments and one word in the first distich which the second distich varies in the same verse position (Hecker 1974: 146–51, naming this technique 'd[ie] variiert[e] Wiederholung eines Verspaares'). The reader of Sumero-Akkadian poetry, even in translation, will immediately recognise this elegant feature, which has long been connected to performance (West 1997a: 593–4). One example from the divine strike scene may suffice (OB *Atr.* 1.70–3, transl. Lambert and Millard):

mišil maṣṣarti mūšum ibašši   70
bītu lawi ilu ul īdi
mišil maṣṣarti mūšum ibašši
bītu lawi Enlil ul īdi

It was night, half-way through the watch,   70
the temple was surrounded, but the god did not know
It was night, half-way through the watch,
the temple was surrounded, but Enlil did not know!

These structures account for six **T** mentions of Enlil in OB *Atr.* (1.44 = 59, 1.73, 1.83, 1.90, 1.96). Now, OB *Atr.* 2.v.24–7 (above) is not precisely a traditional quatrain, given the considerable variation in the second line of the distichs. But a parallel at 1.87–90 suggests that the same technique is in play. That quatrain likewise spans a direct order and its implementation, and displays the correspondence between *maḫrīya* ('my presence'), which Enlil

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[27] The text is highly fragmentary (and thus transliterated); restored *exempli gratia* with Klein (1990: 79 n. 4): 'two of my sons', tr. Foster (2005: 245).

says of himself, and the narrator's naming of the god. It reports Enlil's first reaction to the news of the revolt (OB *Atr.* 1.87–90):

> *Nuska, edil bābka,*
> *kakkīka liqi, izziz ma<u>ḫ</u>rīya!'*
> *Nuska idil bābšu*
> *kakkīšu īlqi, ittaziz ma<u>ḫ</u>ar Enlil*   90

> Nuska, bar your gate,
> take your weapons and stand <u>before me</u>!'
> Nuska barred his gate,
> took his weapons and stood <u>before Enlil</u>.   90

OB *Atr.* 2.v.24–7, then, appears to conflate the techniques relating to the traditional quatrain with those of the speech-introduction, with an unusually compressed version of the latter in place of the expected quatrain closing. As seen above, standard speech-introductions place the verb *issaqar* '(s)he spoke' in the second line of the couplet, followed by *ana* ('to') plus noun-epithet expression (e.g., *issaqar ana qurādi Enlil*). In OB *Atr.* 2.v.24–7, the traditional speech-introduction legitimized the poet to preserve the noun-epithet expression after *issaqar*. Meanwhile, the compression of the speech-introduction (drawn by the 'quatrain' urge to be explicit about Enlil's name in the second distich) made the composer opt for an unusual nominative, resulting in the breaking of the epithetless addresser rule.

To sum up: the 22 traditional (**T**) mentions of Enlil in OB *Atr.* (out of 38) include 10x *qurādu Enlil* formulae, 5x Enlil as speaker in speech-introduction structures, 1x Enlil coupled with a conventional expression (*illakā dimāšu*), and 6x in traditional quatrain structures.

As in our Greek sample, tradition-bound (**TB**) expressions are the least numerous of the three categories (I count seven of them). Their identification invites comparison with the uncertainties surrounding the Greek evidence, highlighting the spectral nature of both systems. As observed above, brief (prepositional) phrases of the kind 'from Zeus' normally offer no hint at traditionality in the sense of a recurring structure. But cases like 'Father Zeus' (Ζεῦ πάτερ), 'but father Zeus' (Ζεὺς δὲ πατήρ), or 'but Zeus me (acc.)' (αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ Ζεύς), whose traditionality is beyond question given the recurring metrical position (including outside the *Iliad*), alert us to the possibility that a phrase like 'against Zeus' (Διὸς ἄντα) may well have been traditional too, even if it recurs only twice and in the same passage. It was certainly meant to sound traditional. The comparable case in Akkadian is the phrase *itti* 'with' + proper noun. In the case of 'against Zeus' (Διὸς ἄντα) the 2x short-range repetition is insufficient for us to classify it as traditional. And the same goes for *itti Enlil* 'with Enlil',

which recurs only 3x *Atr.* (1.152 = 1.165, 2.vii.47). But there is perhaps a case to be made that *itti* + proper noun is an underlying traditional naming manner against whose background *itti Enlil* resonates. One reason is the considerable brevity of the Akkadian line, meaning that *itti Enlil* occupies one of three feet of the quick OB verse. This is in sharp contrast with the prepositional phrases like Διὸς ἄντα, occupying less than a fifth of a hexameter: the Akkadian phrase receives far more emphasis. This impression is reinforced by looking at other examples of this structure in OB Akkadian poetry, such as the sentence-end case in the *Literary letter to Ninmuga* 5–7 (SEAL no. 1649):

> *ana annītim ḫiṭītim*   5
> *ša ubl[â]m qātātīya*
> <u>*itti Išum leqea*</u>

> For this sin   5
> which I have committed
> intercede for me <u>with Išum</u>

The same structure gives a solemn, inscriptional ring to the last lines of the *Zimrī-līm Epic* (iv.11–12, cf. iii.27) (SEAL no. 1552):

> *balāṭam ḫegallam u danānam*
> <u>*itti Dagan*</u> *Zimrī-līm īriš*

> A life of plenty and one of might
> Zimrī-līm has asked <u>from Dagan</u>.

Two examples from OB *Gilgamesh* are also noteworthy. They come at a short distance, from Gilgamesh's famous heroic exhortation to Enkidu, where he contrasts a glorious fight with the certainty of death and the impossibility of living like the gods (OB *Gilg.* 3.141–3, 148–50, ed. George 2003):

> *ilūma* <u>*itti Šamšim*</u> *dāriš u[šbū]*
> *awīlūtumma manû ūmūša*
> *mimma ša īteneppušu šārūma*   143
> ...
> *šumma amtaqut šumī lū ušziz*   148
> *Gilgāmeš* <u>*itti Huwāwa*</u> *dapīnim*
> *taqumtam ištu*   150

> The gods have [dwelled] forever <u>in sunshine</u> (lit. with the Sun-god Shamash)—
> but mankind, its days are numbered,

whatever they might do, it is but wind.	143

...

If I fall, I should have made my name:	148
Gilgamesh—they'll say—with Huwawa, the fierce,	
joined battle.	150

Rather than a casual use of plain 'with someone' expressions, these examples speak for variations on a traditionally pointed—though not necessarily oral—template, which gained strength by the fact that it occupied one of the three (or two, in the case of the *Ninmuga* passage) feet of the line (also OB *Gilg.* 2.135–8, with the colon marked through line-division: ⸢*itti*⸣ [*ša*]*mkatim* / *ippuš* [*u*]*lṣam* / *iššīma īnīšu* / *ītamar awīlam* '[With Shamkat] / he (Enkidu) was pleasuring himself / he lifted his eyes / he saw the man'). Even more striking is the deployment of *itti Enlil* in OB *Atr.*, for it contributes to a long-distance intratextual connection which encapsulates the rivalry between the chief god and the wisdom god Ea. The occurrence at 2.vii.47, in the heated divine assembly where Ea refuses to cause the Flood, Ea's words look back to his own pre-eminence when it came to creating mankind. The destructive obnoxiousness of Enlil is contrasted with the beneficent creative power of Ea (*Atr.* OB 2.vii.47, 1.201):[28]

> *šipiršu ibašši it*[*ti Enlil*]
>
> This task (*viz.* the Flood) lies with Enlil!
>
> (Ea speaking)

> *itti Eāma ibašši šipru*
>
> It's with Ea that the task (*viz.* mankind's creation) falls!
>
> (Mami speaking)

As with 'against Zeus' (Διὸς ἄντα), there can be no demonstration that *itti Enlil* in *Atrahasis* can be taken as an inherited feature. Yet the metrical argument is stronger in the Akkadian case, as is the (related) force and memorability of the phrase, suggested by the quoted occurrences. Such elements seem sufficient to classify *itti Enlil* as **TB**, though this case again highlights that traditionality works as a spectrum rather than by fixed boundaries. No hard-and-fast rules exist to exclude that *itti* + proper noun should just be treated as non-formulaic (**NF**). Conversely, accepting it as a poetically-marked traditional expression might bring *itti Enlil* on a par with **T** cases where the noun is connected to self-standing structures such as speech introductions or quatrains.

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[28] Add this to Helle (2015); cf. Wilcke (1999: 83–85).

A different type of **TB** expression involves variations upon traditional quatrain patterns. The poet utilizes this technique to express Enlil's displeasure at mankind's din which induces him to devise destruction. Lines are repeated three times (one for every scourge, except the final Flood), arguably to mark out sections in performance, and contributing to the *crescendo* effect (OB *Atr.* 1.354–7 = 2.i.3–6 = [2.ii.39–42], restored based on the parallels OB 1.352–60 = 2.i.1-9; cf. NA S rev. iv.1–12, x rev.1-11, and SB Si 5.45–54; George and Al-Rawi 1996):

> *mā[tum kīma lī]'i išappu*
> *ina [ḫubūrišina] ilu itta'dar*   355
> *[Enlil ištēme] rigimšin*
> *[issaqar] ana ilī rabûti*

> The [land] was bellowing like a [bull]
> by [their noise] the god was disturbed   355
> [Enlil heard] their outburst,
> [he spoke] to the great gods:

The variation is elaborate, and again involves an overlap with speech-introduction structures (cf. above on 2.v.26–7). Since the subject is just called 'the god' (*ilu*) in the couplet 1.354–5, audiences would have expected a traditional quatrain, with the ensuing distich substituting *Enlil* for *ilu*. Such a quatrain may well have been performed. What we do have is an unorthodox—and, one may feel, highly effective—speech-introduction couplet. Technically, the position of the noun at the beginning of line 1.356 is attracted there by its function as addresser (see above). Yet this also works as the second half of a traditional quatrain in so far as (a) it resumes the content of the preceding distich and (b) satisfies the audience's expectation that the name be spelled out. Since it is repeated three times, one cannot exclude this is in fact a **T** formulation. But it seems best interpreted as a poet's creative elaboration specifically designed to introduce Enlil's reaction to noise in the Flood poem.

One can interpret the couplet where Atra-hasis addresses the city-elders similarly. Here the variation upon the expected repetition works within the compass of the couplet (as opposed to the quatrain) and takes a chiastic form (OB *Atr.* 3.i.42–3):

> *[i]tti ilīkunu ilī ūl [magir]*
> *ittezzizū Ea u [Enlil]*

> My god is [in a strife] with your (pl.) god,
> [Enlil] and Ea are furious with one another.

One may note the *itti* + noun foot at the beginning; there is little ground to suspect that *Ea u Enlil* is a standardized expression, though it recurs at 2.vi.22 (otherwise illegible), which is unlikely to have contained the same text as 3.i.43 since it precedes Enlil's speech.

Homer is keen on variations marking decisive moments too. One **TB** mention of Zeus is worth quoting (*Il.* 8.1–2):

> Ἠὼς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἐκίδνατο πᾶσαν ἐπ' αἶαν,
> Ζεὺς δὲ θεῶν ἀγορὴν ποιήσατο τερπικέραυνος

> Dawn the saffron-robed was spreading over the face of all the earth
> and <u>Zeus who delights in thunder</u> summoned the gods' assembly

> > (Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος 4x Hom., verse-end, cf. above)

The striking—and unparalleled—hyperbaton (separation of two normally adjacent words) emphasizes the epithet. As a new day begins, the line foreshadows that Zeus will at last take steps towards a Greek defeat as he had promised, and will actively help the Trojan leader Hector through an exceptional display of his thundering abilities (esp. *Il.* 8.68–77, 131–5, 169–71).[29] This can profitably be compared to how Enlil is named in the chief rebel's rallying speech to the assembly of the insurgent gods (*Atr.* OB I 43–6 ≈ 57–60; cf. SB Si I 49–51; George and Al-Rawi 1996: 158):

> [*ilam*] *mālik ilī qurādam*
> *alkānim i nišši'a ina šubtīšu*
> *Enlil mālik ilī qurādam*
> *alkānim i nišši'a ina šubtīšu*

> [The god], the counsellor of the gods, <u>the warrior</u>,
> let us go and remove him from his dwelling!
> <u>Enlil</u>, the counsellor of the gods, <u>the warrior</u>,
> let us go and remove him from his dwelling!

Here the resounding fullness of Enlil's titles, highlighted by the disjunction, stresses the daring of the rebels menacing the chief god. The effect is technically predicated on the use of the traditional quatrain, which appears to determine the hyperbaton. Like in the *Iliad*, this might have a foreshadowing resonance—though an ironic one, since the Enlil who shuts himself in the palace, bursts into tears, and forsakes the divine assembly hardly acts as 'the warrior' (for similar irony surrounding this epithet, see OB *Anzû* 1.2 = SB 1.85). The

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[29] It also looks back at the (equally ominous) thundering at 7.478–81. Nowhere else are thundering and lightning clustered in this way (for occurrences, see Kelly 2007: 113).

foreshadowing disjunction of a noun-epithet expression makes this an excellent parallel to *Il.* 8.2. And although *Enlil mālik ilī qurādam*, on account of the traditional quatrain, should be classified as **T** (rather than **TB** as Ζεύς…τερπικέραυνος or *Enlil ištēme rigimšin*), all these examples illustrate a cross-cultural analogy in the effects achieved by playfully varying upon inherited patterns.

Does the analogy extend to the quantitative level *viz.* the relative percentages of use of traditional, tradition-bound, or non-formulaic ways of naming characters? **NF** occurrences of the name Enlil in OB *Atra-hasis* are nine (1.14, 84, 104, 168, 196, 2.viii.35, 3.i.48, 3.iii.39, v.41). This makes the percentage difference with **NF** occurrences of Zeus in *Iliad* Book 8 relatively negligible.

It is now worth returning to those percentages:

Tab. 6:   Mentions of Zeus in *Iliad* 8 and Enlil in *Atra-hasis* (again).

	T	TB	NF
Zeus in *Il.* 8 (34)	67.5% (23)	12% (4)	20.5% (7)
Enlil in OB *Atr.* (38)	58% (22)	18.5% (7)	23.5% (9)

The data are considerably more useful for comparing the *ways* in which each poetry is traditional than the *degrees* to which each one is so (and much less for comparing degrees of orality). Traditionality in Homer is not the same as in OB Akkadian epic. The noun-epithet formularity as tied to the hexameter system is probably the most evident differential trait here. Disparity in **T** percentages is not insignificant, but more important is the fact that, in Homer, **T** mentions are made up of 74% noun-epithet structures (17/23), but just 43% (10/23) in *Atra-hasis*. In the context of noun-epithet expressions, as noted above, variability is incomparably more pronounced in Homer, since there is only *one* noun-epithet structure for Enlil. Again, this is predicated on the difference between metrical systems and composition as a function of them. On the other hand, the larger proportion of **T** cases that are *not* noun-epithet structures makes the Akkadian technique a more varied one in the ways it expresses traditionality generally.

Another major divergence lies in the degree of *verbatim* repetition, which is much more pronounced in Akkadian poetry, and is also a major factor affecting percentages. (If one, for instance, should not accept that 1.356 = 2.i.5 = [2.ii.41] counts as **TB** but consider it as **NF**, the latter would shift from 23.5% to 31.5%). Homeric messenger speeches are routinely

repeated, often with crucial variations (Kelly 2007: 325–9; now Battezzato 2019; Ready 2019: 34–51, 75–97). But the range of repeated scenes in Akkadian poetry is incomparably larger—most famously perhaps the fourfold repetition of Tiāmtu's illegitimate enthroning of Qingu in *Enūma eliš*, occupying much of tablets II and III (*Enūma eliš* 2.11–48 (with 2.15–48 = 1.129–62) = 3.15–52 = 3.73–110). This phenomenon increases with time: later versions of OB poems augment or introduce repetition (Cooper 1977; Vogelzang 1986; 1988: 192–234 on *Anzû*; Wisnom 2023). Repetition is helpful for memorization, but this difference in *scale* seems best attributed (however speculatively) to aesthetic preferences, perhaps dictated by performance modes: recitation for Homer, higher musical variation and song in *Atra-hasis* permitting audiences to enjoy equal or diverging musical arrangements of the same line blocks (on song in *Atr.* see above §2; below §5 on *Agushaya*).

Nevertheless, fundamental commonalities—shared traditionality modes—remain and should not be downplayed. The existence of common features such as noun-epithet expressions, formulaic speech introductions, or typical situations such as assemblies has long been acknowledged (albeit little studied). But the successful application of the same taxonomy has shown that poets also had analogous ways of playing with traditionality. Crucially, both Homeric and OB Akkadian poets were keen for poetry to *sound* traditional.

The next question is how representative our case study is. This is key not only from a quantitative perspective, but also because narrative poetry is not a mechanic process, and how characters are mentioned must be determined to at least some degree by their attributes and actions, and generally by poets' choices about them. Looking at other characters, and, for OB Akkadian poetry, other poems, shows that the proposed taxonomy holds, and that the traditional modalities identified in *Atra-hasis* were indeed so. They also strengthen the impression of commensurability between the two corpora (for a synopsis see Tab. 8 below §4.3).

4.3. Ea, Diomedes, Hector, Ishtar, and Ea again

Nevertheless, the naming of Ea in *Atra-hasis* (after Enlil, the most frequently mentioned character) may seem to strengthen the comparative divide.[30] Out of 25 counted mentions, only 14 can be taken as **T** (56%, compared to Zeus' 67,5%). Again, one finds noun-epithet expressions, speech-introductions, and traditional quatrain structures.

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[30] OB *Atr.* 2.iii.9 (and 2.vi.22) is too broken for inclusion; I do not consider 3.iii.25, where the missing subject may be Ea (Lambert and Millard 1969: 94; Foster 2005: 205) or, more likely, Anu (Wilcke 1999: 89–90; Wasserman 2020: 26).

Tab. 7:   Traditional mentions (Ea in OB *Atr*).

Lines	Traditional expression	Type
1.16, 3.vi.42	*ana Ea naššīki/niššīki* 'to Ea the prince'	noun-epithet/speech introduction (addressee)
1.204, 372, [2.vi.31] (= Schø. ii.1), [2.viii.40]? (= Schø. iv.11'), 3.i.15, 3.vi.16, 45	*Ea pâšu īpušamma* 'Ea made his mouth ready'	speech introduction (addresser)
1.250	*niššīku Ea* 'prince Ea'	noun-epithet
2.iii.9	*Ea tamīma* 'he swore by Ea'	traditional quatrain
2.iii.29	*išmēma Ea awassu* 'Ea heard his word'	speech reception
2.vi.[17]	*Ea itašuš ašābam* 'Ea got fed up with sitting'	traditional quatrain
2.vi.39	*Ea niššīka* 'Ea the prince'	noun-epithet

The percentage of **NF** occurrences is 28% (7/25), higher than for Enlil (23,5%) and Zeus (20,5%): 1.[18], 1.98, 1.100, 1.102, 1.254, 2.v.18, 3.i.45. **TB** cases (16%, 4/25) include the *itti Ea* occurrence at 1.201 and the quatrain variation at 3.i.43 (both mentioned above §4.2); an association of Ea with the root *'pš* 'to make' with which he is traditionally linked (3.vi.14 *ša lā Ea īppuš* 'who but Ea could have done this?');[31] and a variation upon the quatrain pattern whereby the god is mentioned in the first distich rather than in the second as is usual (1.364–7).[32]

Ea's case-study consists of just 25 cases, and the difference in percentages compared to those for Enlil and Zeus should not be overemphasized. Nevertheless, the higher proportion of **NF** seems to justify the impression that Akkadian naming patterns may be less de-

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[31] Apart from his (non-exclusive) epithet *itpēšu* 'the effective one', cf. *Erra and Ishum* 2.23 (K + IM 121299) *aššu šipri šâšu Ea* ⌈^d⌉[...] *it?-peš* 'Concerning that work, Ea [...] is expert', *Anzû* OB 1.31 [*Ea*] *etpuˈšum*⌉, *Enūma eliš* 1.59–62.

[32] *u š[ū Atram-ḫasīs] / ilšu Ea ub[assar] / ītamu i[tti ilīšu] / u šū ilšu itt[īšu ītamu].* 'Now, that one, [Atra-hasis] / was informing his god, Ea. / He spoke [with his god] / and that one, his god, [spoke with him].' The repetition of *ilšu* ('his god') is thematic (it is this connection that saves mankind), and contributes to the elevated style; this quatrain precedes a traditional speech-introduction distich.

pendent on tradition than the Greek. That impression is strengthened by looking at the occurrences of Diomedes' name in *Iliad* Book 5, where he is the protagonist. Book 5 is the longest of the poem, and being largely about battle scenes it is among the most traditional thematically (see Fenik 1968: 9–78; Krischer 1971: 23–7; and Andersen 1978: 47–94 on the poet's manipulation of conventions). In Book 5 Diomedes' name occurs 25 times, the vast majority of which are **T** instances (84%, 21/25), with both **TB** and **NF** scoring a meagre 8% (2/25). Each of the 21 **T** mentions is a noun-epithet formula,[33] and both **TB** instances resemble one considerably.[34] These data are strongly suggestive of a high degree of traditionality in Homer, one that appears distant from those concerning Ea in *Atra-hasis*.

Yet neither Diomedes' nor Ea's case should be taken as representative of their traditions. Homeric naming can present balanced percentages (like those for Ea); and Akkadian practice similarly unbalanced numbers (similar to those for Diomedes). Returning to *Iliad* Book 8, Hector's case is instructive. He is the human protagonist of the book. As among Diomedes' mentions, **TB** are hardly visible, with only two cases (7,5%) distinguishable from **T** on scant statistical grounds.[35] More important for comparative purposes is that traditional occurrences (**T**) are 16/26 (61,5%), but only seven of them are noun-epithet formulae (27%), in contrast with Diomedes' 21/25 (84%).[36] Moreover, Hector is named in

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[33] κρατερὸς Διομήδης 'mighty Diomedes' (nom.) consistently recurs after the hephthemimeral caesura (19x *Il.*), but it uniquely precedes the bucolic diaeresis at 5.151.

[34] ὑπέρθυμος Διομήδης 'high-spirited Diomedes' (5.375, nom., after masculine caesura) recurs only once in *epos* (acc. at 4.365), and relies on the traditional positioning of ὑπέρθυμος there (18x *epos*); similarly ὑπερφίαλον Διομήδεα 'arrogant Diomedes' (5.881, acc., after masculine caesura), with ὑπερφίαλος recurring 31x *epos* in that position. **NF** instances: 5.124, 519.

[35] For the following two (**TB**) cases, the possibility that the poet crafted and then reused *ad hoc* expressions (as opposed to inheriting them) should not be dismissed, as they recur only twice: **(1)** 8.153: σ' Ἕκτωρ γε κακὸν καὶ ἀνάλκιδα φήσει 'Hector will call you bad and cowardly', cf. 14.126: γε κακὸν καὶ ἀνάλκιδα φάντες; **(2)** 8.312–13: ἀλλ' Ἀρχεπτόλεμον θρασὺν Ἕκτορος ἡνιοχῆα / ἱέμενον πόλεμόνδε βάλε στῆθος παρὰ μαζόν· 'but Archeptolemus, the bold charioteer of Hector, / as he hasted into battle he [Teukros] smote on the breast beside the nipple. Cf. 16.737–8: οὐδ' ἁλίωσε βέλος, βάλε δ' Ἕκτορος ἡνιοχῆα / Κεβριόνην νόθον υἱὸν ἀγακλῆος Πριάμοιο 'Nor did he [Patroclus] throw his dart in vain, but smote the charioteer of Hector / Kebriones, the illegitimate son of very glorious Priam'; though for ἡνιοχῆα after bucolic diaeresis cf. 19.401.

[36] **T** noun-epithet = **(1)** 8.160 (μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ 'great Hector of the glancing helm', after feminine caes. 12x *Il.*), **(2)** 8.216 and **(3)** 356 (Ἕκτωρ Πριαμίδης 'Hector son of Priam', nom. before masculine caes. 7x *Il.*, cf. 2.817), **(4)** 8.324 and **(5)** 377 (κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ 'Hector of the glancing helm', nom. after hephthemimeral caes. 37x *Il.*), **(6)** 473 (ὄβριμος Ἕκτωρ 'mighty Hector' nom. after bucolic diaeresis 4x *Il.*), **(7)** 489 (φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ 'splendid Hector' nom. after bucolic diaeresis 29x *Il.*). Attached to traditional phrases: **(8)** 8.88 (Ἕκτορος ὠκέες ἵπποι 'Hector's swift horses', last three feet 2x *Il.*; ὠκέες ἵπποι after bucolic diaeresis 12x *epos*); **(9)** 8.110 (ὄφρα καὶ Ἕκτωρ 'so that Hector too', after bucolic diaeresis 2x *Il.*, ὄφρα καὶ after bucolic diaeresis 12x *epos*); **(10)** 8.124–5 = **(11)** 316–7: Ἕκτορα δ' αἰνὸν ἄχος πύκασε φρένας ἡνιόχοιο 'Dread sorrow covered Hector in his midriff for his charioteer, cf. 17.83 (Ἕκτορα δ' αἰνὸν ἄχος πύκασε φρένας ἀμφὶ μελαίνας 'Dread sorrow covered Hector in his dark midriff', with αἰνὸν ἄχος before masculine caes. 7x *Il.*; **(12)** 8.158: ἐπὶ δὲ Τρῶές τε καὶ Ἕκτωρ 'and on the Trojans and Hector (nom.)', cf. 15.589, with ἐπὶ δὲ Τρῶές after masculine caes. 4x *Il.* **(13)** 8.172 = 6.110 = 15.346: Ἕκτωρ δὲ Τρώεσσιν ἐκέκλετο μακρὸν ἀΰσας· 'And Hector called to the Trojans shouting aloud'; μακρὸν ἀΰσας after bucolic diaeresis 14x *Il.*; ἐκέκλετο μακρὸν ἀΰσας after feminine caes. 9x *Il.*; **(14)** 8.337: Ἕκτωρ δ' ἐν πρώτοισι 'and Hector amid the foremost', cf. 11.61, with ἐν πρώτοισι before feminine caes. 7x *Il.* **(15)** 8.493 and **(16)** 542 τόν ῥ'/ ὣς Ἕκτωρ ἀγόρευε 'to him/thus Hector spoke', ἀγόρευε

a **NF** manner 8/26 (31%): 8.90, 117, 148, 235, 301 = 310 (Ἕκτορος ἀντικρύ 'against Hector' before masculine caesura, only here, compare Διὸς ἄντα 'against Zeus' discussed above §4.1), 341, 348. This is a much higher percentage than with Zeus and Diomedes, but similar to those for Enlil and Ea.

Further contextual study (and work on other Homeric books) is required to account precisely for such differences between the ways Diomedes and Hector are mentioned. They may well be caused by the specific actions in which Hector participates, rather than his being a relative newcomer in the oral epic tradition about Troy, as some scholars have suggested.[37] Whatever the reason, this example illustrates that the proportion of **NF** mentions can vary considerably in Greek *epos* too.

Hector's mentions thus appear closer to observed Akkadian cases in the relatively high proportion of **NF**. Equally important, the evidence exists in Akkadian for a relatively high proportion of **T**. This can be seen by moving away from *Atra-hasis* and on to another classic of OB Akkadian poetry, the *Song of Agushaya*, a narrative hymn for the goddess Ishtar (ed. SEAL; *Agushaya* A+B refers to the two surviving tablets). Here Ishtar acts as the main character as much as Ea does; for both names I count 12 occurrences.[38] Both display a low percentage of **NF** mentions: Ishtar 16,5%, 2/12; Ea: 8,5%, 1/12 (A.iv.21, vii.14', B.vi.11). The difference one can see between **T** (Ishtar: 58,5%, 7/12; Ea: 83%, 10/12) and **TB** (Ishtar: 25%, 3/12; Ea: 8,5%, 1/12) is largely due to the classification of the two *itti Ištar* 'with Ishtar' instances (A.v.33', vii.13') as **TB** rather than **T** (see above §4.2; third **TB**: variation on the quatrain responsion pattern at A.ii.7–11). **T** mentions of Ishtar include traditional quatrain contexts (A.i.5, iii.10, B.ii.15'),[39] the final noun-epithet *labbatu Ištar* 'the lioness Ishtar' (B.vi.24; cf. CAD L 23), and three cases of an intriguing performance-driven convention: in antiphons (see below), the goddess' name appears only as the first word of the second line (A.ii.5, iii.5, iv.24). The latter form is evidenced for Ea too (A.vii.3'), and appears to be the basis of a **TB** variation when Ea is mentioned in the first antiphon line (rather than the second) at A.v.30'. Otherwise, **T** mentions of Ea include two speech-introduction cases (A.vi.14', B.v.5'), and seven noun-epithet expressions: *niššīku Ea* 'prince Ea' (A.iv.12, v.16', v.28', B.vi.17'), *Ea eršum* (A.iv.19, v.23', vii.10').

Data for all the examined case-studies are below:

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before feminine caes. 11x *epos*.

[37] In Book 8, the battle depiction is relatively 'untypical': Fenik (1968: 219–28); Cook (2009). On Hector as a newcomer, see Kullmann (1960: 182–85, 226); West (2011: 45); Bachvarova (2016: 191–95, 432–38), *contra* Metcalf (2017: 3–4).

[38] A.iii.29, viii.10', B.ii.9' and iv.3' are broken and have not been considered (though B.iv.3' is possibly Ea's speech introduction). B.v.5' can be safely reconstructed and included.

[39] In these manuscripts, quatrains span eight lines of text.

Tab. 8:   General mention distribution.

	T	TB	NF
Zeus in *Il.* 8 (34)	67,5% (23)	12% (4)	20,5% (7)
Diomedes in *Il.* 5 (25)	84% (21)	8% (2)	8% (2)
Hector in *Il.* 8 (26)	61,5% (16)	7,5% (2)	31% (8)
Enlil in OB *Atr.* (38)	58% (22)	18,5% (7)	23,5% (9)
Ea in OB *Atr.* (25)	56% (14)	16% (4)	28% (7)
Ishtar in *Agushaya* (12)	58,5% (7)	25% (3)	16,5% (2)
Ea in *Agushaya* (12)	83% (10)	8,5% (1)	8,5 (1)

The examined control cases confirm the fundamental tendencies outlined by the initial Enlil/Zeus comparison. Greek epic tends to use more **T** expression. The difference is not immense, however, and can be explained by the compositional importance of noun-epithet formulae in the hexameter context. Variations, at any rate, exist in both traditions, as the extremes Diomedes/Hector and Ea (in *Atr.*)/Ishtar (*Agushaya*) exemplify. The broader picture also confirms the value of the proposed taxonomy in illuminating the peculiarities of each corpus such as, again, the Greek noun-epithet formula, or the Akkadian traditional quatrain.

This picture also has limitations. To distinguish between types of mentions, one relies on statistics and on the extent of corpora which are limited by definition and cannot be trusted to encompass the entirety of the tradition. Our percentages can therefore be partially flawed due to borderline cases (as repeatedly discussed) and should not be taken rigidly. A further limitation is that much Akkadian poetry is missing from this research. Preliminary observation of the OB *Gilgamesh*, for example, shows a lower reliance on noun-epithet structures, though traditional speech-introductions and quatrains are as prominent as one could expect. Research should also be extended to later evidence: especially intriguing are changes between OB and first-millennium versions of the same poem. This will sharpen understanding of the traditionality of epic diction, including its diachronic and synchronic variations—an aspect that could also be important for Hellenists, since comparisons could be profitably made between Homeric epic and other archaic hexameter poetry.

Yet the work done indicates fundamental tendencies and an overarching homology. Per-

haps most importantly, the proposed taxonomy shows that in both contexts traditionality worked as a spectrum, with the fundamental aesthetic implication that traditional items were immensely valued by composers and audiences.

5. Concluding Remarks

The *Agushaya Song* was composed under the patronage of king Hammurabi of Babylon (reign. 1792–1750), as evidenced by the following passage (*Agushaya B* v 23–9):[40]

> *u šarrum ša annâm zamāra[m]*
> *idāt qurdīki*
> *tanittāki išmūni*   25
> *Ḫammurapi <ša> annâm zamā[ram]*
> *ina palîšu tanit<tā>ki ⌈x x⌉*
> *innepšū*
> *lū šutlumšu addār balāṭ[u]*

> And the king who heard from me (*viz.* Ea/the performer) this song,
> the sign of your (*viz.* Ištar's) heroism,
> and your praise,   25
> Ḫammurabi, <who> (heard) this song
> your praise, it is during his reign [...]
> it was composed,
> may he be granted life forever!

This composition can be dated precisely. But what matters here is that a song presented to Hammurabi and meant to be used at a civic festival (*Agushaya B* v 11–22), arguably in Babylon, was surely not an 'oral composition' of the improvised and illiterate type, however unclear the institutional relationship between musicians, composers and scribes may be.[41] Moreover, *Agushaya* yields positive evidence for its being a performance text—beyond, that is, internal references such as that just quoted, and those occurring, in a much more circumscribed manner, in *Atra-hasis* (Finkel 2014: 298–308 deems the 'Ark tablet', possibly belonging to *Atr.*, a performer's aide-mémoire). The *Agushaya* manuscripts are accompanied by scribal notations in Sumerian (rubrics) detailing the composition's strophic structure as a function of performance. Each rubric of the type ki-ru-gú 1/2-kam-ma 'this is the

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[40] Text from SEAL (but insert the <-*ta*> at 27). For the difficulties of these lines, see Groneberg (1981): 127–33; CAD T 170–1; Foster (1991): 24; Shehata (2010): 202–3.

[41] Cf. above n. 12. On literacy in OB Mesopotamia, see Wilcke (2000); also Charpin (2010: 7–24); Van De Mieroop (2022: 1-35).

first (/second etc.) song' is matched by one ĝiš-gi₄-ĝál-bi, 'its antiphon' (for *kirugu* 'strophes' and *ĝišgiĝal* 'antiphons', see Shehata 2009: 344–9). Finding stylistic features entirely comparable to those in *Atra-hasis*, and the same forms of traditionality, suggests that those forms and features were integral to the texts' performative dimension. This is so despite stylistic differences, for example in the shape of speech-introductory couplets and strophic structure (there is less uniformity here than in the Greek hexameter corpus). It seems unlikely, therefore, that we are confronting conventional 'relics of orality' in Hecker's sense (see above §2).

This evidence illustrates a point repeatedly made in this volume: evolutionary scenarios leading from oral, illiterate, improvised to written and meditated composition can often be inadequate, and sometimes misleading. They are of limited utility in assessing the type of poetry addressed in this article, either for the mechanisms of composition or for the aesthetic effects poets and audiences were after. Stylistic analysis alone is unlikely to determine degrees of orality or literacy, even in the case of highly traditional poetry like the Homeric. But comparison with the Babylonian practice, which this article has for the first time attempted, can be productive in several ways.

Starting from Homeric orality, the proposed model permits a commensurate accounting of traditionality which respects cultural specificities. It may also highlight the importance of reading Babylonian poetry by doing justice to its traditional diction and performative dimensions. For scholars (such as Homerists) involved in attempts to connect traditionality and orality, the Babylonian comparandum is likely to be sobering. Fully developed literacy in the urban Old Babylonian context is not a deterrent for high degrees of traditionality meant for performance. In fact, this comparison may prompt reconsideration of Foley's category of 'oral-derived' poetry, as well as of Lord's (not unrelated) concept of the 'transitional text' (especially Lord 1986; 1995: 212–37). These have proved excellent models for reading Homer and other narrative poetry conceived for performance. However, a connection between the texts' traditional features and their historical status as documents for the *passage* between orality and literacy does not necessarily reflect reality. In fact, these models convey teleological views (from the oral to the written) which the Babylonian case among many others, as this volume attests, simply disproves. Rather than of 'oral-derived', we should now more accurately—and more productively—speak of 'performance-directed' texts, at least in the Old Babylonian case. This category needs to be explored through further study, but it promises to have historically diagnostic advantages. At the same time, it incorporates the major gain of Foley's approach: it is useful for investigations of comparative aesthetics, and for understanding interactions between composers and audiences.

The proposed classification reveals fundamental analogies in modes of composition and poetic conception between early Greek and Babylonian poetry. Seemingly, the most im-

portant is the nexus between a performance context and the force of traditionality. For ancient poets and audiences, a newly crafted phrase had to fit pre-existing parameters that qualified the expression as worthy of the epic medium. This had the effect of concealing the technical operation behind it. But we can assume that expert poets and audiences would look beneath the surface, enjoying traditionality even more as a result. Modern readers can presume to approximate that competence, and comparison has once again proved as good an avenue as any for doing so.

Acknowledgements

Sigla

AP = *Palatine Anthology*

CAD: *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* = Gelb, I.J. et al. 1956–2010 (eds): *The Assyrian dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.* 21 vols. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

FGE: *Further Greek Epigrams* = Page, D.L. 1981: *Further Greek epigrams. Epigrams before A.D. 50 from the Greek Anthology and other sources, not included in 'Hellenistic Epigrams' or 'The Garland of Philip'.* Edited by D.L. Page, revised and prepared for publication by R.D. Dawe and J. Diggle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SEAL: Sources of Early Akkadian Literature = https://seal.huji.ac.il/

TLG: *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* = https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/

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