CHAPTER 12

In Search Of Dumuzi: An Introduction to Hylistic Narratology

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1 Introduction

The following introduction to hylistic narratology is based on two decades of collaborative effort in the field of mythological studies, which has aimed to establish a new branch of cultural studies: hylistics, i.e., the study of narrative materials or *Erzählstoff-Forschung*.[1] The present introduction to hylistic narratology examines implications of hylistics for narratology and develops a hylistically founded method for narratological issues. In this paper, we focus on the question of how to analyze and explain the textual shape of stories and their narrative material using hylistic methodology (Annette Zgoll); this theoretical framework is then applied through a series of textual and hylistic analyses of multiple sources relating to the death of Dumuzi (Annika Cöster-Gilbert), including its depiction in *Innana's Descent* (Bénédicte Cuperly), as well as other myths about Innana[2] (Annette Zgoll). An outline of the paper is given in Table 12.1.

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1 See C. Zgoll, 2020, 43–47; and 2021, 46 f.

2 For the reading Innana (with assimilation of *aleph* and /n/ in (n)in'an.ak) instead of traditional Inana or outdated Inanna, see Marchesi, 2006, 215 fn. 52 and Attinger 2007, 37 f.

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2 Hylistic Analysis as a Tool to Determine the Textual Shape of Stories and Their Narrative Materials (Annette Zgoll)

2.1 *Understanding and Appreciating the Intricacies in a Work of Art*

Art can be appreciated in many ways. The challenge for a scientific approach to art is to understand as precisely as possible the particular forms or features of the work in question, and to trace the relationship between its contents and form, in order to understand its meaning(s) and appreciate its design. If the aim is to understand and appreciate not just the rough outline but also the finer details of the work, one must compare the finished piece with the raw material from which it was made, as one would examine a precious new garment to appreciate the pattern of its weave and even the individual threads revealed by closer inspection. A comparable approach to art is well-known in the field of musicology: here, a musical theme is the raw material from which composers create variations with different instrumentations, tonalities, major or minor keys, rhythms, tempos, and accompaniments. For example, Johann Sebastian Bach composed *The Musical Offering* as a body of variations on a theme suggested by Frederick the Great, known as "The King's Theme," and musicologists can uncover the subtleties of these variations by analyzing how Bach arranged and adapted the original in different versions and comparing the variations with the King's theme.

To distinguish between a fully formed work of art or literature and its raw material, we need to establish a functional, reliable terminology. The uses and definitions of the term "story" vary widely across the branches of literary scholarship: story is most often defined as the "action of a text in the sequence of the natural chronology," compared to the "plot," which is defined as the "action in the sequence of events, not in their natural order, but as they occur in a

given text."[3] Story and plot, however, are unique to a specific work of art and the medium of texts, whereas the narrative material or "*Erzählstoff*," abbreviated "*Stoff*" is a type of content not exclusively associated with or bound to any one form or medium: "As one can see, no comparable, corresponding term for the concept of Stoff exists in the field of narratology. For the moment we can—only inadequately, as a first approximation—describe a (mythical) Stoff as the totality of both existing and potential variants of a Stoff, which in turn is a self-contained sequence of events with particular protagonists, localities, themes, and actions."[4] Besides texts, an *Erzählstoff*-version may also be represented in pictures, statues, films, pantomimes, and so on. Further, a given text may contain more or even less than one complete version of an *Erzählstoff*. In Mesopotamian literature, we frequently encounter texts that reflect only parts of one *Erzählstoff*-version, rather than the full-length narrative material which is being adapted. One example in the present paper is *ershema* no. 165, which deals with the death of Dumuzi and the lament of his wife Innana and his sister Geshtin-ana. As shown below, this text tells only part of the *Erzählstoff*-version: Dumuzi provides for cities and temples, he has to die, and two goddesses lament his death. At the end of the text and its story, the goddesses are still lamenting, but this cannot be the end of the *Erzählstoff*-version: especially in myths, there has to be a "solution" to the problem addressed in the myth.[5] With *ershema* no. 165, text and story are "smaller" than the narrative material that inspired the poem. Such a relationship is typical not just for Mesopotamian laments, but for many other texts as well.

However, the inverse relationship is also commonly found in Mesopotamian narratives, where the text and its story incorporate multiple *Erzählstoff*-versions, as in Mesopotamian epic poetry. The song called *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld* represents such a case, where a mythical *Erzählstoff* about DUMUZI'S DESCENT TO THE NETHERWORLD is combined with stories about Innana, including several about her journey to the netherworld and one about her bringing the first temple from heaven to earth. Even the narrative material about Dumuzi is not taken from a single *Erzählstoff*-version, as sections

3 C. Zgoll, 2019, 17, fn. 13; for other approaches to these terms (not applied here), see C. Zgoll, 2019, 42–49; 2020, 17–19; for the comparison of story, plot, narrative material ("*Erzählstoff*") and its variants see C. Zgoll, 2021, 13–16.

4 C. Zgoll, 2020, 19.

5 See sections 3.3, 4.1.4, 4.2.1, 5.5.1, and 5.8.1 below. For general information on problem and solution as fundamental characteristics of myths, see C. Zgoll, 2019, 402, 535, and 542–543. As will be seen, this "solution" is often found in durative–resultative hylemes (see section 3.1., and C. Zgoll, 2021, 22–25). For the definition of the concept of a myth, that is, what constitutes a mythical narrative material in contrast to other types of narrative materials, see C. Zgoll, 2019, 562–563.

4–7 will demonstrate. Taken together, the individual *Erzählstoff*-versions about Dumuzi and Innana descending to the netherworld are shaped into a series of composite mythical *Erzählstoff*-versions—that is, myths (see section 6.3 below).

To be more precise, the myths incorporated in *Innana's Descent* are not narrative materials (*Erzählstoffe*) in a strict sense, but concrete manifestations of *Erzählstoff*-variants.[6] Where there are multiple variants of a narrative material, as with the descent of Dumuzi, any number of them can be expressed in a given physical text. The present paper explores the textual shape of stories, and the role of *Erzählstoff*-versions in their shaping, presenting analytical techniques that will allow us to detect and identify narrative materials, and arguing that a comparative approach of text and incorporated narrative material(s) will enhance our understanding of those narrative shapes.

2.2 *Developing Narratological Tools for the Reconstruction of Narrative Material*

In the field of narratology, there was until recently no methodology for examining the final textual shape of stories vis-à-vis their raw material; no technique to separate the material from the finished product (whereas we can distinguish the thread from the fabric, or the musical variation from its original theme). The conundrum we need to resolve is the nature of the material which, by definition, does not exist in any physical form: How can we work backwards from the end product—the physical text—to arrive at the material underneath? How can we describe the liberties that the text has taken with its sources, and weigh the product against its ingredients?

The development of a theoretical framework and corresponding methodological toolbox with which to isolate and extract raw materials from the physical manifestations of a story in any medium has been the goal of several research groups over the past decades, and the recent success of two such research groups has profound implications for the study of narratology.[7] A new framing theory and heuristic method now provides researchers with precise

6 C. Zgoll, 2019, 582–583, defines *Stoff* as "a non–finite quantity of variants of a polymorphic hyleme sequence, which can be circumscribed only approximately with regards to specific protagonists, places, objects, and events"; and a *Stoff* variant as a "self-contained sequence of multiple interdependent hylemes of a specific *Stoff*; a *Stoffvariante* is determined in its details."

7 Theory and methods have been developed in several research groups, including the *Collegium Mythologicum Göttingen* and the DFG-funded research group *STRATA. Stratification Analyses of Mythic Plots and Texts in Ancient Cultures*.

tools to reconstruct the narrative material, the *Erzählstoff*,[8] from the physical manifestation in which it appears.[9] The analysis of mythical *Erzählstoff*-versions opens up new avenues for the field of narratology, by allowing systematic comparisons between the narrative material and its presentation in a given text.[10] Bringing to light the differences between the two will also elucidate the processes involved in and required for the poetic shaping of texts, plots, and stories. In this paper, we explore the consequences of this method for the analysis and interpretation of ancient Near Eastern texts.

3 Hylistic Narratology in Ten Steps (Annette Zgoll)

The following ten hylistic approaches give a condensed overview of how we can analyze the shape of texts through the reconstruction of their narrative material. The analytical tools are designed for maximum compatibility across the spectrum of possible research interests. The following presentation is a schematic overview; in practice, some analytical steps can be repeated at different stages in the process (see for example the repeated analysis of textual omissions in sections 5.3 and 7.1.1), while others may be disregarded. In each case, the goal of the analysis—be it the character of an *Erzählstoff*-version, the way a text has been shaped by different *Erzählstoff*-versions, the comparison between *Erzählstoff*-versions and their interhylistic relations, and the like—determines the sequence and number of methodological steps (see Table 12.2).

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8 C. Zgoll, 2020, 17 notes that, in working with *Erzählstoffe*, "the familiar terms from literary scholarship, story and plot, will not get us very far: as a rule, these concepts are aimed at the narrative framework of one particular *text*, or in some cases, multiple *texts*; they are defined through textual criteria" (italics added). Sometimes, plot and story are used interchangeably, or their definitions are reversed. For the various terminologies, see Schmid, 2007, 104–107. A distinction between *Erzählstoff* and text is rarer; see e.g. Kayser, 1960, 56.

9 See also Morford, Lenardon, and Sham, 2011, 3 on myths as *Erzählstoffe*: "A myth also may be told by means of no words at all, for example, through painting, sculpture, music, dance, and mime, or by a combination of various media."

10 The identification of myths as *Erzählstoffe* has a long tradition (at least in fields other than Assyriology, where the collective term "myths" frequently refers to a special *group of texts*), see e.g., Lévi-Strauss, 1955, 430; Graf, 1985; Neuhaus, 2005, 4; Morford, Lenardon, and Sham, 2011; C. Zgoll, 2019, chap. 2.1 and 2020, chap. 2. The challenge, then as now, has been to create tools to reconstruct *Erzählstoffe*: without the proper tools, even scholars who declared myths to be *Erzählstoffe* have actually analyzed their *textual manifestations* instead.

TABLE 12.2 Overview of methodological steps in hylistic narratology

1	Textual phrases vs. hylemes: Revealing the threads in the fabric
2	Textual variety (length, syntax, focus) vs. hyleme structure: Sewing fabrics into garments
3	Textual omissions vs. complete narrative material, and the ending of myths: Darning holes in the garment
4	Order of the text vs. order of the narrative material: Weaving plain threads into intricate fabrics
5	Multiple narrative materials in a text: Patching fabrics into garments
6	Boundaries between multiple narrative materials: Stitching together the fabrics
7	Hyper-hylemes and other complex patterns: Applying special techniques
8	The stratigraphy of narrative materials and texts: Layering fabrics
9	Comparisons of different versions of narrative material: Recognizing similar fabrics in different garments
10	Comparisons of texts and their versions of narrative material: Interhylistic and intertextual relationships

3.1 *Textual Phrases vs. Hylemes: Revealing the Threads in the Fabric*

How do we get a hold of the narrative materials underneath the text? The starting point for this methodology is the realization that an essential feature of all types of narrative materials is the representation of a change in state.[11] Narratives are shaped by a sequence of actions, where "action" is understood in a general sense, comprising actions as well as states. The minimal definition of an *Erzählstoff* requires at least one change in state;[12] this is usually accompanied by a description of the states themselves.[13] By extracting the smallest action-bearing units from a given text (or other concrete manifestations of narrative materials), we can begin the reconstructive work. As Christian Zgoll puts it: "The focus … is on the *content* of the minimal action-bearing units which lie behind the textual plane, and even behind the plane of an individual lan-

11 See Schmid, 2007, 98: "Repräsentation von Zustandsveränderungen." For more detail on this topic, see C. Zgoll, 2019, chap. 5.

12 See Tomaševskij, 1985, 215; Wolf, 2002, 45; Schmid, 2010, 98.

13 Compare Schmid, 2010, 5, who reaches the same conclusion from a narratological perspective: "The difference between change of state and story is not a quantitative one, the difference between them lies in their extensions—the changes of state form a subset of the story. As well as represented changes of state, which are *dynamic* elements, a story includes *static* elements, which are the states or situations themselves, the settings and the agents or patients within them. Thus, by necessity, the presentation of a story combines *narrative* and *descriptive* modes."

guage."[14] These minimal[15] action-bearing[16] units of *Erzählstoff*-versions (narrative material) are called *hylemes*, from Greek *hyle* (ὕλη) meaning "raw material, stuff."[17] "Hylemes are the basic building blocks of any type of narrative *Stoff* … . Hylemes represent key pieces of content that are moreover not defined by or limited to any specific medial manifestation, such as a text or an image."[18] The

14 C. Zgoll, 2020, 27. Compare Graf, 1985, 9; and Barthes, 1988, 132.

15 See C. Zgoll, 2020, 33: "The definition of hylemes, i.e. what they are (minimal action-bearing units of a *Stoff* variant) and their logical structure remains unaffected by the degree of detail to which they are being analyzed; how many such hylemes could or should, for instance, be extracted from the textual manifestation of a *Stoff* variant depends on the ingenuity of the analyst and where the amount of detail becomes a nuisance rather than a source of information". Compare Dundes, 1962, 91: "A minimal unit may thus be defined as the smallest unit useful for a given analysis with the implicit understanding that although a minimal unit could be subdivided, it would serve no useful purpose to do so."

16 According to our definition of "action" (see above) an action-bearing unit may also comprise actions in a more general sense, e.g. units with a state description. "As a rule, an *Erzählstoff* consists of statements about things that change, and statements about things that do not. The one group of statements moves the action forward, the other supports it; for this reason both the former and the latter will be counted among the action-bearing units" (C. Zgoll, 2020, 24). To make it clearer that state descriptions in this definition belong to "actions" these units could be called "action-bearing and state-describing units".

17 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 112; 2020, 28; and the further definition of these terms in 2020, 25–26: "The narratological terms 'event' (*Ereignis*) and 'motif' used in modern literary scholarship and in the field of motif and fairy-tale studies are, on closer inspection, unsuitable for a description of minimal action-bearing units in the above mentioned sense because the broad terminological spectrum of motif is too diffuse and includes, for instance, character constellations ('relationship triangle') or character types ('evil stepmother'); the 'event' term is too narrowly confined to significant events." For a recent definition of "motif" see Lubkoll, 2013, 542: motif is "im weitesten Sinne [die] kleinste strukturbildende und bedeutungsvolle Einheit innerhalb eines Textganzen." The problematic definition of the term "motif" is discussed in Martínez and Scheffel, 2012, 111, with fn. 1, refering to Drux, 1997, 639: "Eine konsensfähige Definition des Motiv-Begriffs konnte sich bis heute nicht durchsetzen." For the term "event," see Lotman, 1977, 233: "an event in a text is the shifting of a persona across the borders of a semantic field." For problems regarding the terms "motif" and "event," and advantages of the term "hyleme," see C. Zgoll, 2020, 25–29. Another aspect to consider in this context is that, if one applies the term "motif" to the undetermined part of the *Erzählstoff* on the micro level, it would have no counterpart on the macro level. A coherent terminological system is outlined in C. Zgoll, 2020, 47–52, where the determined "(concrete) hyleme" on the micro level relates to the "(concrete) *Erzählstoff*" on the macro level, whereas the undetermined "hyleme pattern" is the micro-level subordinate to the macro level of the *Stoff*-pattern.

18 C. Zgoll, 2020, 29. The smallest action-bearing units of the *Erzählstoff* (hylemes) are different from the "functions" defined by Propp and the functionalists, as presented in Propp, 1928. Hylemes are also distinct from the significance-bearing units of the *Erzähl-*

theory and methods for the reconstruction of narrative raw material, meaning the analysis of *Erzählstoff*-versions, comprise the field of *hylistics*.

In this paper, we aim to present the hylemes under discussion according to a logical structure and in a standardized format.[19] Each hyleme consists of one *hyleme predicate* and at least one *hyleme element*, its logical subject. There may be more than one subject or object, and the hyleme predicate and elements may have additional determinants.[20] The standard hyleme is expressed in the present tense and active voice;[21] sequences of hylemes are given in lists introduced by a dash; and the names of narrative materials (*Erzählstoff*-versions) are given in small capitals to distinguish them from the titles of texts, which are given in italics.

Different categories of hylemes must also be considered: (1) single-event actions, in which the changes in the story unfold dynamically; (2) durative-constant hylemes, comprising actions and states that existed before the changes in the story and which remain unchanged; (3) durative-initial hylemes, which exist at the beginning of the story but change during its course; and (4) durative-resultative hylemes, which come into being as the story unfolds and represent the lasting consequence of the story's changes.[22] For example, an *Erzählstoff*-version might start with the hylemes:

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stoff ("grosses unités constitutives ou mythèmes") that were adopted by Lévi-Strauss and the structuralists, as presented in Lévi-Strauss, 1958, 233. The entities referenced by Propp and Lévi-Strauss are semantically (not formally) defined; they include only some, not all, of the smallest units of the *Erzählstoff*; and their functions are based on subjective assumptions about what is functionally meaningful. Lévi-Strauss' concept of the "significance-bearing units" creates an analogous problem, because the extraction of these units requires a prior definition of what is deemed meaningful or "significant." (According to Lévi-Strauss, mythemes are bundles of antithetical pairs.) Propp's "functions," moreover, lack a universal applicability: his analysis was confined to a single literary genre, Russian fairy tales. Units of *Erzählstoff*, by contrast, cannot be defined by or limited to any particular genre or form of expression. The "mythemes" of Lévi-Strauss are equally ill-suited for general use in the analysis of *Erzählstoffe* due to their highly specific focus on myths. For a comparison of hyleme analysis and functionalist approaches, see C. Zgoll, 2019, 97–102, and 102–108 for a comparison with structuralist approaches.

19 See C. Zgoll, 2020, section 3.5.

20 Hylemes are not identical with syntactic-textual building blocks, but contain their contents. As noted by C. Zgoll, 2020, 32, "even though hylemes can be rendered in the form of sentences on account of their overall propositional structure, hylemes are ultimately not identical to sentences in texts. We are not concerned with syntactic-textual building blocks, but with their contents." Compare Barthes, 1988, 105.

21 For more details, see C. Zgoll, 2020, 29–30 and 45.

22 See C. Zgoll, 2021, section 2.4.

– Innana is the daughter of Nanna. (= durative-constant hyleme)[23]
– Innana is a young, unmarried girl. (= durative-initial hyleme)

This would be followed by hylemes about Dumuzi's courtship and the wedding of Innana and Dumuzi, all of which are single-event hylemes:

– Dumuzi brings gifts to Innana.
– Dumuzi praises Innana's beauty.
– Innana marries Dumuzi.

This results in a new state:

– Dumuzi is the husband of Innana. (and *vice versa*) (= durative-resultative hyleme)

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 1 IDENTIFICATION, CATEGORIZATION, AND STANDARDIZATION OF NARRATIVE MATERIALS

– Identification of hylemes: Which hylemes can be found in the text?
– Categorization of hylemes: single-event hylemes, durative-constant, durative-initial, and durative-resultative hylemes.
– Representation of hylemes in a standardized format.

3.2 *Textual Variety (Length, Syntax, Focus) vs. Hyleme Structure: Sewing Fabrics into Garments*

Two text passages of the same length may yield a different number of hylemes, but the reverse is also true: different lengths of text may yield the same number of hylemes. Take for instance the short epithet kur gul-gul, "destroyer of mountainous (or: foreign) lands," from *Innana B*, l. 17, which contains the hyleme:

– Innana destroys the mountainous (or: foreign) lands.

On the other hand, the first three lines of *Innana's Descent*[24] express a single hyleme about Innana, who is making plans to go to the Great Earth, that is, the netherworld:

– Innana sets her mind to go from Great Heaven to the netherworld.

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23 This hyleme would belong to another category in an *Erzählstoff* about the birth of Innana, for example the following:
– Nanna has no child. (durative-initial hyleme)
– Nanna conceives a child with Ningal. (single-event hyleme)
– Ningal gives birth to Innana. (single-event hyleme)
– Innana is the daughter of Nanna and Ningal. (= durative-resultative hyleme)
The hyleme about Nanna's fatherhood is durative-constant in the first instance, durative-resultative in the latter.

24 Edited by Sladek, 1974; see also Attinger, 2016. For a new edition, see Cuperly, 2021.

The comparison of text and hyleme structure reveals how information (the hylemes) can be incorporated differently into a concrete text with its own syntax and length, and where the focus of that text lies.

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 2 ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL REPRESENTATION OF HYLEMES

Specification of shortened, enlarged, or abstractly presented hylemes:
- Which hylemes are only briefly hinted at or summarized, and why?
- Which hylemes are made syntactically subordinate (as in epithets), and why?
- Which hylemes are expanded extensively, and why?
- Which hylemes are focalized through their position at the beginning or end of a story, syntactic superiority (as in main clauses), or the perspective of certain figures,[25] and why?

3.3 *Textual Omissions vs. Complete Narrative Material, and the Ending of Myths: Darning Holes in the Garment*

Narratological research has shown that no narrative can be all-encompassing. It is simply impossible to describe every step and detail of an action.[26] This causes no problems for the audience if the missing details and implied sequence can be easily reconstructed. But the more complex the story is, and the further removed the audience is from its original context and cultural background, the more incumbent it is on us to reflect on and bring out those implicit hylemes, and in so doing, enhance our understanding of the material. Hylistic analysis gives us the tools to do so. Some hylemes clearly imply additional information, that is, implicit hylemes that may be logically compelling or culturally deducible. Such implicit hylemes will be given in square brackets. The following example illustrates this step of hylistic analysis: a hyleme,

25 C. Zgoll, 2020, 39, fn. 68: "In principle, the *Stoff* substrate can be reconstructed independently, 'outside of' the perspective dictated by the (in Genette's terminology: homodiegetic, heterodiegetic, autodiegetic, etc.) narrator (cf. Tomaševskij, 1985, 218: 'Für die Fabel ist es unwichtig, in welchem Teil des Werkes der Leser von einem Ereignis erfährt, auch ob es ihm unmittelbar durch den Autor mitgeteilt wird, in der Erzählung einer Person oder durch ein System von Andeutungen, die nebenbei fallen'), but only in principle; in individual cases (esp. in modern literature), different perspectives can also obstruct the view of 'what really happened' ('unreliable narration', cf. Booth, 1961)."

26 See Martínez and Scheffel, 2012, 165 ("kein Text kann vollständig explizit sein"); Iser, 1994; C. Zgoll, 2019, 127–128 and 174–175; and 2021, section 2.8.

– King NN dies.

logically implies the preceding hyleme,

– [King NN lives].

and even a further hyleme:

– [NN becomes king].

The reconstruction of implicit hylemes has yielded important insights into texts and their meaning. For example, hylistic analyses of the myths incorporated in the epic praise song *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld* (with special regard to the ending of the myths) have increased our understanding of the different myths incorporated in it, revealing that Innana does not fail, but is rather the victorious hero of these myths, and was celebrated as such in religious rituals for many centuries.[27]

The search for implicit hylemes is particularly important when the ending of a myth is not reflected in the concrete manifestation of the myth. The phenomenon of omitting parts of a myth is common in visual media (where it is a challenge to integrate multiple action-bearing units, e.g., in a concrete group of statues or a painting),[28] but it is also common in textual media (which is to be expected the more a concrete myth is known to the people who use it). So, the absence of the ending of a myth in a concrete manifestation does not mean that there is no ending in that myth. Myths serve to explain the world and cope with problems.[29] They display a three-partite structure:

(1) problem = starting point
(2) addressing the problem = middle section
(3) solving the problem = ending.[30]

Myths, then, have neither open endings nor do they lead into aporias (narratives that end openly or in aporias do not fall into the category of myths; even if they may use mythic hylemes, the narrative material as a whole does not belong to the mythic, but to another narrative category). Therefore, it is important to try to reconstruct the endings of myths. The fact that the ending of a Mesopotamian myth can be omitted or only hinted at in concrete text

27 See A. Zgoll, 2020 and 2020a.

28 Therefore, one often finds the narrative material in condensed, hyper-hylematic form. For hyper-hylemes see section 3.7.

29 See the recent definition of myth which has been the result of fundamental research of several Göttingen research groups on mythology: C. Zgoll 2019, 562–563 (in German), C. Zgoll 2020, 75–76 (in English).

30 See C. Zgoll 2019, 154 and 402 with narratological literature.

versions has posed a great challenge (see above for *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld*). This paper discusses examples of narrative materials about the death of Dumuzi.

On the methodological level, the analysis of implicit hylemes is a way of making transparent what the modern researcher takes for granted, comparable to the techniques used in grammatical analysis, which also reproduces morphemes that are a part of the language but not represented in writing; some may not even be present in spoken language (as in the case of zero morphemes, {Ø}). The more complex and polysemous the text and its narrative materials are, the more important it is to have a systematic, methodological presentation of the reconstructed hylemes.

The visual representation of implicit hylemes also allows us to categorize them on a scale from the obvious and indisputable, through the highly possible, to the merely plausible, by employing brackets, italics, and question marks exactly as we do in standard text editions. The line from which the hyleme has been deduced is given in superscript, as in the hyleme:

– [Demons hit Dumuzi.$^{\rightarrow \text{l. } 24}$].

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 3 ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL OMISSIONS OF THE NARRATIVE MATERIAL (*ERZÄHLSTOFF*-VERSION)

Addition of omitted hylemes: – Which hylemes are merely implied and must be deduced?

3.4 *Order of the Text vs. Order of the Narrative Material: Weaving Plain Threads into Intricate Fabrics*

A key step in hyleme analysis is the reconstruction of the chronological order of the narrative material. This has yielded key results for the restoration of whole narrative materials and can determine the composition or degree of complexity of the "fabric," that is, the textual manifestation of a story.

In *Innana's Descent*, for example, the chronological order of one of its incorporated *Erzählstoff*-versions[31] is so complex that it was not discovered until 2020.[32] The beginning of this hidden *Erzählstoff*-version about Innana descending into the netherworld is left untold in the concrete manifestation of

31 For the incorporation of multiple *Erzählstoffe* into one text, a frequent phenomenon in Mesopotamian literature, see sections 3.5, 3.8, 5.5, and 6.2 below.

32 See A. Zgoll, 2020 and 2020a.

the story until line 193 mentions it in passing: me kur-ra me al nu-di.d-da al bi_2-in-du_{11}.g, "The Instruments of Power of the netherworld (Sumerian me), the Instruments of Power demanded by no one—she demanded them!" The hyleme that is told in this line is:

– No one (so far) demands the Instruments of Power of the netherworld.
– (Now) Innana demands the Instruments of Power of the netherworld.

A hyleme-based narratological approach will then compare the plain chronological order of the narrative material with the often elaborate rearrangement of that narrative material in the text.

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 4 ANALYSIS OF THE ORDER OF NARRATIVE MATERIAL IN THE TEXT

Arranging the hylemes into their chronological order:
– How are different narrative materials or versions of a narrative material presented in the text: one after the other, alternately, intertwined etc., and why?
– How is one such narrative material presented in the text: employing foreshadowing (*prolepsis*) or flashbacks (*analepsis*) etc., and why?

3.5 *Multiple Narrative Materials in a Text: Patching Fabrics into Garments*

The relationship between the narrative material (*Erzählstoff*) and its textual manifestation can take on many different forms. A simple connection would be a single narrative text incorporating a single *Erzählstoff*-version, but this is rarely the case. As we have seen, texts can incorporate more but also less than one *Erzählstoff*: the possible combinations in a given text include multiple *Erzählstoff*-versions (and even multiple versions of the same *Erzählstoff*), part of one *Erzählstoff*, the combination of parts of multiple *Erzählstoff*-versions, and so on.[33] A complete hylistic and sequence analysis has for example enabled new insights into Enheduana's ritual song to Innana, *Innana B*. Only by analyzing the incorporated narrative material hylistically has it become clear that three myths are incorporated into the song of Enheduana which are fundamentally important to the rhetoric of the song:[34]

33 On how to distinguish among (the variants of) multiple *Erzählstoffe*, see C. Zgoll, 2020, 34–38, with reference to Tomaševskij, 1985; Echterhoff, 2002; Wolf, 2002; and Brinker, 2019.

34 See A. Zgoll, 2021a.

First myth: AN LETS INNANA EXECUTE HIS JUDGEMENT OVER THE ENEMIES, INCLUDING SUMER
Second myth: INNANA LETS NANNA EXECUTE HER JUDGEMENT OVER UR AND EVERY OTHER REBELLIOUS CITY
Third myth: INNANA EXECUTES HER JUDGEMENT ON THE ANUNA GODS
Together, these three myths form a larger, composite myth: INNANA BECOMES THE RULER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

The hylistic narratological analysis of *Erzählstoff*-versions aims to describe the shape of texts as fully as possible by taking into account the totality of incorporated *Erzählstoff*-versions.

The layered combination of multiple versions of the same *Erzählstoff* is common in ancient texts, especially when the narrative materials are transmitted over long periods of time, as is often the case in myths, making stratification analysis an indispensable tool.[35] A failure to separate different versions of an *Erzählstoff* that have been incorporated into one text may cause confusion about the story's structure, contents, and intended message(s).

Recognizing and separating the different narrative materials is sometimes an easy task but quite often a challenge. This is where sequence-analysis comes in. In our context it must suffice to sketch out the major methodological outlines of sequence-analyses. Important parameters are topic, time, place, protagonists, and events (abbreviated TTPPE, in German ZOPHT: Zeit, Ort, Protagonisten, Handlung, Thematik). The more these parameters change at a certain point in a narrative sequence, the more it is necessary to check whether there is a border between different narrative materials at this point.[36]

Another analytical clue is to be found through the evidence of durative-resultative hylemes. Such durative-resultative hylemes are a typical feature of the ending of narrative materials (see section 3.1). Thus, when we find a durative-resultative hyleme within a hyleme sequence, this is a strong indication that this hyleme marks the end of a narrative material that has been combined with one or more subsequent narrative materials.[37]

35 See section 3.8 below, and for further details, C. Zgoll, 2020, 52–60, and 70–76.
36 See C. Zgoll 2021, 35–37, and 478–480; as for the background see C. Zgoll 2019, 153–163.
37 See C. Zgoll, 2021, 34–35 and 36–37.

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 5 ANALYSIS OF THE NUMBER AND CATEGORIES OF NARRATIVE MATERIALS (*ERZÄHLSTOFF*-VERSIONS) CONTAINED IN A TEXT (SEQUENCE ANALYSIS)

Sequence analysis of the narrative material helps to record whether different narrative materials (*Erzählstoffe*), or different versions of the same narrative material (*Erzählstoff*) are combined and what kind of narrative raw material is incorporated into the text:
- How many different *Erzählstoff*-versions can be found?
- Which category do the *Erzählstoff*-versions belong to?
- How many different versions of each *Erzählstoff* are incorporated?

This is achieved with the following methodological steps:
- Which changes in the parameters topics, time, place, protagonists, and events (TTPPE) indicate the existence of different *Erzählstoff*-versions?
- Are there durative-resultative hylemes within a hyleme sequence as markers of a borderline between different *Erzählstoff*-versions?

For the complementary stratigraphical analysis, see Hylistic approach no. 8.

3.6 *Boundaries Between Multiple Narrative Materials: Stitching Together the Fabrics*

The combination of multiple *Erzählstoff*-versions within one text is characteristic of Mesopotamian literature, necessitating various devices to mark the boundaries between two or more *Erzählstoff*-versions (or different versions of the same *Erzählstoff*-version). Often, we find elaborate "narrative hinges" or "threshold lines" linking these segments.[38] Sometimes, the need for such a hinge resulted in new hylemes, as in *Innana's Descent*, where Innana's ascent from the netherworld is conflated with the need for a substitute, causing the descent of Dumuzi in the new version of the narrative.[39]

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 6 ANALYSIS OF HOW MULTIPLE (VERSIONS OF) NARRATIVE MATERIALS ARE COMBINED IN A TEXT

- How are the boundaries between multiple narrative materials (or their versions) depicted?

38 See A. Zgoll, 2003a, 258, 260–261, and 281; compare Wilcke, 1993, 49, fn. 95 for the transition ("Überleitung") between different parts of a text.

39 See A. Zgoll, 2020a, 124, 138, and 143–149; compare Katz, 2015.

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 6 (*cont.*)

– Are they placed in a sequence without any apparent changes?
– Or is their combination achieved through a narrative hinge, that is, the addition of new hylemes on the level of the narrative material, resulting in threshold lines on the level of the text?

3.7 *Hyper-Hylemes and Other Complex Patterns: Applying Special Techniques*

This operation leads to the next methodological step: examining the textual shape of stories with an eye for the idiosyncrasies of each incorporated narrative material (*Erzählstoff*-version). In *Innana's Descent*, one half-line from the speech of the gods Enlil and Nanna refers to another myth that is entirely separate from the poem's primary narrative. Innana has made her way into the netherworld and, while dead, confronts the great gods, who respond with the half-line in 191a–192, repeated in 205a–206a: dumu-ĝu$_{10}$ an gal al bi$_2$-in-du$_{11}$.g (…) Innana.k an gal al bi$_2$-in-du$_{11}$.g, "My child! She demanded the Great Heaven! … Innana! She demanded the Great Heaven!" This half-line contains the hyleme:

– Innana demands to possess the Great Heaven.

Another research project has identified this hyleme as representing an entire self-contained and separate *Erzählstoff*-version: the myth INNANA BRINGS THE FIRST TEMPLE FROM HEAVEN AND THEREBY CREATES THE EARTH.[40] A hyleme that stands in for an entire *Erzählstoff*-version is a hyper-hyleme.[41] Hyper-hylemes are defined as "hylemes which represent longer episodes or even an entire Stoff …, either by summarizing these episodes or the Stoff in the style of a chapter heading, or by evoking them through their succinctness and specific detail."[42] In this example, the hyper-hyleme referring to the myth INNANA BRINGS THE FIRST TEMPLE FROM HEAVEN also functions as a subtle reminder that Inanna's plan to bring the Instruments of Power from the netherworld to earth has a precedent, in which Innana was actually successful: the House of Heaven was indeed brought to earth. On the textual level, the point

40 See A. Zgoll, 2015 and 2021 (compare the edition of the mythical *text* by van Dijk, 1998). The results have been made possible by the research project TEMEN, funded by a Joint Lower Saxony—Israeli Research Cooperation Program and the Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture.

41 C. Zgoll, 2020, 40–42 with discussion of the hyper-hylemes mentioned here.

42 C. Zgoll, 2020, 40.

can be made in a variety of ways: not just through the Sumerian grammatical option of an affirmative future, but also through the direct juxtaposition of the two myths. Both have Innana as the protagonist bringing items of high significance to earth,[43] and both employ hyper-hylemes to tell the story, using near-identical wording, matching rhythms, epiphora, and rhyme. Only a single word has been changed: an gal al mu-un-du$_{11}$.g / ki gal al mu-un-du$_{11}$.g, "She demanded the Great Heaven! She demanded the Great Earth!" (l. 191–192 // 205–206). The compression of the two myths—(1) INNANA BRINGS THE FIRST TEMPLE FROM HEAVEN AND THEREBY CREATES THE EARTH and (2) INNANA BRINGS THE NETHERWORLD'S INSTRUMENTS OF POWER TO EARTH—creates a strong association between these myths and the events that they explain: Innana's successful creating of the earth (in 1) and her shaping of the earth as a space where gods and humans can live (in 2).[44]

A hyper-hyleme can be found in an ancient text but may also be created by modern scholars to summarize, compress, or abbreviate multiple hylemes. This is especially useful when comparing different versions of one narrative material or multiple *narrative materials*, which can thereby be aligned more closely, especially if their original forms have different lengths or degrees of detail (see further in section 3.9 below).

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 7 ANALYSIS OF THE COMPRESSION RATIO, INCLUDING HYPER-HYLEMES

- How much of the narrative material (*Erzählstoff*-version) is narrated?
- Is one of the following techniques used?
- Abbreviation: hyper-hylemes, allusion, omission of an *Erzählstoff*-version
- Expansion: a single hyleme spanning a large amount of text
- Why are the *Erzählstoff*-versions presented in this particular way?

3.8 *The Stratigraphy of Narrative Materials and Texts: Layering Fabrics*

The patchwork style of combining multiple narrative materials and their variants into one, multi-layered narrative material (as described in section 3.5) is a familiar technique in ancient texts, especially in myths but also in other

43 In this myth, the House of Heaven being brought down from heaven marks the beginning of the Sumerian civilization and the creation of earth in general; see A. Zgoll, 2021.

44 See A. Zgoll, 2020a.

types of narratives.[45] It is a challenge to recognize the variants that are combined into a multi-layered narrative. Research has shown that the combination of multiple strata in one composite narrative material is not always a benign, simple procedure like the combination of different fabrics into one garment. Which version of a myth is made dominant and how much of the competing versions are still visible in the text is a significant indicator of priorities, testifying to the fact that myths are "battle-grounds for competing world views."[46] Myths have never broached issues that were considered either commonplace or of only limited interest.[47] While mythical narratives have always dealt with important world phenomena, the notion of what constitutes such phenomena has varied over time. New interpretations have been superimposed over preexisting ideas, and both old and new concepts have invariably been transformed in the process. The kind and the degree of that change ranges from imperceptible tweaks to major modifications.[48] In the field of mythological studies a set of methodological instruments has been developed to identify each stratum of an *Erzählstoff*-version and the modifications of those strata by their combination.[49] More dominant *Erzählstoff*-versions, for instance, are more likely to cause what are known as *Stoff-Stoff* interferences, i.e., interferences between different narrative materials, which can be detected through inconsistencies on the textual level or value judgements and hierarchical relationships on the semantic level of the *Erzählstoff*-versions.[50]

Stratigraphical analysis of the praise song *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld*, for instance, has shown that at least three different versions of the myth INNANA GOES DOWN TO AND COMES BACK FROM THE NETHERWORLD[51]

45 This is a common occurrence when *Erzählstoffe* have been transmitted over a longer period of time; see C. Zgoll, 2019, 247–259, and 2020, 52–76.

46 C. Zgoll, 2020, 60, and further on pp. 60–70; C. Zgoll, 2019, 448–500. In myths, we find evidence of "conflicts over the power of interpretation" ("Deutungsmachtkonflikte"): see Stoellger, 2014, 28, for the term and its definition; and C. Zgoll, 2020, 69–70 for its application to myths. Compare also Rüpke, 2013, 54.

47 C. Zgoll, 2020, 65–67.

48 See Annika Cöster-Gilbert about Innana and Geshtin-ana, section 7.1 below.

49 C. Zgoll, 2019, 270–543 and 2020, 60–73.

50 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 276–288 and 316–500; and 2020, 55–60 and 67–73.

51 For the myths about Dumuzi that were incoporated in *Innana's Descent*, see section 4 below. Further myths incorporated in the *Erzählstoff* that underlies *Innana's Descent* include ERESHKIGAL MARRIES THE BULL OF HEAVEN (A. Zgoll, 2020, 136–137) and INNANA BRINGS THE FIRST TEMPLE FROM HEAVEN (A. Zgoll, 2020, 129–130, and 2020a).

are combined to form one complex, composite narrative material INNANA BECOMES MISTRESS OVER LIFE AND DEATH and its text, the praise song.[52] Incorporated in this composite narrative material are myths about THE DEATH OF DUMUZI as well as a shorter, older version of INNANA'S DESCENT TO THE NETHERWORLD, namely INNANA BRINGS THE NETHERWORLD'S INSTRUMENTS OF POWER TO EARTH.[53] This reconstructed older *Erzählstoff*-version was corroborated in a comparative study of previously unedited texts.[54] Such new findings enhance our understanding of the myths and allow for new insights into their original meaning.

Erzählstoff-versions, as we have seen, can be combined in a variety of ways: they can be presented sequentially, in opposition, or in tandem as separate entities, or they can be merged and intertwined. Both types of *Stoff-Stoff* combinations will be explored in the case studies below.

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 8 STRATIGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE MATERIALS

Stratigraphical analysis of the narrative material (*Erzählstoff*) recording whether and how different narrative materials, or different versions of the same narrative material are intertwined into one composite narrative material:

- Are there *Stoff-Stoff* interferences that would indicate conflicting accounts of the same event, or even of entirely separate events?
- Are there inconsistencies indicating the presence of conflicting narrative materials?
- Are there value judgements and hierarchical relationships indicating the presence of conflicting narrative materials?
- How are such conflicts resolved, and how do the combined narrative materials co-exist: through omission, suppression, harmonization, or the like?

For the complementary sequence analysis, see Hylistic approach no. 5

52 See A. Zgoll, 2020. Another myth about Innana incorporated into the composite myth is INNANA OPENS A WAY OUT OF THE UNDERWORLD FOR THE SUN GOD; see A. Zgoll, 2020, 134–136.

53 On the myth (that is, the mythical *Erzählstoff*) INNANA BRINGS THE NETHERWORLD'S NUMINOUS INSTRUMENTS OF POWER TO EARTH, see A. Zgoll, 2020, 98–114 and 2020a; for the myth INNANA BECOMES MISTRESS OVER LIFE AND DEATH, see A. Zgoll, 2020, 137–149.

54 See A. Zgoll, 2020.

3.9 *Comparisons of Different Versions of Narrative Material: Recognizing Similar Fabrics in Different Garments*

As the previous sections have shown, mythical and other texts are often complex, layered structures forming a patchwork of different narrative materials. For Mesopotamian religious-literary texts, it is the rule rather than the exception that a text comprises multiple layers.[55] To unlock the specific content of such a text, we must first understand the number and variants (if any) of its *fabrics*—the layers and the patches of narrative material it is made of. The task requires nothing less than a painstaking comparative analysis of the same and related fabrics—*narrative materials*—in other textual manifestations of the same or related texts.

Comparison is central to comprehension.[56] An analogy might be drawn from life sciences, e.g., the study of dolphins: biologists learn about dolphins by studying their characteristics compared to those of other mammals; and they gain knowledge about mammals and their behavior by including as many mammals as possible in their studies. In the fields of narrative analysis, a bespoke branch of hylistic studies that is fully equipped to take on this challenge has only recently taken shape: the comparative study of narrative materials, comparative hylistics. Since comparative hylistics is a discipline in its own right, a short introduction will have to suffice in this context.[57] Any comparative study of the textual variations of a given narrative material (*Erzählstoff*-version) must ensure that its methods are sound, if the pitfalls of comparing apples to oranges are to be avoided. Different media, such as texts versus pictures, or different genres within one medium, such as prayer versus fiction, will inevitably cause the narrative to be told in different ways. For a successful comparison, we therefore need to do the following:[58]

– Create comparable conditions across all variants. This may be an issue if the variants differ considerably in their number of hylemes or level of abstraction (see the following point). To compensate for such differences, the levels of abstraction may be raised or lowered, e.g. from concrete hylemes to abstract hyleme patterns, or from concrete hyleme sequences (i.e. *Erzählstoff*-versions) to abstract *Erzählstoff* patterns.[59]

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55 See sections 4, 5, and 7 below; compare also A. Zgoll, 2020; 2013; 2011.

56 See e.g. North and Worthington 2012, 182–183 "on the usefulness of influence-free comparison".

57 For more information, see C. Zgoll, 2019, 164–204; 2020, 14 and 45, and the projects in the second phase of the research group STRATA, starting in 2020, with funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG).

58 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 144–149 and 168–204; and 2020, 43–52.

59 C. Zgoll, 2020, 47–52.

– Keep the level of abstraction and (in)determinacy *meaningful*.[60] For the comparison to be meaningful, it may be necessary to raise the level of abstraction above those present in the narrative(s) themselves. By creating hyper-hylemes from smaller narrative units in each variant, we can assess the overall picture from an elevated vantage point.
– Identify hyper-hylemes already present in the text. The number, arrangement, and degree of compression for each individual hyleme are all essential data that must be recorded. The most important analytical step is to scan for embedded "external" narratives, which typically appear in abbreviated form as hyper-hylemes: that is, one must establish the narrative strands before attempting an analysis based on false premises.[61]

A comparative study of similar *Erzählstoff*-versions (be it in the same text or across multiple texts) can, for example, reveal that a particular variant inverts the message(s) conveyed by other versions of the same narrative, even if the textual format (genre, formulations, length, etc.) is different (see section 3.10). The myth INNANA BRINGS THE FIRST TEMPLE FOR EARTH, as told in the epic song *Innana and An*, clearly makes Innana a heroine, who is praised for stealing the House of Heaven from An and bringing it down from the heavens, thereby creating the earth and the land of Sumer through this First Temple; the god An eventually acknowledges the theft and decrees that the beauty of the temple shall never cease.[62] But in the version of the myth extracted from Enheduana's ritual song *Innana B* (l. 85–89), the message is reversed. Here, one of the accusations levied against the usurper Lugal-Ane is that he stole the House of Heaven from An and thereby destroyed its beauty.[63] The comparison underscores the stark contrast between the strategic goals pursued by each variant: one sets out to praise Innana's heroic deeds for the benefit of mankind, the other twists the tale into a dark warning against human hubris and sacrilege.[64]

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60 As noted by C. Zgoll, 2020, 47 (note also 43–47): "Comparisons are fruitful above all if the material is prepared in such a way as to register in the vicinity of a *medium degree of determination and concreteness*, between the extremes of total abstraction and indetermination on the one hand and an exaggerated concreteness and over-determination on the other—even though such an approach can never aim for any kind of arithmetic mean that would be the result of statistical calculations. The exact location of the fruitful mean value in each case depends not only on the individual point of departure and the nature of the material but also for instance on the central question(s) that are guiding the comparison."

61 C. Zgoll, 2020, 46–47; for such hyper-hylemes, see section 3.7 above.

62 For the latest translation of *Innana and An* see A. Zgoll, 2015, for its interpretation see A. Zgoll, 2021.

63 A. Zgoll, 1997, 401–407, and 2015, 56 and 63.

64 The negative version is told in *Innana B*, see A. Zgoll, 2015 and 2021a. The positive version is quoted in *Innana's Descent to the Netherword*; see A. Zgoll, 2020, 105, 129–130.

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 9 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF NARRATIVE MATERIAL

- Which versions of a narrative material are known, how do they differ, and why?
- How does the text shape its version of a narrative material compared to other existing versions of it?

3.10 *Comparisons of Texts and Their Versions of Narrative Material: Interhylistic and Intertextual Relationships*

When comparing *texts* on the semantic level,[65] the first step is to analyze which *Erzählstoff*-versions are incorporated in them. The best results will be achieved when the semantic analysis, or content comparison, examines the same or similar *Erzählstoff*-versions across multiple texts. Whether we are comparing the same narrative material or different stories across texts, the *Erzählstoff*-versions will have to be disentangled from their textual manifestations before we can analyze their narrative strategies and intricate combinations. With the methods described above, we can achieve a solid scientific footing from which to move on into increasingly complex territory, especially the comparative analyses of narrative materials described in the previous section: How do *Erzählstoff*-variants line up against each other, where are they identical (or similar), where do they differ, and why?

Returning to an earlier example, two seemingly different versions of the myth INNANA BRINGS THE NETHERWORLD'S NUMINOUS INSTRUMENTS OF POWER TO EARTH are told in *Innana's Descent* and in *Innana and Shukaleduda*. This impression is based on quantitative evidence: the comparable mythical variant in *Innana's Descent* is told in 284 lines, whereas in *Innana and Shukaleduda* a version of the same narrative material is told in just 28 lines. Furthermore, both versions of the myth INNANA DESCENDS INTO THE NETHERWORLD combine it with different myths. But despite these apparent differences, hyleme analysis has brought to light their undeniable qualitative similarities (see below).[66]

65 Another option is to compare texts according to their formal properties, as in genre studies.

66 For a comparison of the mythical *Erzählstoff* INNANA'S DESCENT TO THE NETHERWORLD and its manifestations in *Innana's Descent* and *Innana and Shukaleduda*, see A. Zgoll, 2020, 114–127.

Similarities in content must be examined carefully: if there are enough clues linking one *Erzählstoff*-variant to another across texts,[67] we may be dealing with an *interhylistic* relationship. Connections that are both semantic *and* formal constitute a subset of interhylistic relationships; the fact that both narrative material and text must agree makes such *intertextual* relationships much rarer than other kinds of interhylistic relationships. Another comparative step on the semantic level is to examine the internal contextualization of the narrative material, which has consequences for the external perception of the material. Thus, the myth INNANA BRINGS THE NETHERWORLD'S NUMINOUS INSTRUMENTS OF POWER TO EARTH is embedded in both *Innana's Descent* and *Innana und Shukaleduda*, but the context provided by the surrounding narratives differs substantially. In *Innana's Descent*, the mythical version of INNANA AND THE NUMINOUS INSTRUMENTS OF POWER is combined with a several mythical versions about the DESCENT OF DUMUZI TO THE NETHERWORLD, whereas *Innana und Shukaleduda* combines INNANA AND THE NUMINOUS INSTRUMENTS OF POWER with myths about INNANA EXAMINING SUMER and a myth about INNANA AND SHUKALEDUDA. The hylistic comparison has shown that, while they contain the same core myth, in their textual manifestations the composite narratives take different forms and convey different messages.[68]

HYLISTIC APPROACH NO. 10 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE MATERIALS (*ERZÄHLSTOFF*-VERSIONS) AND TEXTS

- How is a text shaped in comparison to other texts by the narrative materials that it contains? What is the degree of determination in the variant? If it is abstracted, are there hyper-hylemes (see section 3.7) which represent or summarize a complete external narrative material in a single hyleme?
- Are there interhylistic (i.e., entirely content-driven) relationships between variants of a narrative material or between different narrative materials incorporated in different text(s), and what is their purpose?
- Are there intertextual (i.e., content- *and* form-driven) relationships between the variants of a narrative material or between different narrative materials incorporated in the same or different text(s), and what is their purpose?

67 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 144–204.
68 See A. Zgoll, 2020a, 114–127.

3.11 *Conclusion: Hylistic Narratology and its Methodological Approaches*

The application of the ten methodological steps detailed above forms part of a larger theoretical-methodological framework which allows us to reconstruct narrative raw materials for the first time. The extraction and reconstruction of these narrative materials through hyleme and stratification analysis thus merits a new narratological discipline: hylistic narratology. Hyleme analysis gives us precise tools with which to extract the hidden threads and the layers of content that shape stories and define literary texts by their degree of complexity. We are now able to appreciate more fully the process by which stories and especially myths have acquired their characteristic shapes over time and space, how they have developed duplicates and variants, how they have lost or gained layers of fabric, and so on. Because the new discipline also allows us to compare the fabrics (narrative materials) themselves, independently of their textual manifestations, we can now confidently establish interhylistic cross-references as well as intertextual ones. The possibilities unlocked by the methods of hylistic narratology range from analytic access to the structures of literary forms in their entirety, such as epics and poems, down to excerpts and even individual lines. It also enables us to examine how different texts incorporate the same (or similar) narrative material.

4 The Fly Reveals Dumuzi's Whereabouts to Innana. Case Study of a Myth in *Innana's Descent* (Bénédicte Cuperly)

Now that hylistic theory and methodology have been presented, the time has come for a case study: the narrative material The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. This study was chosen for two main reasons. First, it exemplifies the hylistic approach in general and sheds light on some of the concrete steps of a hyleme analysis; second, it is a good example of one narrative material taking on multiple forms at different levels: the level of manuscript variants (section 4), the intratextual level (sections 5 and 6), and the intertextual level (section 7). We intend to describe and characterize those forms by comparing them to their narrative material and to one another, and in so doing, show how this approach can contribute to a better understanding of ancient texts and their inner workings. We have two textual sources for the narrative material under scrutiny: *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld* and a ritual lament or *ershema*, known as *The Fly's Promise* or *ershema* no. 165.[69] In the following,

69 For these titles, see Fritz, 2003, 113–114, and Cohen, 1981, respectively.

we will first reconstruct the narrative material as it appears in two different versions of *Innana's Descent* (this section), and then study the distinct forms it takes on in *The Fly's Promise* (section 5).[70]

In *Innana's Descent*, the relevant passage comes at the end of the text (lines 392–403), as Innana laments and searches for Dumuzi, and just before she decrees a new fate for him (lines 388/404–393/410).[71] Unfortunately, at the end of the text, we find an increasing number of gaps that cannot be filled using suitable Sumerian sources. Only three manuscripts of the passage in question have been uncovered, Ur-S, Ni-d, and UN-y.[72] All three date to the Old Babylonian period: Ur-S and Ni-d, which are both highly fragmentary, come from Ur and Nippur respectively; UN-y is better preserved, but of unknown provenience. The two sets clearly correspond to two different versions of the text, one comprising a dozen lines (Ur-S and Ni-d), the other eight lines (UN-y).[73] Transliterations of both can be found in the appendix.

4.1 *The Long Version*

Table 12.3 below presents the passage as it appears in Ur-S and Ni-d (see Appendix 1) and shows the hyleme analysis method detailed in section 3.1 at work, as I extract the hylemes from the preliminary translation and present them in a standardized format.

TABLE 12.3 Extraction of hylemes, presented in order of appearance

Preliminary translation	**Hylemes in text order**[74]
[376] [...] she (= Innana) kept *saying*:	– [Innana$^{\rightarrow 378}$] speaks.
"Where is my man?"	– [Innana] asks about the whereabouts of [Dumuzi].
	– "[Dumuzi] is [Innana's] man."

70 In both texts, the *Erzählstoff* THE FLY REVEALS DUMUZI'S WHEREABOUTS TO INNANA is combined with several other *Erzählstoffe* (see sections 3.5 and 3.6). For detailed analyses of combinations of *Stoffe*, see A. Zgoll, 2020; Cuperly, 2021; and Cöster-Gilbert, forthcoming.

71 The first number corresponds to the new line numbers, following Cuperly, 2021; the second to the numbering used by ETCSL.

72 UET 6 10, CBS 6894, and MS 3282.

73 It is difficult to be more precise, as Ni-d repeats some lines, apparently by mistake, and is broken at the end of the passage (see the transcription in the appendix). Although Ur-S is also damaged (though mainly at the beginning) this text seems equivalent to Ni-d in length, except for the repeated lines. UN-y apparently omits lines 397–400.

74 Hylemes in square brackets are implicit and have been deduced from explicit hylemes (compare section 3.3). Hylemes between quotation marks correspond to the content of direct speech.

TABLE 12.3 Extraction of hylemes, presented in order of appearance (*cont.*)

Preliminary translation	**Hylemes in text order**
377 [...] she kept *saying*: "Where is my [man]?"	– *Idem*
378 [The Fly] spoke thus to Bright Innana:	– Innana is the Bright One. – [The Fly comes to Innana.] – The Fly speaks to Innana.
378a "[Me,] I am the Fly. (Suppose) the whereabouts (of) your man is revealed: what will be my (gift =) reward?"	– The Fly introduces itself. – "The Fly will reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana." = The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. – The Fly wants to know what the reward will be. – [The Fly wants a reward.]
379 "[Me,] I am the Fly. I (want to =) may reveal to you the whereabouts (of) your man; what will be my (gift =) reward?"	– *Idem*
380 [Bright Innana] spoke thus to the Fly:	– Innana answers the Fly.
380a "Were you to reveal [the whereabouts] (of) my man, I would grant you a gift!	– "The Fly will reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana." – "Innana will give the Fly a gift." = Innana promises an unknown reward to the Fly.
381 Were you to reveal [the whereabouts (of) my man], I would grant you a gift!"	– *Idem*
382 [...] it (= the Fly) began to (cover =) swarm over his *whereabouts*.	– [The Fly] swarms over the whereabouts [of Dumuzi?].
383 As the Fly [...] it to (or: for) Bright Innana,	– Innana is the Bright one. – The Fly [...] it to Innana.
384 Maiden Innana decided a fate for the Fly:	– Innana is the Maiden. – Innana decrees a fate for the Fly.
385 "You (pl.) shall [...] in the Alehouse, near the goblets of NN,	– "The Fly will [dwell$^{\rightarrow UN\text{-}y}$] in the Alehouse near the goblets of NN."
386 (and) [...] among (or: like) the Children of the Wise!"	– "The Fly will [live$^{\rightarrow UN\text{-}y}$] together with (or: like) the Children of the Wise."

TABLE 12.3 Extraction of hylemes, presented in order of appearance (*cont.*)

Preliminary translation	Hylemes in text order
[387] And now, verily, concerning the fate decreed by Innana, it is truly so.	– Innana decrees a fate. – The fate comes to be.

4.1.1. Adjusting the Level of Detail: Abstraction of Hylemes

"In analyzing hylemes, the distinction between a (regular) hyleme and a hyper-hyleme is already of fundamental importance because textual manifestations of Stoff variants can sometimes contain statements that look exactly like hylemes but are merely summarizing, either proleptically, what is about to happen or, retrospectively, what has just been narrated."[75] Also at the analytical level, it is sometimes helpful or even necessary to adjust the level of detail to gain more clarity, especially in order to compare different versions of an *Erzählstoff* which operate on different levels of details;[76] to do this, one can refer to several hylemes by condensing them into one hyper-hyleme.[77] For example:

Hyleme A) [Innana] asks questions about [Dumuzi]'s whereabouts. (l. 376//377)
Hyleme B) Innana looks for Dumuzi at the bottom. (l. 376)
Hyleme C) Innana looks for Dumuzi at the summit. (l. 377)
Hylemes A, B, and C can be referred to as one hyper-hyleme: Innana searches for Dumuzi everywhere. (hyper-hyleme) (l. 376//377)

4.1.2 Durative Hylemes

The long version of the narrative material can now be reconstructed. First, we must isolate the durative hylemes:[78]

– Innana is the Bright one.[79] (l. 378, 383)
– Innana is the Maiden. (l. 384)
– [Dumuzi] is [Innana]'s man. (l. 376//377)

75 C. Zgoll, 2020, 41.
76 See section 3.10.
77 Here, hyper-hylemes are not extracted from the text directly, but have been created to simplify a more detailed hyleme sequence (see section 3.7).
78 Compare section 3.1.
79 For the specific significance of this hyleme in *Innana's Descent* (Innana is the risen one), see A. Zgoll, 2020, 145–146.

The concrete textual form of the three durative hylemes is syntactically subordinate. Either they are epithets, or they correspond to a possessive relation—for example, the hyleme "[Dumuzi] is [Innana]'s man" is deduced from "Where is my man?"—indicating that they are not the focus of this narrative material (see section 3.2 above).

A more significant durative hyleme is the following:

– [The Fly is the First Fly Ever] (l. 378a//379)

Indeed, it would have to be the first of its kind to require an introduction (compare line 378a/379). The fact that the poem does not state this explicitly is of no concern: as with many similar first encounters in other myths, the status of the Fly as the first of its kind would have been self-evident to contemporary audiences; it could therefore be omitted from the concrete manifestation of the narrative material.[80]

4.1.3. Single-Event Hylemes

Our first reconstitution of the hyleme sequence, in chronological order of the narrative material, is as follows:[81]

– Innana searches for Dumuzi. (l. 376//377)
– [The First Fly Ever comes to Innana.] (l. 378)
– The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 378a//379)
– [The Fly wants a reward.] (l. 378a//379)
– Innana promises an unknown reward to the Fly in exchange for Dumuzi's whereabouts. (l. 380a//381)
– NN swarms over his whereabouts. (l. 382)
– The Fly [...] it to Innana. (l. 383)
– Innana decrees a fate for the Fly. (l. 384–386)
– The fate comes to be. (l. 387) (durative-resultative hyleme)

One immediate semantic problem is the hyleme extracted from line 382:

– NN swarms over his whereabouts. (l. 382)

The subject NN can be easily filled in, as it is probably the Fly. Contextually, it is more likely that the Fly acts rather than Innana or Dumuzi, the only two other characters in this *Erzählstoff*-version; besides, flies as a species are known for their tendency to swarm over whatever attracts them, expressed by the verb dul in Sumerian, usually rendered "to cover."[82] Alternative reconstructions are

80 For this question, compare C. Zgoll, 2019, 392 (on the often implicit first-time occurence of figures, objects, institutions, and other phenomena in myths) and 471 (on prototypical figures). See also A. Zgoll and C. Zgoll, 2021, section 3.1.

81 Compare section 3.4.

82 See, for example, *Dumuzi Chased by Demons* (Cohen, 1981, 71–84, *ershema* no. 97), lines 26–27, where it is said that demons come for Dumuzi like flies that "cover" (dul) fresh grass.

possible, but less plausible. The more satisfying solution is to read the line as a description of what the Fly does:

> [382] [The Fly] began to swarm over (his =) Dumuzi's whereabouts; [383] as the Fly [...] it to Innana, [384] Innana decreed a fate for the Fly.

The hyleme thus refers to the ability of flies to find and cover (dead) bodies even in remote areas—an innate, instinctive behavior of flies as a species. Because the Fly was drawn, as flies are, to dead bodies, it was aware of Dumuzi's whereabouts and gained a reward for helping Innana in the form of a propitious fate.

However, the reconstruction is still incomplete: we know that Innana was searching for Dumuzi and that the Fly wanted a reward, but it is not very clear how the situation is resolved. With regards to Innana, something has to trigger the hyleme "Innana decrees a fate for the Fly": The Fly has to earn such a fate, which must be the reward promised by Innana.[83] We can therefore fill in the hyleme:

– The Fly [...] it to Innana. (l. 383) =
– The Fly [does ...] it for Innana =
– The Fly [reveals] it (= Dumuzi's whereabouts) to Innana.

Thanks to the reconstruction of the hyleme, the verb pa_3 can be reconstructed in the Sumerian text: [383] nim-e ku_3 ^{d}innana-ra im-ma-an-[pa_3], "The Fly [reveal]ed it (= Dumuzi's whereabouts) to Bright Innana."

The presence of the {i} prefix further supports this reconstruction.[84] Line 383 is semantically subordinate to line 384, and this subordination can have a causal aspect as well as a temporal one: the sentence, "As the Fly revealed it to Bright Innana, Maiden Innana decreed a fate for the Fly," can be taken to mean, "*because* the Fly revealed it to Bright Innana ..." Below, I will show that line 387 of the UN-y version and the reconstruction of that *Erzählstoff*-variant support this reconstruction.

4.1.4. Durative-Resultative Hylemes

Regarding the Fly, we can reconstruct the end of the sequence by looking at the durative-resultative hylemes.[85] If the fate comes to be (l. 384), this means that the Fly does now live in the Alehouse amidst the Children of the Wise:

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83 Compare A. Zgoll, 2003, on the principle of reciprocity.

84 For the meaning of the {i} prefix see Zgoll and Kärger, 2018, chapter 12.2.2; Postgate, 2019; Kärger, 2021, 129 fn. 116 with references to previous literature, especially Wilcke, 2010, 56–58.

85 Compare section 3.1.

– [The Fly dwells in the Alehouse] (l. 385)
– [The Fly lives amidst the Children of the Wise.] (l. 386)

The revised version of the hyleme sequence thus reads:

– Innana searches for Dumuzi. (l. 376//377)
– [The Fly comes to Innana.] (l. 378)
– The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 378a//379)
– The Fly wants a reward. (l. 378a//379)
– Innana promises a reward to the Fly in exchange for Dumuzi's whereabouts. (l. 380a//381)
– The Fly [reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts] to Innana. (l. 383)
– Innana decrees a fate for the Fly [as a reward]. (l. 384–386)
– The fate comes to be. (l. 387)
– [The Fly dwells in the Alehouse.] (l. 385)
– [The Fly lives amidst the Children of the Wise.] (l. 386)

The sequence fulfills different narratives functions for the Fly and for Innana. The Fly obtains a change of status,[86] as reflected by the durative-resultative hylemes. For Innana, this is only one in a series of steps that lead to her ultimate goal in the *Erzählstoff*-conglomerate: to find Dumuzi and decree (in *Innana's Descent*) or obtain (in *The Fly's Promise*) a new, better fate for him.[87] The solution practically suggests itself, and we can complete the sequence with an implicit hyleme, which ties the *Erzählstoff* THE FLY REVEALS DUMUZI'S WHEREABOUTS TO INNANA to the ensuing *Erzählstoff*, INNANA DECREES A BETTER FATE FOR DUMUZI (l. 389–393):

– [Innana finds the dead Dumuzi]

4.2 *The Short Version*

TABLE 12.4 Extraction of hylemes, presented in order of appearance

Preliminary translation (UN-y, see Appendix 2)	**Hylemes in text order**
376 At the bottom,? (she asked) the first one:? "Where (is) my man?"	– [Innana] is at the bottom. – [Innana] speaks to the first one: – [Innana] asks about the whereabouts of her man. – [Dumuzi] is [Innana]'s man.

86 Compare section 3.1.
87 See sections 5.8.1, 6.1, and 6.3 (*Erzählstoff* 4 = myth 3).

TABLE 12.4 Extraction of hylemes, presented in order of appearance (*cont.*)

Preliminary translation (UN-y, see Appendix 2)	**Hylemes in text order**
377 At the summit,? (she asked) the most distant one:? "Where is my man?"	– [Innana] is at the summit. – [Innana] speaks to the most distant one: – [Innana] asks about the whereabouts of her man. – [Dumuzi] is [Innana]'s man.
378 The Fly spoke thus to Bright Innana:	– Innana is the Bright one. – [The Fly comes to Innana.] – The Fly speaks to Innana.
379 "Me, I (am) the Fly! (If) I reveal to you the whereabouts (of) the man, what then will be done?"	– The Fly introduces itself. – The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. – [The Fly wants a reward.] – The Fly wants to know what the reward will be.
380 Bright Innana answered the Fly thus:	– Innana is the Bright one. – Innana answers the Fly:
385 "They (= the Flies) will dwell in the Alehouse, together with the goblets of the ones of the Steppe,	– "The Flies will dwell in the Alehouse with the goblets of the ones of the Steppe."
386 and they will live a long life among the Children of the Wise."	– "The Flies will live a long life among the Children of the Wise." = Innana promises a reward to the Fly.
387' The Fly revealed! to her! the whereabouts (of the man.)	– The Fly shows the (man's =) Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana.

4.2.1 Reconstruction of the Sequence of Hylemes

Only single-event hylemes will appear below; the durative hylemes are identical to those found in the long version.

– Innana searches for Dumuzi everywhere.[88] (l. 376–377)
– [The Fly comes to Innana.] (l. 378)
– The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 379)
– [The Fly wants a reward.] (l. 379)

88 I here take the phrases "at the bottom" and "at the summit" to constitute a merism, similar to the English idiom "(to seek) high and low." For the reconstruction of the hyper-hyleme, see section 4.1.2 above.

– Innana promises a reward to the Fly in exchange for Dumuzi's whereabouts. (l. 385–386)
– The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 387)

There are two important points to note here. First, this version of the *Erzählstoff* explicitly states that the Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana, validating our reconstruction of the longer version in section 4.1. Second, it does *not* specify whether the Fly's promised fate comes to pass: this manifestation of the *Stoff* is apparently incomplete. Its ending may not be explicit in the text,[89] but it should be possible to reconstruct its hylemes all the same. An awareness of the cultural specificities of the period is useful here: as the Fly has kept up its side of the bargain by revealing Dumuzi's whereabouts, it is entitled to receive its reward, according to the Mesopotamian principle of reciprocity.[90] The longer version of the story lends further support to this conclusion, leading to the following reconstruction:

– [Innana grants the Fly its reward = decides a fate for the Fly→ Ur-S l. 384–387]
– [The Flies dwell in the Alehouse near the goblets of the steppe]. (l. 385)
– [The Flies live like/together with the Children of the Wise.] (l. 386)

4.3 *Comparison*

At this point, we can confirm that the long and the short textual manifestations are indeed variants of the same narrative material: The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. There is, however, one glaring discrepancy between them, which becomes apparent when they are juxtaposed for the text score, and it has to do with the order of the hylemes in the text. Table 12.5 presents the sequence of hylemes as they appear in the two manifestations, which is to say, on the actual tablets:

TABLE 12.5 Hylemes, presented in order of appearance

Ur/Nippur (long) version	**un-y (short) version**
– Innana searches for her spouse Dumuzi. (l. 376–377)	– Innana searches for her spouse Dumuzi at the bottom. (l. 376)
– *Idem*	– Innana searches for her spouse Dumuzi at the summit. (l. 377)

89 For the necessary ending of myths see C. Zgoll, 2019, 154 and 402 and section 3.3.
90 On the principle of reciprocity in Mesopotamian cultures, see A. Zgoll, 2003.

TABLE 12.5 Hylemes, presented in order of appearance (*cont.*)

Ur/Nippur (long) version	**UN-y (short) version**
	– Innana is the Bright One. – [The Fly comes to Innana.] – The Fly speaks to Innana. (l. 378)
– [The Fly is the First Fly Ever.] – The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. – [The Fly wants a reward.][95] (l. 378a)	
	– *Idem* (l. 379) – Innana answers the Fly. (l. 380)
– Innana promises an unknown reward to the Fly.[96] (l. 380a, 381) – *Idem* – [The Fly] swarms over the whereabouts [of the man?]. (l. 382) – The Fly reveals it (= Dumuzi's whereabouts) to Innana. (l. 383) – Innana is a/the Maiden. – Innana decrees a fate for the Fly. (l. 384)	
	– "The Fly will dwell in the Alehouse near the goblets." (l. 385) – "The Fly will live together with (or: like) the Children of the Wise." (l. 386)
	– The Fly reveals (the man's =) Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 387')
– The fate comes to be. (l. 387)	

95 The repetition only occurs in Ni-d.
96 The repetition only occurs in Ni-d.

TABLE 12.6 Comparison of the variants

Narrative material variant A (Ur-S + Ni-d)	**Narrative material variant B (UN-y)**
– [Innana] searches for her spouse [Dumuzi]. (l. 376–377)	– [Innana] searches for her spouse [Dumuzi] **everywhere**. (l. 376–377)
– [The First Fly Ever comes to Innana.] (l. 378a–379)	– [The First Fly Ever comes to Innana.] (l. 379)
– The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 379)	– The Fly offers to reveal Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana. (l. 379)
– Innana promises an unknown reward. (l. 380a–381)	– Innana promises a good fate. (l. 385–386)
– The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts. (l. 383)	– The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts. (l. 387')
– Innana decrees a good fate. (l. 384–386)	– [Innana decrees a good fate.]
– The fate comes to be (l. 387):	– [The fate comes to be:→ l. 387 version A]
– [Flies dwell in the Alehouse near the goblets. (l. 385) (durative-resultative hyleme)	– [Flies dwell in the Alehouse near the goblets.→ l. 385 + 387 version A (durative-resultative hyleme)
– Flies live together with the Children of the Wise. (l. 386) (durative-resultative hyleme)]	– Flies live together with the Children of the Wise. (durative-resultative hyleme)→ l. 386 + 387 version A]

The key difference between the two versions lies in the position and function of two hylemes: "The Fly will dwell in the Alehouse near the goblets" and "The Fly will live like/together with the Children of the Wise." In the long version, they are placed after "The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana"; in the short version, they appear *before* that action. The content of the quoted speech is the same, but a shift occurs in their semantic value, and this is also true for the corresponding hylemes. In the long version, both hylemes can be summarized by one sentence, "Innana *decrees* a (good) fate for the Fly"; in the short version, UN-y, their meaning is rather that "Innana *promises* a (good) fate for the Fly." The hyleme in the extended version is performative: Innana speaks (l. 385–386), and her words immediately enact the promise (l. 387). The hyleme in the UN-y version is not performative, or at least not instantaneously so: the Fly has to hold up its end of the bargain for the words to come true.

As can be seen in this table, there are, on one hand, similar hylemes, corresponding to different lines in the textual variants ("Innana promises a reward" is extracted from lines 380a–381 in the long version and from lines 385–386 in the

short version); and, on the other hand, similar lines corresponding to different hylemes ("The Fly will dwell in the Alehouse near the goblets. The Fly will live like/together with the Children of the Wise" corresponds to "Innana *decrees* a fate" in the long version and to "Innana *promises* a fate" in the short one). The short version actualizes a narrative material that is similar to the longer one, but it does so with a greater economy of explicit hylemes:[97] we are provided only with what we need to understand the plot. Innana's promise and its reciprocal response, the Fly's revelation of Dumuzi's whereabouts, are retained from the long version, while the self-evident outcome for the Fly is omitted. (Yes, it does receive its reward.) The fact that in this case the narrative material does not take on the exact same form in the two variants presents a challenge for anyone attempting to arrange the Sumerian versions into a coherent text score.[98]

But why does UN-y present us with such a condensed version of the narrative material? First, it should be noted that UN-y is generally more concise than the other manuscripts; it shares this trait with UN-x (MS 3281), and these two tablets constitute the only two originally complete manuscripts of *Innana's Descent*. Other tablets contain, at best, little more than half the text. To an extent, then, the size and type of the tablet may have constrained the poetic shape of the narrative material in UN-y. Second, an important difference is the use of direct speech in the two versions. For example, in lines 376 and 377 of UN-y (quoted above in section 4.2), direct speech is not introduced by a verb of speaking—a consistent feature of the manuscript. For example, in lines 363' and 363'a, which follow line 363/383, the direct address to Innana reads merely: "Innana, (direct) your attention to your spouse"; or "Innana, (direct) your attention to Dumuzi". Furthermore, UN-y contains several phonetic spellings (e.g., UR and BAD lines 376 and 377). The emphasis on direct speech, combined with the format of the tablet, suggest a specific use for this particular textual manifestation, such as an oral performance.[99]

But is it true to say that UN-y only offers an abbreviated version of the narrative material? Unlike the longer version, it does summarize most of the narrative material. On closer inspection, one can note that the hylemes manifested in lines 376–377 have no exact equivalent in the longer version:

– [Innana] searches for her spouse [Dumuzi] **at the bottom**.
– [Innana] searches for her spouse [Dumuzi] **at the summit**.

Innana's search has been given additional qualifications that are not present in the longer version. Innana is literally searching high and low for her husband,

97 Compare section 3.3.
98 Alster, 1996 already highlights the difficulty of numbering the lines in *Innana's Descent*.
99 For examples of such clues, see Wilcke, 2012.

reflecting a greater emphasis on the relationship between Inanna and Dumuzi, that is, on the larger story that is being told in the final part of *Innana's Descent*, rather than on the specific episode of the Fly. Therefore, the last explicit hyleme in the order of the text concerns the Fly's revelation of Dumuzi's whereabouts (and his subsequent reunion with Innana), rather than the fate of the Fly, as it did in Ur-S and Ni-d. The two versions therefore emphasize different aspects of the same narrative material: one highlights the search for Dumuzi, the other the fate of the Fly.

4.4 *Preliminary Conclusion*

Hyleme analysis has proven to be a useful and rigorous scientific instrument that allows us to identify and extract important clues from the extant manuscripts and reconstruct some of the missing text in the tablets. It has enabled us to go beyond the mere observation that the two versions differ in length and note that the narrative focus shifts from the Fly in one version to the bond between Innana and Dumuzi in the other. And finally, it illustrates how an *Erzählstoff*-variant can be described and summarized by applying structural modifications to a sequence of hylemes.

Taken together, these findings offer fresh perspectives on the established notions of text and literary works in the Old Babylonian period. Scribes and scholars at the time clearly held the long and the short version of the narrative material to be representatives of the same entity: a text beginning with the incipit an gal-ta ki gal-še$_3$, which we today call *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld*.[100] But in contrast to modern or even later ancient texts, the precise poetic shape of *Innana's Descent* was not fixed at the time. The scribes seem to have had a quite clear canvas for the story, a mental version of the narrative material and its necessary steps, but the exact sequence of events and the choice of expressions afforded them some degree of liberty.

5 Reconstructing Mythical Narrative Materials about Dumuzi's Death in *ershema* no. 165 (Annika Cöster-Gilbert)

As mentioned, *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld* is not the only text containing multiple versions of the search for the dead Dumuzi. A similar hyleme sequence is also found in *ershema* no. 165. It is one of several Old Babylonian

100 UN-y is damaged but contained the complete text. The beginning of the first column is preserved, and so is the characteristic incipit of the text. Ur-S contains a colophon identifying it as the third and final tablet of *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld*.

TABLE 12.7 Transliteration and translation of text A, l. 1–4

[1] ses-e dab_5-a-na iri ir_2-ra na-nam	"The well-known brother!" Because he was seized, the city is full of tears (and this has consequences):[a]
[2] a guruš ses-e tab an-na ⟨dab_5-a-na iri er_2-ra na-nam(?)⟩	"Alas for the young man! The well-known brother! The companion of An!" ⟨Because he was seized, the city is full of tears, (and this has consequences):⟩
[3] a guruš su_8-ba en ^{d}Dumu-zi ⟨dab_5-a-na iri er_2-ra na-nam(?)⟩	"Alas for the young man! The shepherd, the priest-king (en)[b] Dumuzi!" ⟨Because he was seized the city is full of tears, (and this has consequences):⟩
[4] dumu e_2-gal-a-ni nu-mu-un-su_3-ga-ĝu_{10}	(Innana laments:) "My darling, who has not provided anything for his (or: her) palace(s)!"

a For this "effective" meaning of the na-prefix, see A. Zgoll, 2020, 88, fn. 18.
b For the meaning and translation of en as priest-king, see fn. 124 below.

*ershema*s, or cultic lamentations, about the death of Dumuzi.[101] Such *ershemas* are fruitful for the analysis of mythical *Erzählstoff*-versions since they illustrate different versions of Dumuzi's fate. Previous studies have often lumped these narratives together and used them primarily to reconstruct the narrative of *Innana's Descent* (see, for instance, *The Death of Dumuzi*[102] and the *Dream of Dumuzi*), despite the fact that these narratives differ substantially, as is also the case for *ershema* no. 165. Based on the hylistic method, we can now reconstruct the individual mythical *Erzählstoff*-versions of Dumuzi's death so as to differentiate between them and better understand each narrative material in its own right.

Ershema no. 165 is preserved on two Old Babylonian tablets of unknown provenance, which will be termed A and B.[103] While they are not identical, they are very similar, as will be shown below.[104] I will first present a step-by-step

101 As the STRATA research group in Göttingen has shown, myths about descents to the netherworld provide an interesting basis for the reconstruction and comparison of mythical *Erzählstoffe*. Initial results have been published in C. Zgoll, 2019 and A. Zgoll and C. Zgoll, 2020. An in-depth analysis of several of the *ershema*'s dealing with the death of Dumuzi will be presented in Cöster-Gilbert, forthcoming.

102 See Kramer, 1980.

103 They are part of the collection of the British Museum (A: BM 29628; B: BM 109167) and were first published in 1902 (CT 15, A) and 1990 (CT 58, B).

104 Text A consists of 31 lines; the colophon identifies it as an *ershema* and it is written in standard orthography. Text B consists of 33 lines; it has no colophon and is written with phonetic variants.

reconstruction of the mythical narrative material, using the method described in section 3 and focusing on four representative lines from the beginning of text A that tell us about Dumuzi's fate.

5.1 *Hylistic Approach no. 1: Identification, Categorization, and Presentation of the Mythical Narrative Material*

From this short passage, we can reconstruct the following sequence:

TABLE 12.8 Extraction of hylemes

"The well-known brother!"	– Dumuzi is the brother of NN. (l. 1, 2)
Because he was seized, the city is full of	– NN seizes Dumuzi. (l. 1–3)
tears, (and this has consequences):	– The City laments Dumuzi. (l. 1–3)
"Alas for the young man! The well-known	– Dumuzi is a young man. (l. 2, 3)
brother! The companion of An!"	– Dumuzi is a companion of An. (l. 2)
⟨Because he was seized, the city is full of	
tears, (and this has consequences):⟩	
"Woe the young man! The shepherd, the	– Dumuzi is a shepherd. (l. 3)
priest-king (en) Dumuzi!"	– Dumuzi is priest-king (en). (l. 3)
⟨Because he was seized, the city is full of	
tears, (and this has consequences):⟩	
(Innana laments:)	– [Innana laments:]
"My darling, who has not provided any-	– "Dumuzi is Innana's darling." (l. 4)
thing for his (or: her) palace(s)!"	– "Dumuzi does not provide for his (or: her) palace(s)."[105] (l. 4)

5.2 *Hylistic Approach no. 2: Analysis of Textual Representation of Hylemes*

A categorization of theses hylemes shows the following distribution.

Durative-constant hylemes:

– Dumuzi is the brother of NN. (l. 1, 2)
– Dumuzi is a companion of An. (l. 2)
– Dumuzi is a young man. (l. 2, 3)
– Dumuzi is a shepherd. (l. 3)

105 For an interesting association between temple and palace, see the royal praise hymn Šulgi P: The goddess Nin-sumun pleads before An for Šulgi's appointment as ruler, An agrees and Nin-sumun leads Šulgi to her temple, "her exalted palace" (segment C, l. 14).

– Dumuzi is a priest-king (en). (l. 3)
– "Dumuzi is Innana's darling." (l. 4)[106]

Single-event hylemes:
– NN seizes Dumuzi. (l. 1–3)
– The City laments Dumuzi. (l. 1–3)
– Innana laments Dumuzi. (l. 4)
– "Dumuzi does not provide for his (or: her) palace(s)." (l. 4)

One immediately apparent feature of the narrative is the small number of actions that are expressed by single-event hylemes, while the *ershema* elaborates in great detail on Dumuzi's functions and character (i.e., the durative-constant hylemes).

5.3 *Hylistic Approach no. 3: Analysis of Textual Omissions of the Narrative Material, and the Ending of Myths*

Innana's statement also implies that Dumuzi used to provide for the palace, as well as the cities and the temples, as she explains in the following lines. We can therefore add the hyleme:
– Dumuzi provides for the palace(s). (l. 4)

The wording of Innana's lament further hints at the fact that Dumuzi performs this task because he is the darling of Innana. To account for the implication, the hyleme must be made more specific:
– As Innana's darling, Dumuzi provides for the palace(s). (l. 4)

So, what exactly happened to Dumuzi? The crucial hyleme here is "NN seizes Dumuzi." From similar texts about Dumuzi, we know that the term "to seize," Sumerian dab_5, when carried out by the *galla* demons is used as a reference to death.[107] This assumption is supported by the following lamentations and the search for him. The overwhelming majority of the *Erzählstoff*-versions about the seizure of Dumuzi present demons as the agents of his death. Considering that demons are the usual offenders, and with no other characters in sight in the narrative, one can make the case that the most common version of the narrative is also at play in this version of the *Erzählstoff*. Therefore, we can complete the hyleme sequence as follows:

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106 On closer inspection, another durative hyleme can be deduced from the words in line 4, "My … darling (dumu)". The personal statement makes it highly likely that the line is spoken by Innana (who is mentioned in line 5). Similarly, the direct quotation in line 1 may be spoken by Innana, or perhaps by Geshtin-ana, who appears later in the *ershema*.

107 See, e.g., *The Death of Dumuzi*, l. 23–25; *Dumuzi and Geshtin-ana*, l. 67–68; *ershema* no. 97, l. 120; and *ershema* no. 88, l. 3 and 10. See A. Zgoll, 2020, 139, fn. 157, for the verb dab_5 and its connotation of death.

– [Demons] seize Dumuzi. (l. 1–3)
– [Dumuzi dies.] (l. 1–3)
– [Dumuzi is dead.] (l. 1–3)

5.4 *Hylistic Approach no. 4: Analysis of the Order of the Narrative Material in the* **ershema**

Dumuzi usually provides for the city and its inhabitants (A, l. 4–10; B, l. 12–16), but this stops with his death. Consequently, the hyleme sequence can now be arranged as follows:

– [As Innana's darling, Dumuzi provides for the palace(s).]
– [Demon(s)] (Sg/Pl) seize(s) Dumuzi.
– [Dumuzi is dead.]
– Dumuzi does not provide for the palace(s) anymore.
– The City laments Dumuzi.
– Innana laments Dumuzi.

5.5 *Hylistic Approach no. 5: Analysis of Narrative Materials Incorporated into the* **ershema**

Within the limited space available, my focus here will be on an overview of the most important steps in the analysis, displaying only hyper-hylemes of the story (see section 3.7) in a hyleme-based summary of the narrative material.[108] I will then reconstruct two more hyleme sequences for passages that are especially helpful for a more profound understanding of the mythical narrative material represented in *ershema* no. 165.

5.5.1 Summary of the Mythical *Erzählstoff*-Version in *Stoff*-Chronological Order (Single-Event Hylemes Only)

– As Innana's darling, Dumuzi provides for the palace(s) and the temples, i.e. the cities of Uruk, Zabalam, and Umma. (A, l. 4–10; B, l. 12–16)
– [Demon(s)] (sg./pl.) seize(s) Dumuzi. (A, l. 1 + 3; B, l. 1–2, 11) // [Demon(s)] bestow(s) evil on Dumuzi. (A, l. 12, 17)
– [Dumuzi is dead.]
– [Only the Fly knows Dumuzi's whereabouts.] (A, l. 20–22; B, rv. l. 4)
– Dumuzi does not provide for palace and cities anymore. (A, l. 5–10; B, l. 14)

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108 For a detailed analysis of this mythical *Erzählstoff*, see Cöster-Gilbert, forthcoming. The (hyper-)hylemes are based on the edition by Cohen, 1981, and unpublished editions by Annika Cöster-Gilbert and Bénédicte Cuperly. Square brackets denote additional implicit hylemes (compare section 3.3); corresponding lines from the original text are printed in superscript.

- Uruk, Zalabam, and Umma lament over Dumuzi. (A, l. 1–2, 3; B, l. 1–11, 16)
- Innana laments in the E-ana temple of Uruk, in the temple of Zabalam, in the temple of Umma, and in the steppe (A, l. 5–12) / in the steppe at a sheepfold. (B, l. 12–15)
- Geshtin-ana leaves the butter churn and the young animals. (l. 13+18)
- Geshtin-ana laments over Dumuzi. (only A, l. 14–17)
- The Fly promises to find Dumuzi for Innana. (A, l. 19–20; B, rv. l. 3–4)
- Innana promises a good fate for the Fly in return. (A, l. 21–22; B, rv. l. 5–6)
- The Fly promises to find Dumuzi for Geshtin-ana. (A, l. 23–24; B, rv. l. 7–8)
- Geshtin-ana promises a good fate for the Fly in return. (A, l. 25; B, rv. l. 9)
- Geshtin-ana walks into the steppe. (A, l. 26; B, rv. l. 11–12)
- Geshtin-ana laments over Dumuzi in the steppe Arali. (A, l. 28–29; B, rv. l. 13–14)

The sequence shows that there are several protagonists (Dumuzi, the people of the city, Innana, Geshtin-ana, the Fly) acting in different places (cities, sheepfold, steppe) combining different activities (lamenting, searching, deciding fates). Furthermore, many of the actions of Innana and Geshtin-ana are similar and, in the end, the Fly receives two similar fates (for the myth of the First Fly compare section 4 above), indicating the multiplicity of narrative materials present in the *ershema*. For now, we can say that there is at least one hyleme sequence about Geshtin-ana and one about Innana (see also section 6 below).[109]

The study of myths has taught us that ancient texts often abbreviate mythical narrative materials (see section 3.7 above). In order to fully understand mythical narrative materials and their variants, a critical step is to verify whether their beginning and the end are indeed represented in the text under scrutiny. Notably, the composite *Erzählstoff*-version as represented in the *ershema* no. 165 has no proper ending (see section 3.3). At first glance, no effort is made to address Dumuzi's absence and the lost provisions for Innana and the cities. From this perspective, the lamentations of the goddesses would make no sense, and the end of the text consists of a list of birds and plants after Geshtin-ana's departure into the steppe.[110] For a more satisfying picture of what is going on, we need to take a closer look at some of the interwoven narrative materials that form the narrative conglomerate of this passage. Many other texts about Dumuzi's death tend to focus on the brutal torture he suffers at the

109 On the combination of multiple mythical *Erzählstoffe* into one manifestation, see C. Zgoll, 2019; and A. Zgoll and C. Zgoll, 2020.

110 For a possible explanation of the birds and plants at the end of the text, see Cohen, 1981, 87 and 170.

hands of the *galla* demons before he dies.[111] However, *ershema* no. 165 concentrates on the actions of the bereaved, namely his sister Geshtin-ana and his wife Innana; we will therefore analyze these sequences in detail. One scene takes places in an urban setting, in which not only the goddess but also the people of the cities are lamenting; the setting then moves to the steppe, where the lamenting continues, led by either Geshtin-ana or Innana, depending on the text.

5.6 *Hylistic Approach no. 6: Analysis of the Techniques for Joining Multiple Variants of the Same* Erzählstoff-*Version*

As mentioned in the previous section, the *ershema* presents two similar sequences about Geshtin-ana and Innana, and we can assume that we are dealing with two versions of the same narrative material. Rather than being joined by threshold lines,[112] or other mechanisms of this type, the descriptive passages about the lamenting goddesses are presented sequentially in the text. Structurally, however, they are parallel compositions (but see section 6 below on the "hinge" construction).

5.7 *Hylistic Approach no. 9: Comparison of Two Versions of the Composite* Erzählstoff-*Version*

At this point, a comparison of the narrative materials presented in the various manuscripts will be useful. The following actions take place *before* the goddesses' encounter with the Fly.

The parallel structure of Innana's and Geshtin-ana's actions is remarkable: both lament and leave their homes in search of Dumuzi. Later, both have a conversation with the Fly. In both manuscripts of the *ershema*, Geshtin-ana appears to be the one who finds Dumuzi in the end[113] (see section 6.3 below for a summary of the narrative material in *Stoff*-chronological order). And there are more parallels that connect the two versions. For instance, locations include Uruk, Umma (and Zabalam in Text A, perhaps also in B), the site of a sheepfold, and the steppe. Common themes revolve around lamenting, leaving, and searching for Dumuzi, as well as rewarding the Fly. Specific points in time are not mentioned in either version.

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111 See e.g. *The Death of Dumuzi, Dumuzi's Dream, Dumuzi and Geshtin-ana, ershema* no. 97 (for which see Cohen, 1981, 71–83; and Fritz, 2003, 112–113), and, though with a different antagonist (a demonic bison), *ershema* no. 60 (Cohen, 1981, 89–92; and Fritz, 2003, 114–115).

112 Compare section 3.6; for this terminology, see also A. Zgoll, 1997, 56.

113 See Cohen, 1981, 87.

TABLE 12.9 Innana leaves her temples—Comparison of *Erzählstoff* Variants in Text A and B

Text A	**Text B**
– Innana laments in the E-ana: Dumuzi does not provide [for the E-ana anymore]. (l. 5–6)	– Innana laments in the E-ana: Dumuzi does not provide [for the E-ana anymore]. (l. 13–14)
– [Innana leaves the E-ana.] (→ l. 7–8)	– Innana leaves the E-ana. (l. 13)
– [Innana goes to Zabalam.]	
– Innana laments in Zabalam: Dumuzi does not provide [for Zabalam anymore]. (l. 7–8)	
– [Innana leaves Zabalam.] (→ l. 9–10)	
– [Innana goes to Umma.]	– [Innana goes to Umma.]
– Innana laments in Umma: Dumuzi does not provide [for Umma anymore]. (l. 9–10)	– Innana laments in Umma: Dumuzi does not provide [for Umma anymore]. (l. 15)
– [Innana leaves Umma.] (→ l. 11–12)	– Innana leaves Umma. (l. 15)
– Bright Innana silences (or: fills up) the steppe [with her lamentation]: "My heart!"[114] (l. 11–12)	
– Innana laments in the steppe. (l. 11–12)	
– [Geshtin-ana is in / goes to the sheepfold in the steppe.]	
– Geshtin-ana leaves the butter churn. (l. 13)	– Innana leaves the butter churn. (l. 18)
– Geshtin-ana leaves the lambs and young animals. (l. 13)	– Innana leaves the lambs and young animals. (l. 18)
– Geshtin-ana laments over Dumuzi:	– Innana laments over Dumuzi:
– Nobody has accomplished anything for Dumuzi. (l. 14–17)	– Nobody has accomplished anything for Dumuzi. (rv. l. 1)

Given the similarity of places, actions, and themes, it is safe to assume that the two texts express two variants of the same mythical narrative material.[115] The two variants differ in the degree to which they elaborate on certain actions (e.g., the lament of the city), and which of the two protagonists is the main character in the hyleme segments. While Innana's departure from her cities is described in both versions, Geshtin-ana's departure is only briefly mentioned in version

114 This translation is by Bénédicte Cuperly.

115 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 153–163, for the methodology that underlies the definition of mythical *Erzählstoffe*.

TABLE 12.10 female relative laments the death of Dumuzi: Comparison between two versions of the same narrative material

Innana version	**Geshtin-ana version**
– The Fly speaks to Innana: (A, l. 19; B, rv. l. 3)	– The Fly speaks to Geshtin-ana: (A, l. 23; B, rv. l. 7)
– "I am the Fly." (l. 20)	
– "I will find the whereabouts of Dumuzi." (A, l. 20; B, rv. l. 4)	– "I (Fly) will find the whereabouts of Dumuzi." (A, l. 24; B, rv. l. 8)
– "What will Innana give in reward?" (A, l. 20; B, rv. l. 4)	– "What will Geshtin-ana give in reward?" (A, l. 24; B, rv. l. 8)
– [Innana answers the Fly:] (A, l. 21; B, rv. l. 5)	– [Geshtin-ana answers the Fly:] (A, l. 25; B, rv. l. 9)
– "Flies will live in the house of beer / brewing with the children of the wise." (A l. 22; B, rv. l. 6)	– "Flies will live in the house of beer and of brewing with the children of the wise among the young animals." (A, l. 25; B, rv. l. 9) – Geshtin-ana walks into the Arali Steppe. (A, l. 26; B, rv. l. 11–12). – Geshtin-ana laments over Dumuzi in the Arali Steppe. (A, l. 28–29; B, rv. l. 13–14)

A. In version B, it is Innana who again leaves the sheepfold and the young animals, leading to Geshtin-ana's rather abrupt appearance at the end of version B.

5.8 *Hylistic Approach no. 8: Stratigraphical Analysis of Narrative Materials*

The parallel presentation of the goddesses' actions allows us to reconstruct a more abstract narrative:

– The goddess leaves the butter churn. (A, l. 13 with Geshtin-ana; B, l. 18 with Innana)
– The goddess leaves the lambs and the young animals. (A, l. 13 with Geshtin-ana; B, l. 18 with Innana)

The abstraction yields two variants of the same mythical narrative material that differ only slightly. These differences, however, may shed some light on the dynamic between Innana and Geshtin-ana in religious traditions; the following comparison of two more hyleme sequences lends further support to this suggestion. As the parallel structure of actions and events has been established,

we will compare the segments by looking at their protagonists, the defining difference between them.

The comparison shows two variants of the narrative material A FEMALE RELATIVE LAMENTS THE DEATH OF DUMUZI. A closer look reveals that the same hyleme sequence occurs twice in each text. The sequence starts with Innana and the Fly, breaks off, and continues with Geshtin-ana and the Fly. The parallel structure is preserved; only the protagonist (and a detail regarding the Fly's reward) are altered. Clearly, the *ershema* here combines an Innana stratum and a Geshtin-ana stratum to form a composite mythical narrative material (see sections 3.8 and 6.1).

5.8.1. Reconstruction of the Incorporated Mythical Stratum about Geshtin-ana and Dumuzi

Both narrative materials lack explicit endings (see section 3.3). It remains unclear what will happen to Dumuzi and whether his relatives will find him. But must we give up hope of finding "closure"? Perhaps not. There is one hyleme that stands out from the Geshtin-ana sequence and that has no equivalent in the Innana sequence: Geshtin-ana walks into the steppe (A, l. 2; B, rv. l. 11–12), and this action is reported immediately after her conversation with the Fly. Considering its penultimate position in the hyleme sequence, it is not unreasonable to posit that, in fact, the Fly shows Geshtin-ana Dumuzi's whereabouts in the steppe. Consequently, Geshtin-ana's journey into the steppe indicates her search for the missing Dumuzi (see also section 5.5.1 above).

Regarding the reconstruction of the mythical narrative material about Geshtin-ana, the following hylemes can thus be added to the sequence:

– Geshtin-ana leaves the sheepfold to search for the dead Dumuzi [in the steppe?]. (= hyper-hyleme to lines 13–17)
– Geshtin-ana laments Dumuzi.
– [The Fly offers to help Geshtin-ana find Dumuzi in exchange for a reward.]
– Geshtin-ana promises to reward the Fly with a good fate.
– [The Fly searches for Dumuzi.]
– [The Fly finds Dumuzi in the Arali steppe.] (→ rv. l. 7–8)
– [The Fly shows Geshtin-ana Dumuzi's whereabouts in the Arali steppe.] (→ rv. l. 7–8)
– [Geshtin-ana determines a good fate for the Fly.] (→ rv. l. 9–10)

Is this the end of this version of the search for Dumuzi? It is the end of the Fly's "origin myth" (for which compare section 4) but a solution to the most pressing problems of the narrative material has yet to be found: What is to be done about Dumuzi and the fate of the cities, their temples, and their goddess, Innana? As

stated above, neither text contains the ending of this narrative material. Since myths, as discussed in section 3.3, follow the three-partite structure of (1) problem = starting point (2) addressing the problem = middle section (3) solving the problem = ending, one must search for the ending of the Dumuzi-myth in question. Based on our hyleme analysis and on cultural knowledge about rituals in Mesopotamia, we can present a thesis about the shape of the resolution. The people of Mesopotamia were convinced that ritual lamentations like that of Geshtin-ana had an important effect for the deceased. The primary function[116] of Geshtin-ana's lament must be aimed at something good for the lamented Dumuzi. Since it is a goddess who is lamenting and since this is shown as an example in a myth it is more than probable that the goal is reached. But which goal? Comparing this Dumuzi-myth with another myth about the afterlife, a myth told in the Sumerian song *The Death of Gilgamesh*, one has good reason to assume that the lamentation ritual leads to a better life of Dumuzi in the netherworld.[117] So we reconstruct the following hylemes:

– [Geshtin-ana laments over Dumuzi in the steppe.]
– [The lament does something good for the dead Dumuzi:]
– [Dumuzi has a good life in the netherworld.]

A possible explanation for the omitted endings on the textual level may be the audience's familiarity with the material: the narrative materials in question were widely known, and so there was no need to state the obvious.[118] With the results from the hyleme analysis, we can now propose the title, GESHTIN-ANA FINDS DUMUZI WITH THE HELP OF THE FLY AND PROVIDES FOR HIM, for this *Erzählstoff*-variant.

6 Reconstruction, Stratification, and Layers of Meaning of the Composite Myth about INNANA AND DUMUZI in *ershema* no. 165 (Annette Zgoll)

As shown in the previous section 5.8, *ershema* no. 165 combines part of a single myth about GESHTIN-ANA AND DUMUZI with parts of several myths about INNANA AND DUMUZI into one composite myth. The composite myth starts with the narrative material about INNANA AND DUMUZI and contin-

116 Or macro-function. For the three main functions of rituals, see A. Zgoll, 2003b.

117 See section 6.1. *The Death of Gilgamesh* goes that Gilgamesh receives provisions in the netherworld and is given a preeminent administrative position; see Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, 2000; and A. Zgoll, 2006.

118 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 197–204; and A. Zgoll, 2020a, on the condensation of myths.

ues with the narrative material about GESHTIN-ANA AND DUMUZI. Strangely enough, the myths about INNANA AND DUMUZI appear to break off in both manuscripts. After Innana has told the Fly that it will be rewarded with a good fate for helping Innana find her husband, the text goes on to relate the story about Geshtin-ana. In text A, Geshtin-ana is mentioned even earlier, instead of Innana (A, l. 13).

6.1 *Polyphony of Different Voices: More about the Stratification of the Dumuzi Myths in* **ershema** *no. 165*

The two texts deal with the myths in distinct ways: text B uses them in an additive way, placing the narrative materials in a sequential order and juxtaposing the narratives in their entirety, allowing them to remain separate, consistent entities. This is a case of *Stoff-Stoff* interference where both narrative materials stay recognizably intact. Together, they form an enriched combination, a compound of multiple narrative materials (see section 3.8). The overall myth is shaped around first Innana and then Geshtin-ana. A hinge is created in the duplication of the Fly's offer to find Dumuzi and its demand of a reward, and the promise of first Innana, then Geshtin-ana, to reward the Fly with a good fate.

The situation in text A is different. Here, the combination of *Erzählstoff* strata leads to inconsistencies, because the strata are intertwined: Geshtin-ana leaves the sheepfold in search of Dumuzi (A: l. 13–18), whereupon the Fly appears to offer its help—not to Geshtin-ana, but to Innana. Innana promises a reward to the Fly, then the Fly goes to Geshtin-ana, and Geshtin-ana promises a reward. From this point onward, the narrative material is only focused on Geshtin-ana.[119] From a synchronous perspective, the finding could be interpreted as a case of syncretism of the two goddesses that would be typical of Emesal songs (both *ershema* and *balang*).[120] From a diachronous perspective, various strata can be reconstructed, pointing to a merging of different traditions. From a functional standpoint, the *Stoff-Stoff* interferences create a "simultaneous recognition of multiple traditions … The polyphony of different voices is not a deficiency … it is a bonus."[121]

Because the hyleme sequence with the Fly occurs in both the Innana and the Geshtin-ana version of the underlying narrative material, their parallel

119 Accidental misspellings are unlikely, since Geshtin-ana appears twice in the same context with Innana. The distribution is as follows: Innana up to A, 11; Geshtin-ana in A, 13 and 18; Innana in A, 19 and 21; and Geshtin-ana from A, 23 onward.

120 Compare Delnero, 2020, 60, 69, and 210–214; Gabbay, 2015, 11–12; Gabbay, 2013, 108–109; and Maul, 1999, 306–309.

121 C. Zgoll, 2020, 58.

structures make it safe to deduce from the available texts that these mythical versions about INNANA AND DUMUZI will continue on their parallel paths, alongside either the added (B) or the inserted (A) myth about GESHTIN-ANA AND DUMUZI. A plausible explanation for the absence of further textual parallels could be found in the desire to avoid repetition or duplication, but this may hold true only for the level of the written text, not necessarily for the oral performance of the lamentation. The *ershema* laments are typically full of repetitions,[122] and usually not all of these repeated lines were written out in full.[123]

In light of these practices, the short episode about Innana lamenting and searching for Dumuzi, and the abrupt change of perspective from one narrative material to another cannot be seen as conveying a particular message of disruption, or a preference for one over the other. The hylistic analysis of texts A and B shows that the hylemes about Geshtin-ana's search for Dumuzi and her lamentation over his death have a parallel in similar hylemes about Innana. The composite myth that is thus reconstructed conveys the sense that Innana's search and lament are no less important than Geshtin-ana's efforts. The presentation of the myth must be understood as an *abbreviated depiction of parallel events*, dictated by the conventions of written texts and the literary genre of laments.

6.2 *Reconstruction of the Dumuzi Myths in the* ershema

Having reached these preliminary findings, we can begin to reconstruct the hyleme sequence for the Innana version of the composite myth. Accordingly, I will present the hylemes by incorporating the *Erzählstoff*-version about Innana that has been extrapolated from the Geshtin-ana version; indicating the lines where a hyleme concerns Geshtin-ana on the textual level. The hylemes are grouped together under descriptive headings that also identify their respective narrative materials:

122 On the use of repetitions in Sumerian laments, see most recently Delnero, 2020, 137–168.

123 For an example of "short-hand" repetitions in *ershema* no. 165, see A, l. 1–3 and B, l. 1–11 above in section 5 (beginning). The refrain "Since he (= Dumuzi) is seized, the city is in tears (and this has consequences)" (1) is only written once and not repeated. On repetitions of statements about deities or temples, see also Krecher, 1966, 45: "Wir müssen wohl annehmen, daß man in jedem Fall [sc. von derartigen Wiederholungen] eine geschlossene Gruppe von Gottheiten oder Tempeln im Auge hatte, die es vollständig zu berücksichtigen galt." According to Delnero, 2020, 137 and 168, the variability of these repetitions in the Sumerian cultic literature is largely due to "the requirements of oral peformance." This is reminiscent of the "Marduk-Ea formula, which is often heavily abbreviated because it was perhaps a placeholder for the entire known element when set in an incantation" (Gina Konstantopoulos, personal communication).

Narrative material 1 =**myth 1**: Innana chooses Dumuzi as provider of her cities
- [Innana chooses Dumuzi.]
- [Dumuzi becomes Innana's lover.]
- [Innana marries Dumuzi.]
- [Dumuzi becomes Innana's husband.]
- As Innana's beloved husband, Dumuzi provides for Innana's palaces and temples, i.e. the cities.

Narrative material 2 with first problem = **myth 2**: The fate of Innana's cities
- [Demons] seize Dumuzi.
- [Dumuzi is dead.] (→ A, l. 1–3; B, l. 1–11)
- Dumuzi does not provide for the palace and cities anymore. (A, l. 4–10; B, l. 12–15)
- The cities of Uruk, Zabalam, Umma mourn for Dumuzi. (A, l. 1–2, 3; B, l. 1–11, 16)
- Innana laments in the E-ana temple of Uruk that Dumuzi does not provide for his (or: her) palace(s) and temples.[124] (A, l. 4–6; B, l. 12–13)
- [Innana goes from Uruk to Zabalam.] (→ A, l. 5–7; B, l. 13 and omitted part)[125]
- Innana laments (in the temple of) Zabalam [that Dumuzi does not provide for his (or: her) palace(s) and temples.] (A, l. 7–8 with 4; B, l. 13 and omitted part with 12)
- [Innana goes from Zabalam to Umma.] (→ A, l. 7–9; B, omitted part and 15)
- Innana laments (in the temple of) Umma [that Dumuzi does not provide for his (or: her) palace(s) and temples.] (A, l. 9–10 with 4; B, l. 15 with 12)

Narrative material 3 as hinge between narrative material 2 and 4: From the cities (narrative material 2) to the steppe and Dumuzi (narrative material 4)
- [Innana goes from Umma into the steppe.] (→ A, l. 9–11; B, l. 15–16)

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124 The difference in the phrasing between temple (E-ana) and cities (Zabalam, Umma) is clear: the text treats Uruk and its temple E-ana differently from the other cities and their temples, thus hinting at the provenance of the *Erzählstoff*—the mythology of Uruk. Steinkeller, 1999, and 2017, 82–104, touches on some of the larger context in his study of the religious and political leader of Uruk, the en. His findings suggest that the rituals and *Erzählstoffe* of Innana marries Dumuzi derive from the tradition of Uruk, where the en or "priest-king" was the spouse of Innana—see especially Steinkeller, 1999, 105 and 130–131; and 2017, 89 and 144–145.

125 I here follow Wilcke, 1993, 50, who asserts that the omission of Zabalam in text B is accidental.

Narrative material 4 with second problem = **myth 3:** The fate of Dumuzi
– Innana laments in the steppe (A, l. 11–12)
– Innana is in a sheepfold [in the steppe]. ([A, l. 13+18;] B, l. 17 + rv. l. 2)
– Innana leaves the sheepfold to search for the dead Dumuzi [in the steppe?]. (= hyper-hyleme to lines [A, l. 13–18;] B, l. 17–rv. l. 2)
– While searching for Dumuzi [in the steppe?], Innana mourns for Dumuzi and his fate: "Nothing is made perfect for Dumuzi!" (A, l. 14–17;[126] B, rv. l. 1)
– The first Fly offers Innana to find Dumuzi in exchange for a reward. (A, l. 19–20; B, rv. l. 3–4)
– Innana promises a good fate for the Fly as a reward. (A, l. 21–22; B, l. 5–6)
– [The Fly searches for Dumuzi]. (→ A, l. 19–22; B, rv. l. 3–6)

The following hylemes are extrapolated from the hylemes about Geshtin-ana:
– [The Fly finds Dumuzi in the Arali steppe.] (→ [A, l. 26–29; B, rv. l. 11–14])
– [The Fly reveals Dumuzi's whereabouts to Innana.] (→ [A, l. 26–29; B, rv. l. 11–14])
– [Innana determines a good fate for the first Fly (meaning: for all flies).] (→ A, l. 21–22; B, l. 5–6)
– [Innana goes to the Arali steppe to find Dumuzi.] (→ [A, l. 26–29; B, rv. l. 11–14])

Narrative material 4 with solution of the second problem = **myth 3**: Innana improves the fate of Dumuzi
– [Innana mourns for Dumuzi in the Arali steppe, in order to improve his fate.] ([A, l. 28–29; B, rv. l. 13–14])

This means that Innana creates the first rituals for the first person to suffer death.[127]
– [The lament improves the status of Dumuzi in the netherworld.]
– [Dumuzi has an elevated status in the netherworld.][128] (→ A, l. 14–17; B, rv. l. 1)

Comparable to the function of praise, the function of such a lamentation is to elevate the status of a person. And it is not only the lamentation which car-

126 Due to constraints of space, the longer hyleme sequence of text A has not been printed in full.

127 This is a finding from Cuperly's study of *Innana's Descent*; see Cuperly, 2021, sections v.1.3 and v.6.

128 The funerary rituals determine the status that the deceased will achieve in the netherworld; this is a prominent thread in the Sumerian poem *The Death of Gilgamesh*, where Gilgamesh receives provisions for the netherworld and is therefore given a position of great importance; see Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, 2000; and A. Zgoll, 2006.

ries this function with regard to a deceased. In the given context, references to lamentations have the character of a synecdoche, in that they denote not only lamentations, but funerary rituals in general. These funerary rituals serve the dead Dumuzi whom we are to understand here as the first deceased person ever.[129] In Mesopotamian funerary rituals, lamentations were performed, the body was cleansed and wrapped in a shroud, and the deceased were provided with offerings of food and drink, as well as gifts that they could present to the officials of the netherworld.[130] Knowledge of these cultural practices allows us to add the following hypothetical hylemes, indicated in italics, which can but need not be part of the hyleme sequence:

– [*Innana wraps the dead Dumuzi in burial sheets.*] (→ l. 15)
– [*Innana provides the dead Dumuzi with offerings of food and drink.*]
– [*Dumuzi consumes Innana's offering of food and drink.*]
– [*Innana's offering of food and drink strengthens the dead Dumuzi.*]
– [*Innana gives Dumuzi gifts to present to the officials of the netherworld.*]
– [*Dumuzi presents the gifts to the officials of the netherworld.*]
– [*The gifts to the officials of the netherworld make them elevate Dumuzi's status in the netherworld.*]
– [*Dumuzi has an elevated status in the netherworld.*]

In passing, one may note that this interpretation gives a clue to understanding the hitherto incomprehensible enumeration of plants and animals at the end of the text; since their names and spellings contain references to burial rituals; this is still being investigated. In our example, only the opening rites of the funeral ceremony are mentioned; other elements, such as the offerings of food and drink and the gifts to the netherworld gods, are missing. Either way, the problem of Dumuzi's fate in the afterlife must have been resolved in the myth like this. The reconstruction of the myth has shown an important meaning of this myth and text: the mythical explanation for death, and how to cope with death through funerary rites.

Narrative material 2 with solution of the first problem = **myth 2**: Innana and Dumuzi improve the fate of the cities

While one myth (narrative material 4) is complete, narrative material 2 still lacks a solution to the "first problem:" the fate of the cities. Of course, here too, the original narrative material would have included a proper ending; the fact

129 For Dumuzi as the first deceased in *Innana's Descent* see A. Zgoll, 2020, 141.
130 Compare Maul, 2005; Barrett, 2007; Katz, 2007 and 2014; as well as Löhnert, 2016.

that it is missing from the textual medium as preserved forces us to consider the possible suitable endings for the sequence of events: Innana's intervention in Dumuzi's favor has consequences for the dead Dumuzi, whose status in the netherworld is elevated; therefore he is willing and able to provide for (the fertility of) the cities, even from "beyond the grave."[131] At a time when the king was ritually transformed to become an earthly manifestation of Dumuzi (that is, the twenty-first to twentieth century BCE, in the Ur III and Isin periods), the task of providing for the cities and ensuring their survival would have been of fundamental importance, to be performed not only by the divine figure of Dumuzi in the netherworld, but also by his living human incarnation, the king who ruled over and provided for his people. In Mesopotamian culture, such a dual concept of Dumuzi posed no intellectual problem: a fundamental aspect of the Mesopotamian worldview was the conviction that gods existed in multiple manifestations, including astral and other natural phenomena, cult statues, standards, and the like.[132] Dumuzi may have been busy in both his mortal and immortal forms, providing for the cities of his kingdom simultaneously as a dead and a living king.[133]

6.3 *The Incorporated Myths, Their Concerns, and the Composite Myth as Reconciliation of Two Mythical Traditions*

We have found that *ershema* no. 165 is an amalgamation of multiple myths about Innana and Dumuzi, resulting in a new composite myth:

Myth 1: INNANA CHOOSES DUMUZI AS PROVIDER OF HER CITIES

This myth is only alluded to; it provides the background for the other myths.

Myth 2: INNANA MAKES DEAD DUMUZI PROVIDE FOR HER CITIES

This myth provides the framework for the composite myth. It shapes the perspective of the *ershema* lament by setting the scene and the mood from the very beginning: the death of Dumuzi is lamented; the cities have lost their provider.

131 On fertility and irrigation as gifts from the gods of the netherworld, see A. Zgoll, 2011; 2013; and 2020, 91–92 with fn. 33, 126–127, and 133–134.

132 See e.g. *Erra* I 109–114; as well as Taylor, 2017, 343–344.

133 The concept of Dumuzi's dual incarnation is even more complex than the *ershema* suggests: see Steinkeller, 2013 on this concept as well as the ritual enactment of Dumuzi's ascension to heaven. A version of this myth is recounted in *Dumuzi's Ascension to Heaven*; see Kramer, 1984; Ibenthal, 2019; and Cuperly, 2021, section V.6.3.

Studies by Sara Milstein have shown that new, innovative additions to a textual tradition were often placed at the beginning of the text in question, and this would appear to be the case in our text as well.[134]

Myth 3: INNANA CREATES FUNERARY RITUALS TO IMPROVE THE FATE OF THE DEAD DUMUZI

The stratification of this Innana-Dumuzi-myth reveals obvious traces of an earlier version about Dumuzi and his sister, the myth GESHTIN-ANA CREATES FUNERARY RITUALS FOR HER BROTHER DUMUZI TO GRANT HIM A GOOD FATE IN THE NETHERWORLD. This myth must be understood as the precondition for a positive outcome to myth 2. When Dumuzi is appeased and has gained a good status in the netherworld, he is powerful enough to continue in his role as provider for Innana's cities, which is the primary concern of myth 2.

Composite myth: The three myths are intertwined to form the composite myth INNANA IMPROVES THE FATE OF DEAD DUMUZI so that he provides for her cities from the netherworld.

The question arises, why the complex entity made up of three myths about INNANA AND DUMUZI was made even more complex by the addition of yet another myth about Geshtin-ana (GESHTIN-ANA FINDS DUMUZI WITH THE HELP OF THE FIRST FLY)? The composite myth clearly focuses on Innana: she represents *her* cities and *her* temples. The fact that GESHTIN-ANA'S CREATION OF FUNERARY RITUALS FOR DUMUZI has been included points to the presence of a strong Geshtin-ana tradition, which the authors of the *ershema* did not wish to neglect and so harmonized with the myth about powerful Innana. Myths are battlegrounds for clashing interpretations of the world[135]—and in this rivalry between two mythical traditions, the *ershema* chose the path of reconciliation.[136]

134 See Milstein, 2016, on the expansion of Ancient Near Eastern texts through "frontal additions."

135 C. Zgoll, 2019, 430; and 2020, 67–70.

136 In *Innana's Descent*, the *Erzählstoff* INNANA AND THE FIRST FLY retains no trace of Geshtin-ana, but she is not completely expunged from the myth: she appears at the end of the text, as Innana decides that Geshtin-ana and Dumuzi will take turns as captives in the netherworld. Nonetheless, her role has been drastically reduced.

7 *Ershema* no. 165: Comparative Analysis and Conclusions (Annika Cöster-Gilbert)

7.1 *Hylistic Approach no. 9: Comparative Analysis of the Mythical Narrative Materials about Innana and Geshtin-ana*

By applying the methods of hylistic analysis, we have shown that the narrative material is stratified, in that it combines one stratum about Innana with another about Geshtin-ana. As described above, these strata may be understood as two competing traditions that have been merged into a single variant of the narrative material. The narrative materials of the individual myths are here connected as strata, both in terms of their content on the level of the *Erzählstoff* and in terms of their diachronous textual levels.[137] On the content level, the goddesses clearly pursue the same goal with the same steely determination: to find Dumuzi and give him a proper burial, ensuring a safe passage for his spirit into the netherworld and a good place for him in the afterlife.

Looking at the two variants of the origin myth for burial rites as they manifest in separate texts, we note different emphases in them: while Innana's variant focuses on her leaving her temples and cities, Geshtin-ana's variant elaborates on her search and her lament. However, nothing indicates a preference for one over the other: the fact that the *Erzählstoff*-versions in both traditions follow a similar or parallel pattern is perhaps a good measure of their importance and presence in the imagination of the contemporary audience. Different emphases aside, the composite *Erzählstoff*-version implies a strong preexisting tradition about Geshtin-ana, which other *Erzählstoffe*-versions about Dumuzi's death readily attest to.[138] The tradition about Innana, by contrast, appears stronger than Geshtin-ana's at the beginning of the text. In the context of Dumuzi's death, the person lamenting the deceased is a female relative, such as a wife, sister, or mother (see for instance *Innana and Bilulu*, *Dumuzi's Dream*, and *ershema* no. 88). Whereas Mark Cohen interprets Geshtin-ana's offer as more alluring to the Fly, and Innana's behavior as leading to Dumuzi's capture by evil demons,[139] we offer a different reconstruction based on hylistic ana-

137 A power struggle between the two goddesses is taking place here, but not on the *Stoff* level: it is two versions of the *Stoff* that compete, not the goddesses themselves. See section 6.3 above.

138 Geshtin-ana is the protagonist who looks for Dumuzi in many of the *Erzählstoffe* reconstructed from *ershema's* in Cöster-Gilbert, forthcoming.

139 According to Cohen, 1981, 87, "the fact that the two women are competing … rather than cooperating, indicates that their motives were different." Cohen argues that, while Geshtin-ana wants to help her brother, Innana attempts to deliver him to the demons. However, there is no evidence for such evil intentions on Innana's part. In fact, our hyleme

lysis: the actions of both Geshtin-ana and Innana are deliberately structured to shape originally diverging traditions and narrative materials into a parallel pattern. Once differing ideas about the goddesses and their functions have thus been harmonized into one composite myth.

We can also observe a clear interhylistic relationship between the two variants. Any analysis of their underlying *Erzählstoff*-versions must treat them as separate entities, as they represent two variants of the same narrative material—with different protagonists, now joined together in a much larger composite *Erzählstoff*-version, a relatively frequent occurrence in Mesopotamian myths and their textual manifestations.[140] The composite myth as a whole can thus be described as stratified: it is composed of various (parts of) individual mythical *Erzählstoff*-versions. While the Innana variant is known from other texts and contexts (see section 4), the Geshtin-ana variant has to date only been reconstructed from this one *ershema*.

7.1.1 Mythical Narrative Materials in *ershema* no. 165

In section 5, I analyzed two textual manifestations of *ershema* no. 165, specifically the mythical narrative materials about the death of Dumuzi that it contains. I have shown how, by breaking down the narrative into its constituent hylemes, one can show that different texts contain versions of the same narrative material; and that one text can incorporate multiple mythical narrative materials, or in this case, versions of the same mythical narrative material. To summarize, *ershema* no. 165 contains parts of four different myths: three about Innana and Dumuzi (see section 6.2), and one about Geshtin-ana and Dumuzi (see section 5). The myth about the search and lament for the dead Dumuzi is presented in two extremely condensed versions, more condensed even than what we find in *Innana's Descent*. Both versions contain the same protagonists (the Fly, Innana, and Geshtin-ana), the same themes (the search for Dumuzi and the Fly's fate), and the same actions (see section 5.8) and thus the same ttppe parameters as time and place are identical as well (compare section 3.5). However, in the *ershema*, each *Erzählstoff*-version comprises no more than three or four lines, and it achieves the compromise through sev-

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analysis shows that the demons were already in possession of Dumuzi, and Innana is motivated by the desire to retrieve his body. Cohen's assumption is of course based on *Innana's Descent*, but as demonstrated above, the variant of the *Erzählstoff* in *ershema* no. 165 is not taken from the *Innana's Descent* tradition. It is two versions of the same *Erzählstoff* that are competing here—not the two women in the same *Stoff*.

140 See e.g. A. Zgoll, 2020, 83–159, for myths about *Innana's and Dumuzi's Descent*; and section 4 above.

eral significant omissions. Perhaps the most striking difference between the *ershema* and *Innana's Descent* is the *ershema*'s silence on the execution of the Fly's promise and reward.[141] Instead of an explicit narration, these hylemes are left implied: in fact, all textual versions omit the ending of the narrative material. Clearly, the rituals conducted by Innana and Geshtin-ana have a purpose, which is to ensure a good life for Dumuzi in the netherworld. To this end, they take care of his corpse and provide him with food and water.

7.1.2. Different Versions of the Same *Erzählstoff*-Version within a Single *ershema*

Hylistic analyses have shown us how to distinguish between variants of mythical narrative materials by using tools and methods of hyleme-based mythological studies. In conclusion, we have reconstructed two versions of the same mythical narrative material about finding the body of Dumuzi and providing for him in the netherworld, with two different protagonists, combined into one composite myth and its concrete textual manifestation. If our findings have taught us anything, it is that an attempt to "adapt" or "amend" mythical narrative materials according to one particular version that is deemed to be the "correct" or "original" form—in our case, *Innana's Descent*—not only compromises the narrative material, it also risks losing entire variants of a myth. Further, it ignores the human ingenuity that is evinced by the combination of two or more traditions—and, in some cases, by the rivalry between them. Indeed, mythical narrative materials about the death of Dumuzi appear to be a favorite battleground for rivalries among powerful goddesses (see section 6.3 above). On the surface, these composite myths tell us about the ancient Mesopotamian view of their relationship and roles in the context of Dumuzi's death; but implicitly, they depict female power struggles between sister and wife (as here and in *Innana and Bilulu*), or between mother and sister (as in the *Dream of Dumuzi* and *ershema* no. 88).[142]

7.1.3. Comparison of the Narrative Materials in the *ershema* and *Innana's Descent to the Netherworld*

Finally, the interhylistic comparison shows that Geshtin-ana does not appear in the corresponding passage from *Innana's Descent*. From the perspective of the narrative material as a whole, this is not surprising since *Innana's Descent* is about Innana and her heroic deeds. The *ershema*, by contrast, combines two

141 See the comparison of the long and short versions of *Innana's Descent* in section 4 above.

142 See C. Zgoll, 2019, 60 and 448–500, for myths as "battle grounds for competing world views."

traditions: while Innana's version is well known from *Innana's Descent*, we find that other versions of the same material with Geshtin-ana as the protagonist do exist. Crucially, both goddesses play a key role in bringing Dumuzi back to life and in securing a safe destiny for him. In the *ershema*, Innana is not responsible for Dumuzi's abduction to the netherworld; on the contrary, she mourns his death and actively searches for him. For us, this is a poignant reminder that *Innana's Descent* is not the measure (or indeed the origin) of all things, but a rich tapestry woven from many different and diverging narrative materials. It has been the aim of this presentation to offer new perspectives and pathways for scholars to explore the rich variety of narrative materials and their many different shapes.

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Appendix 1: The Long Version of the Fly's Passage in Innana's Descent (Ur-S and Ni-d) (Bénédicte Cuperly)

Lines	Transcription	Preliminary translation[143]
376/392	Ur-S: *traces* Ni-d: [m]u-lu-ĝu$_{10}$ ⌜me-am$_3$⌝ mu-un-KA-e[144]	[...] she (= Innana) kept *saying*: "Where is my man?"

143 The initial step is to prepare a "rough" working translation, which will then serve as the textual basis for all subsequent steps (philological treatment).

144 This form is problematic. Collations confirm that the sign is KA and not KA×X. If *marû*, the verbal basis should be e (*marû* of du$_{11}$). If *ḫamṭu*, there should not be an {e} at the end (=

(*cont.*)

Lines	Transcription	Preliminary translation
377/393	Ur-S: *traces* Ni-d: [mu-lu$_{\rightarrow 376}$-ĝ]u$_{10}$ me-am$_3$ mu-un⟨⟨-BI⟩⟩-ne-ᶠe¹[145]	[...] she kept *saying*: "Where is my [man]?"
378/394	Ur-S: [ ] ᶠmu¹-na-[ ] Ni-d: [nim-e$_{\rightarrow 378a}$] ᵈinnana-ra -- gu$_3$ mu-[ ]-de$_2$-e	[The Fly] spoke thus to Bright Innana:
378a/394a	Ur-S: Ø Ni-d: [ĝe$_{26}$-e$_{\rightarrow UN\text{-}y}$] ᶠnim-me¹-en ki lu$_2$-zu ⟨⟨NI⟩⟩ ba-ni-ᶠib¹-[(----)]-pa$_3$ a-na-am$_3$ niĝ$_2$-ba-ĝu$_{10}$-ᶠum¹	"[Me,] I am the Fly. (Suppose) the whereabouts (of) your man are revealed: what will be my (gift =) reward?"
379/395	Ur-S: [ ] ᶠx-am$_3$¹ [ ] Ni-d: [ĝe$_{26}$-e nim-me-en ki$_{\rightarrow 378a}$ lu]$_2$-zu ga-mu-ri-[pa$_3$ a$_{\rightarrow 378a}$]-na-am$_3$ niĝ$_2$-ba-ĝu$_{10}$-um	"[Me,] I am the Fly. I (want to =) may reveal to you the whereabouts (of) your man; what will be my (gift =) reward?"
380/396	Ur-S: [ ] mu-na-n[i-] Ni-d: [ku$_3$ ᵈinnana$_{\rightarrow 378}$]-ᶠke$_4$ nim¹-e mu-na-ni-ib-ge$_4$-ge$_4$	[Bright Innana] spoke thus to the Fly:
380a/396a	Ur-S: Ø Ni-d: [ki$_{\rightarrow 378a}$] ᶠmu-lu¹-ĝu$_{10}$ ba-ab-pa$_3$-de$_3$-en niĝ$_2$-ba a-ra-ba-e	"Were you to reveal [the whereabouts] (of) my man, I would grant you a gift!"
381/397	Ur-S: *traces* Ni-d: [ki mu-lu-ĝu$_{10}$$_{\rightarrow 378a}$] ba-ab-pa$_3$-de$_3$-en niĝ$_2$-ba a-ra-ba-e	"Were you to reveal [the whereabouts (of) my man], I would grant you a gift!"
382/398	Ur-S: *traces* Ni-d: [ ] ᶠki?-ni¹ mu-un-dul-dul-ᶠle¹	[...] it (= the Fly) began to swarm over his *whereabouts*.
383/399	Ur-S: nim-e ᶠku$_3$ ᵈinnana-ra¹ [ ]ᶠx¹[ ] Ni-d: [ ]-ra? im-ma-an-[ ]	As the Fly [...] it to (or: for) Bright Innana,
384/400	Ur-S: ki-sikil ᵈinnana¹-ke$_4$ n[im?]-ᶠx¹ [(x)] ᶠx¹ [mu]-ni-[x]-ᶠtar¹-r[e] Ni-d: [ni]m-e -- nam mu-ni-i[b$_2$-]	Maiden Innana decided a fate for the Fly:

marû subject marker). Philological difficulties aside, we should be able to reconstruct the subsequent hyleme from the fact that the character's speech is *not* reported. The hyleme must therefore be: NN speaks. (NN = *nomen nescio* = placeholder when the character is not explicitely named).

145 Compare line 378a for another supernumerary sign in Ni-d.

(*cont.*)

Lines	Transcription	Preliminary translation
385/401	Ur-S: e_2 kaš-⌜a-ka⌝ zabar(UD.KA.BAR) x ⌜x⌝-a-ke_4 ⌜ḫu-mu⌝-r[a?-]-a-ze_2-e[n] Ni-d: [ ] ⌜x saĝ⌝ e_2-an-na-⌜x⌝-[ ]	"You (pl.) shall [...] in the Alehouse, near the goblets of NN,
386/402	Ur-S: ⌜du_5-mu⌝ [lu_2] ⌜ku_3-zu⌝-ke_4-⌜ne⌝-gen_7 nam [ ] --- ⌜x⌝ Ni-d: [du_5-mu] ⌜lu_2 ku_3⌝-zu-ke_4-ne-ne-da [ ]	(and) [...] among (or: like) the Children of the Wise!"
387/403	Ur-S: ⌜i_3⌝-[ne-$še_3$ na]m tar-ra ^{d}innana-ke_4 ur_5 ⌜ḫe_2⌝-e[n-na]-⌜nam⌝-[ma-am_3] Ni-d: *traces*	And now, verily, concerning the fate decreed by Innana, it is truly so.

Appendix 2: The Short Version of the Fly's Passage in *Innana's Descent* (UN-y) (Bénédicte Cuperly)

Lines	Collated Sumerian	Preliminary translation
376/392	UR-e lu_2-ĝu_{10} me[146] dub-saĝ-e	At the bottom,? (she asked) the first one?:[147] "Where (is) my man?"
377/393	BAD lu_2-ĝu_{10} me su-su-be_2	At the summit,? (she asked) the most distant one?:[148] "Where (is) my man?"

146 Attinger, 2016 specifies in a comment to lines 372–373/390–391 that me does not mean "where" but, among other things, "I" in *emesal*. Indeed, "where" is normally rendered by me-a or me-am_3. However, it can be argued that me does stand for me-am_3 in this case. UN-y uses many non-standard writings, and both lines come directly before the appearance of the Fly, as they do in the longer version. Both contain the same direct speech: "my man". Also, note that UN-y consistently uses *emegir* for Innana's direct speech (compare e.g. line 386: dumu lu_2 ku_3-zu instead of du_5-mu mu-lu ku_3-zu).

For the justification of the translation, compare Attinger, 2016, fn. 515. Similar lines are found in *Innana and Shukaleduda*, lines 11–12: Innana stands with one numinous animal at the foot of the *kur*, with another one at the summit, and perfects the *me* (i.e., the Instruments of Power, compare A. Zgoll, 2020, 119–121). Could UN-y allude to such a precise cosmic location? Alternatively, it could mean that Innana asks everyone, from the nearest person to the most distant one, she seeks "high and low".

147 Compare comment to line 377 below.

148 su can be a non-standard writing for sud, "to be distant" (see for example line 500

(*cont.*)

Lines	Collated Sumerian	Preliminary translation
378/394	nam[149] ku_3 ^{d}innana-ra gu_3 mu-un-na-de_2-e	The Fly spoke thus to Bright Innana:
379/395	$ĝe_{26}$-e ⌜nam⌝ ki lu_2 ma-ra-pa_3-de_2 a-na-am_3 mu-un-dim_2	"Me, I (am) the Fly! (If) I reveal to you the whereabouts (of) the man, what will be done then?"
380/396	ku_3 ^{d}innana-ke_4!(RA) nam mu-un-na-ni-ib_2-ge_4-ge_4	Bright Innana answered the Fly thus:
385/401	e_2-kaš zabar edin-na-ka-ta mu-un-/tuš[150]	"They (= the Flies) will dwell in the Ale-house, together with the goblets of the ones of the steppe,
386/402	u_4 ab-dirig-ge dumu lu_2-⌜ku_3⌝-zu-ka mu-til	and they will live a long life[151] among the Children of the Wise."
387'/Ø	nam ki lu_2 ma-ra-pa_3-de_3	The Fly revealed![152] to her![153] the whereabouts (of) the man.

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of *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*: du_{11}-ga-ni [maḫ]-am_3 $ša_3$-bi su-su-a-am_3, "His speech was outstanding, its contents (very distant/long =) extensive"). UN-y uses many non-standard writings (compare nam for nim). Like UR-e and BAD, dub-saĝ-e and su-su-be_2 (= su-su + deictic {bi} + directive) could form a pair of antonyms (the first one vs. the most remote one, e.g. in a queue), which is expected in such a couplet of lines with a fixed core (lu_2-$ĝu_{10}$ me).

149 This duplicate writes nam instead of nim (compare line 246/255).

150 Inserted in the following line.

151 Literally: "They will live towards days that will have been made numerous."

152 Contamination through line 379.

153 Contamination through line 379.

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