



1-1-2006

# Tašnintu II, 'Repetition, Teaching'?

Alan Lenzi

University of the Pacific, [alenzi@pacific.edu](mailto:alenzi@pacific.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/cop-facarticles>

 Part of the [History of Religion Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Lenzi, A. (2006). Tašnintu II, 'Repetition, Teaching'?. *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*, 2006(1), 28–29.  
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/cop-facarticles/181>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Faculty Scholarship at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of the Pacific Faculty Articles by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [mgibney@pacific.edu](mailto:mgibney@pacific.edu).

31) *Tašnintu* II, « Repetition, Teaching »? – *Tašnintu*, according to *AHw*, means “Kampf.” The word occurs primarily in omen literature, ranging chronologically from OB to LB texts, with only a few instances in Assyrian royal inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> In all but one of the listed attestations in *AHw*, “Kampf” or the like seems an appropriate semantic equivalent for *tašnintu*. The exception is the attestation listed as BiOr 14, 190.<sup>2</sup> Von Soden included this attestation under his category 1) “in Omina.” But K.11097, the fullest context treated in *BiOr* 14 (1957), 190f. that attests *tašnintu*, does not contain omens strictly speaking; rather, the text concerns calculations related to divination.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the immediate context in which *tašnintu* occurs is concerned with intergenerational transmission of something, probably divinatory lore (see below). For these reasons, the use of *tašnintu* is not at all clear, as Borger has indicated: “Was mit ‘Streit der Gelehrten’ gemeint sein könnte, ist mir nicht recht klar.” His own attempt at achieving an understanding was: “etwa ‘Wetteifer’ > ‘durch Wetteifer erfolgte besondere Leistung’?” (191).<sup>4</sup> Without excluding this possibility, I would like to offer an alternative interpretation: I suggest that there may exist a *tašnintu* in Akkadian that has the meaning “repetition, teaching” (from an unattested Akkadian root \**šunnunu*). The evidence for this homonym is by no means compelling. This note is simply intended to offer a *possibility* for understanding an otherwise hopeless context.

First I offer some philological justification. There are geminate roots in the cognate languages, *šnn* in Biblical Hebrew and *tnn* in Ugaritic, that mean “to repeat” (a by-form of *š/tny*). See, e.g., Ugaritic *tnnth*, “she did it a second time”, in *CAT* 1.16 v 8<sup>5</sup> and the Biblical Hebrew verb *תִּנְנָתָם* (*w<sup>e</sup>šinnantām*), “you will repeat them”, in Deut 6:7.<sup>6</sup> As the Biblical Hebrew clearly shows, this root occurs in the D stem, the same stem from which the Akkadian taprist- nominal formation derives (see GAG §56 1). Admittedly, the evidence is slim, but it may be just enough to conjecture an unattested Akkadian root \**šunnunu*, “to repeat”, which, like the situation in Hebrew and Ugaritic, would be a by-form of the attested Akkadian root *šanû* III (Ug *t* = BH *š* Akk *š*).<sup>7</sup> From this geminate root, I suggest, may have derived the Akkadian noun *tašnintu* meaning “repetition.” Analogical support for the development of this nominal form may be found in two other Akkadian words *tašnû* and *tašnitû*, tapris- and taprist- nominal formations of *šanû* III.

A *tašnintu* meaning “repetition” provides a reasonable meaning for the context of K.11097: 1-3. The text reads:<sup>8</sup> 1. [*šumma* DU]B ḪA.LA *niširti bārūt[i pirišti šamê u eršetim]* 2. *taš-nin-tum ummâni ša bār [û ... 3. abu ana mārīšu ša irammu inaššaru ... [...*, “*Šumma* DUB ḪA.LA, secret of divination, secret of heaven and earth, the *repetition* of the scholar, which the diviner... the father to his son whom he loves (and) protects...” The context probably pertains to the transmission of scholarly lore from father to son.<sup>9</sup> “Repetition” would thus be best understood as “teaching”. Again, note in this regard the similar Deut 6:7, *תִּנְנָתָם לְבָנֶיךָ* (*w<sup>e</sup>šinnantām l<sup>e</sup> bānêkā*, “you will repeat them to your sons”) and its general context. The pedagogical function of “repeating” in Deut 6:7 is made explicit by the fact that a form of the root *למד* (*lmd*), “to teach” (D stem), stands in the place of *תִּנְנָתָם* (*w<sup>e</sup>šinnantām*) in the similar construction at Deut 11:19.<sup>10</sup> Given these two contexts and general pedagogical experience, it is not at all a stretch, in my opinion, to understand *tašnintu*, “repetition”, as also indicating “teaching”.

Although “rivalry” > “attainment” cannot be entirely excluded especially given the difficult context of K.11097: 1-3 and the sociology of scholarship displayed in the SAA 10 correspondence, I think a *tašnintu* II, “repetition, teaching”, is a philological possibility and provides a contextually appropriate understanding of the word. But the evidence is indeed slight. And therefore a question mark must remain on this suggestion for the time being.

1. See the attestations listed in *AHw*, 1339.
2. See Rykle Borger, “niširti bārūti, Geheimlehre der Haruspizin (Zu Neugebauer-Sachs, MCT, V und W, und einigen verwandten Texten)”, *BiOr* 14 (1957), 190-195.
3. The original edition of the text may be found in O. Neugebauer and A. Sachs, *Mathematical Cuneiform Texts* (New Haven: American Oriental Society and American Schools of Oriental Research, 1945), Text V: transliteration and treatment, 139-140; copy: plate 19, but it must be used in conjunction with the important insights from Borger’s treatment in *BiOr* 14 (1957), 190f. For a recent characterization of the DUB ḪA.LA texts, see Ulla Koch-Westenholz, *Babylonian Liver Omens: The Chapters Manzāzu, Padānu and Pān Takalti of the Babylonian Extispicy Series Mainly from Aššurbanipal’s Library* [CNI Publications 25. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2000], 21, n. 50 and her more recent and extensive work in Ulla Susanne Koch, *Secrets of Extispicy: The Chapter Multabiltu of the Babylonian Extispicy Series and Niširti bārūti Texts Mainly from Aššurbanipal’s Library* (AOAT 326; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2005).
4. Professor Borger pointed out to me in a personal communication (May 5, 2004) that A. Leo Oppenheim suggested “examinations, quite possibly competitive” (see *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, revised by Erica Reiner [Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977], 82).
5. I read here with John Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [Edinburgh, 1977], 99 and 160. Unfortunately, the word is in a broken context. The identification and meaning of the root, however, is secured via the context. Note especially the verb in the next line: *līth*: “she did it at a third time.”
6. As is well-known, this verb has presented great difficulty. I follow the most recent lexicon, Koehler-Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1606-07 for its derivation and meaning: this is accepted by, e.g., the English NRSV translation and the recent commentator J. Tigay – among many others – in his *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 78 and n. 25 at 358-359 (with references). The older, less tenable view derived the verb from the root *šnn* (“to be sharp” (see *BDB*, 1042).
7. I owe the recognition of the root by-form parallel to Dr. Blane Conklin.
8. Borger appealed to the catchline in CT 31 33: 38 as the basis for restoring the first line of K.11097 (*BiOr* 14 [1957], 190). See now, however, the duplicate K.6055: 1-2 [unpublished], noted by Borger, *RLA* 3 (1957-71), 190 and W. G. Lambert, “The Qualifications of Babylonian Diviners,” in *Festschrift für Rykle Borger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Mai 1994*: Tikip santakki mala bašmu..., edited by Stefan M. Maul (CM 10; Groningen: Styx Publications, 1998), 143.
9. See several other collected examples of this procedure in *BiOr* 14 (1957), 191 and Lambert, *Borger Festschrift*, 143.
10. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 78.

Alan LENZI (16-01-2006)  
Washington University in SAINT-LOUIS, (U.S.A.)

[*Des erreurs s'étant glissées dans l'impression de la note publiée dans N.A.B.U. N° 4, 2005, une nouvelle édition en est présentée ici.*]