

# LINES GLEANED FROM THE Å Å€̃.ZI.GA

Contributed by J. J. Phillips

LINES GLEANED FROM THE Å Å€̃.ZI.GA  
 Å Å Å Å (Remembering disjecta membra)  
 by J.J. Phillips

I

[x x x (x)]  
 [x x x (x)] x la

traces  
 (rest destroyed)

II

traces  
 traces

INIM.INIM.MA Å Å€̃.ZI.GA

Bright Pleiades  
 Stars of early morning  
 Stationed in the heavens.

Let the wind blow  
 Let the groves quake  
 Let the clouds gather  
 Let the moisture fall.

Palm tree!Å Palm tree!  
 Bright sheen!Å Bright sheen!  
 Fig tree laden with attractiveness!

Gate of silver  
 Gate of gold.

I am washed  
 I am anointed  
 My face bedewed.

My body purified like lapis lazuli  
 My features bright like alabaster  
 Like shining silver and reddish gold.

Look, come close  
 Do not hold back  
 Wild assâ€šionager!

I am endowed with love  
 I sit in a net of lovemaking  
 May I not miss my quarry.

Let them put favor of heart  
 Into your heart.

i-sal-luma Å Å€̃.ZI.GA

Do for me what Ishtar did for Dumuzi  
 What Nanya did for her lover.

Let us lie down by night  
 Let us copulate and copulate  
 At the command of wise Ishtar.

III

traces  
traces

Silver bead  
Gold bead  
Dewclaw of a stag  
Put them into a leather bag.

Pluck the wool from a sheep's forehead  
Tie a wild buck to your bed.

UG.GAÂ UG.GA

Get an erection!  
Get an erection!  
Get an erection like a wild bull!

UG.GAÂ UG.GA  
ti-ba [ti-ba]

Make love to me like a wild bull fifty times  
Make love to me like a pig fourteen times  
Like a mountain goat six[ty] times.

UG.GAÂ UG.GA

By means of the plants of the mountain  
And the plants of the deep  
Let your limbs rise.

Stag! Stag!  
Let your heart rise  
Let your strength rise.

UG.GAÂ UG.GA  
ti-ba [ti-ba]

May your penis become long as a ma-ga-u weapon  
May your penis be taut as a harp-string  
May your penis be a stick of martu-wood.

May the arrow find its mark  
May the bow not become slack  
May the quiver not become empty.

UG.GAÂ UG.GA

Make love to me with the lovemaking of a partridge  
Make love to me with the lovemaking of a wolf.

Let us lie down by night  
Let us copulate and copulate  
At the command of wise Ishtar.

UG.GAÂ UG.GA  
Â€Zi.GA

Note: The Â€Zi.GA: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations, [compiled and translated] by Robert D. Biggs (J.J.)

Augustin Publisher, Locust Valley, NY, 1967) is, as its subtitle states, a collection of incantations to restore male potency. Then, as now, the problem of erectile dysfunction was of seminal importance.

Scholars and purists will no doubt object to my shameless appropriation of these ancient texts. However, their very antiquity, obscurity and mystery, the fragmentary nature of the incantations and rituals, and their linguistic indeterminacy (including the lacunae, the Sumerian-Akkadian bilinguality, abracadabra, and Biggs's textual reconstructions), make the *À Æ.ZI.GA* ideal for engaging in this kind of postmodern poetic play. Furthermore, the *À Æ.ZI.GA* is a compilation of spells and related material, as opposed to a narrative or other corpus in which the whole depends on its parts and the parts on the whole. This again lends itself to play in which I can dismember and remember, decontextualize and recontextualize lines of text to suit my particular sensibilities of the moment. Indeed, anybody can go to the *À Æ.ZI.GA*, engage in this kind of jouissance and make his or own poem from what is there; and in the process one would hope be drawn to investigate and thus remember ancient Mesopotamian civilization.

The incantations contain stunning imagery, and to the modern eye many utterances are highly allusive. Others are unequivocally literal and direct – exhorting the penis to rise, commands to tie (sexually excited) animals to the bed in order to become stimulated. (I have been assured by the Sumeriologist Anne Kilmer that this latter activity was indeed practiced). The juxtaposition of these disparate modes of expression coupled with the broken texts and the fact that in today's world some of the utterances evoke puerile chortling and even sometimes cause one to recoil, produces a kind of *cognitus interruptus*, which continually complicates, confounds, displaces, derails, and obliterates one's expectations at every level of comprehension. Nonetheless, these incantations are frequently breathtaking in their beauty and expression of carnal desire. They speak across millennia, culture, language, and gender with an immediacy that brings a visceral shudder of recognition and connection.

*À Æ.ZI.GA* = "œrising of the heart" = sexual potency  
 INIM.INIM MA *À Æ.ZI.GA* = "œincantation for potency"  
 UG.GA = "œget excited"  
 ti-ba = "œget an erection"