Tammuz

I. Introduction. *Mesopotamian god,* →DDD. T., the Hebrew rendering of the Sumerian DN Dumuzi, is mentioned in the Bible only in Ezek 8:14, bewailed by women in the temple of Jerusalem shortly before its destruction in 587/586. Some biblical texts (e.g. Isa 17:10; Zech 12:11; Dan 11:37) are considered by some to refer to the cult of T.

"Although the god did not belong to the leading deities in any period of Mesopotamian history, Dumuzi has played a major role in discussions of ancient Near Eastern religion" (ALSTER 1999: 828; see also PISI 2001: 35). For some scholars, e.g., MOORTGAT or JACOBSEN, T. has even become the main representative of Sumerian religion. T. has been associated with such controversial concepts as "sacred marriage," "dying and rising god," or "vegetation deity."

In Mesopotamia T. frequently appears in liturgical and mythological texts (but also in other literary forms) dated to Old Babylonian (c. 1850-1600) and earlier times "as the shepherd and as a manifestation of all aspects of the life of the herdsmen" (ALSTER 1999: 828) and particularly as consort of Inanna (→Ishtar) and as a character who dies an untimely death and is ritually lamented (see ALSTER 1999: 831-833; HEIMPEL 1997: 542f, 547-549, 560f; see the sources in JACOBSEN 1987: 1-84; FRITZ 2003: 55-248). In the 1st mill. T. is less frequently attested than in Early Dynastic to Old Babylonian periods and appears mostly in magical contexts. His ritual is celebrated in different places and a month is named after him (see FRITZ 2003: 339-341).

Isolated references from Ebla (lexical list; see KREBERNIK 2003: 153) and Ugarit (god-list; see NOUGAYROL et al. 1968: 212; FRITZ 2003: 59) show that T. was known in Syria and the Levant. However, traces of an early knowledge of T. in the West (see ACKERMAN 1992: 82-84) are uncertain.

II. Iconic representations. No iconic representations from Mesopotamia can be attributed to T. (see GREEN 1995: 1844, 1846; BLACK/GREEN 1998: 73; ZIMMERN 1909: 701, 737, n. 1). However, temple cults for T. are attested in earlier times, and sources refer to cult statues of T. A text from Old Babylonian Mari attests the cleansing (translation uncertain) of the statues of Ishtar and Dumuzi (DOSSIN 1975: 27f, no. 4; see COHEN 1993: 289; FRITZ 2003: 235). A Dumuzi ritual is mentioned in 1st mill. ritual texts from Assur, Kalhu, Nineveh, and Arbela. COHEN (1993: 316f) understands the expression *taklimtu* in this ritual as display of the god's statue (see also PISI 2001: 50), whereas FRITZ 2003: 347, n. 1498 interprets this as display of burial objects (see SCURLOCK 1991). According to a New Babylonian ritual text from Uruk a figurine of Dumuzi was cast down outside the temple and symbolically revived (FALKENSTEIN 1931: no. 51, lines 28-31; see COHEN 1993: 318; FRITZ 2003: 237f). A Dumuzi figurine was also used in a healing ritual (FARBER 1977; SCHWEMER 2007: 215-217).

The only known image of T. identified by inscription is a Roman period tessera from Palmyra that represents a mummy-like body outstretched on a bed with the caption *tmwz'* (see INGHOLT et al. 1955: no. 342; SERVAIS-SOYEZ 1981: no. 42).

III. Identifications proposed. Many propositions have been made to identify T. iconographically, e.g., a child on the knees of a goddess (VANDERBURGH 1911: 319 referring to MENANT 1888, pl. 9:83; see BAUDISSIN 1912: 187, n. 1), animal combat scenes (HEIDENREICH 1925; see KEEL 1992: 14-16), or the naked hero with long spikes of hair (FRANKFORT 1939: 59, pl. XII c; LAMBERT 1997: 4, fig. 8; see GREEN 1997: 574). MOORTGAT'S monography of 1949, which was heavily criticized (see KRAUS 1953), was the peak of a "T. iconography" that identified numerous "timeless" motifs of Mesopotamian iconography (i.e., the tree flanked by animals, the hero fighting wild animals, banquet scenes) as illustrations of the Sumerian myth of Inanna and Dumuzi. An example of the arbitrariness of MOORTGAT'S urge to explain all motifs as iconography of T. may be his fig. 46 with a "nicht leicht deutbaren Tammuz-Paar, das mit je einem Dolch in der Hand, sich gegenseitig zu töten versucht" (1949: 86). More recent proposals for a visual identification of T. include the Uruk vase as representing the *hieros gamos* of Inanna and Dumuzi (JACOBSEN 1976: 24, 26; see ALSTER 1999: 830; PISI 2001: 39; for further proposals on *hieros gamos* scenes see HERLES 2006: 124, 209), or the depiction of a god in fetters on a 3rd mill. cylinder seal (COLLON 1987: no. 838; see GREEN 1997: 578). WIGGERMANN (2010: 332-341) identified T. with "the god with the whip" on Akkadian and Neo-Sumerian seals and on Old Babylonian terracotta plaques. On the latter he is sometimes depicted together with a goddess.

AMIRAN opted for a veneration of T. in Palestine in early times. She identified a scene with two "matchstick-figures" on a stela from Early Bronze Age (3000-2700) Arad with "Dumuzi-of-the-Grain" (AMIRAN

1972a; see AMIRAN/ILAN 1993: 82; AMIRAN/ILAN 1996: 36, 142; SCHROER/ KEEL 2005: no. 208) and the Early Bronze Age temple in Ai as a temple of Bilulu and Dumuzi (AMIRAN 1972b). However, these hypotheses are very uncertain (see METTINGER 2001: 205).

IV. Conclusions. According to the mythological material relating to T. several iconographical phenotypes of T. are imaginable: love scenes (see GREEN 1995: 1844; 1997: 579), a shepherd, a ruler, a dying or dead youth, or a god of the netherworld (→God in sarcophagus, →Nergal). Possible interactions with representations of dying (and rising) gods in the West (→Adon, Ugaritic →Baal, →Melqart [§ II.1.A.2.3]) require further study (see METTINGER 2001: 205-214).

In 1st mill. Palestine the mention of T. in Ezek 8:14 (with no hint of an iconographic representation) is isolated, unless it is to be understood as the imaginary transfer of Babylonian cults to Jerusalem by the prophet, or as an *Interpretatio Babylonica* of some unidentified West Semitic cult.

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