

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NAMES OF THE STATUES OF GUDEA¹

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The paper aims at presenting the topics related to the naming of the Gudea Statues. Beyond the religious meaning of the names given in the texts, in fact, the proposal is put forward that they can be used as a sort of guide fossil in order to find out a possible chronological grid for the making of the statues themselves and implicitly of the reign of Gudea.

Keywords: statue; Gudea of Lagaš; naming in Sumer; Mesopotamia; Mesopotamian Religion

1. NAMING THE WORLD

It is a well-known fact that the Sumerians, and through them the Mesopotamian culture in general, were prey to a sort of *cupiditas*, or *furor*, *nominandi*, the need, that is, to give an identifying and unique (unequivocal) name to the realities that surrounded them, be they natural or cultural. Indeed, the name represented the substance of the reality it identified,² and the ontological relationship between *res* and *nomen* has been one of the main concerns of the Mesopotamian written tradition during the entire its history, which strove to highlight, often in a very ideologically sophisticated way, this unit, given for granted and axiomatic.³

This does not apply only, of course, to anthroponomy, for which we can recall here the oldest and most famous example of the name(s) of the sovereign E'anatum, as attested in the *Stele of the Vultures* in the 26th century BC,⁴ but holds true also, and to a certain extent especially, for the aspects concerning the creation or production of objects of the most varied

¹ This text represents a slightly revised version of the first part of the paper read at the Congress of which this volume collects the contributions, added of bibliographical references. I decided to maintain its original "conference" tone for a wider than only assyriological public.

² For the general aspects of naming (esp. personal names) see Radner 2005, 15ff.

³ The school texts, mainly the lists, omen texts and the related late commentaries are good and famous examples of this attitude; the immanence of the Gods made the evidence in the world the privileged way in which man, whose duty on earth was to interpret their will written in the appearance of the world itself, could interact with them and know the right way to behave not running into error - see in general, for the theoretical aspects, D'Agostino 2020, 153-157 (also for a Sumerian origin of this attitude). We ignore here the political use of "giving a name", which is in our opinion in any case always secondary to other, more religious or epistemological aspects. On the various aspects of "giving a name" in Sumer-Akkadian tradition see Edzard 1998.

⁴ In the *Stele of the Vultures*, col. IV, 18-23, one finds a sort of 'religious explanation', if not an etymology, of the name of the king of Lagaš: ^dInana-ke₄ / da mu-ni-dab / E₂-an-na-^dInana-/Ib-gal-ka-ka a-tum₂ / mu mu-ni-sa₄, "Inana stood at his side and gave him the name: 'The one chosen (lit. brought) into the E'ana of Inana of the Ibgal'" - to be noted that this long version of the name is never used to refer directly to E'anatum in other contexts, see comments and bibliography in Frayne 1998, 126. In the same text it is recorded the *battle*-name of the king: *Stele of the Vultures*, col. V, 9-19: u₄-ba / E₂-an-na-tum₂-ma / E₂-an-na-tum₂ / mu-u₂-rum-m[a]-ni / mu-ĜIR₃.ĜIR₃-ni / L[U]M-ma-a / ^dNin-ĝ[ir₂]-su₂-[r]a / a-gibil / mu-na-dun / LUM-ma-ĝin₇-du₁₀ / mu mu-na-sa₄, "In that very day E'anatum, whose personal name is E'anatum (but) whose battle²-name is 'He is a ...!', dug a new canal for the god Ningirsu and for him (= Ningirsu) gave it the name: '(Its water) is sweet like ...'"; see for the different interpretations of the passage Steible 1982, 149f; Marchesi 2006, 120ff (with bibliography); Frayne 1998, 148.

characteristics: temples and buildings of all nature,⁵ canals and fields,⁶ Gods' weapons and belongings⁷ and temple furnishings,⁸ more rarely even animals,⁹ were identified with a name that defined their essence not only through a semantic and denominative value, but at the same time highlighting its inner and unique ideological, political and religious aspects.¹⁰

Obviously, statues were no exception to this strict rule and had their specific names.

2. NAMES OF THE STATUES: THE CASE OF GUDEA OF LAGAŠ

The statue of a ruler, always dedicated to a specific deity, was placed in a temple, or a chapel inside it, to stand or sit in front of the god(dess) to whom it was dedicated:¹¹ the name that was given to it, which expresses in general the benevolence of the divinity towards the offerer, or a blessing¹² (see below), fulfills two main functions. The main purpose is to make the statue ritually "alive", because naming is a form, or part, of creation (literally: the Sumerian verb used for forging statue is 'du₂.d', the same verb meaning also "to give birth, to generate");¹³ the second one is to recall the offerer's act of devotion and serves to ingratiate the devotee with the divinity.¹⁴ Behind this attitude must be sought a commercial relationship between god and man: just as the god responds to man's request in the mantic practice through an offering, in the same way the reaction to an important offer such as a statue must

⁵ See *ex.g.* a list of all known temple names in George 1993 and the name of the wall against the West of the 4th year of reign of Šu-Sin, the 4th king of Ur III: mu^dŠu-^dEN.ZU lugal Uri^{ki}-ma-ke₄ bad₃ Mar-tu *mu-ri-iq ti-id-ni-im* mu-du₃, "Year (when) Šu-Sin, the king of Ur, built the wall against the West (whose name is) 'The one that keeps the Syrian tribes away!'", see Michalowski 2013, 646f; Edzard 1998, 116 *ad* §12.3, and for the Babylonian-Assyrian tradition Cancik-Kirschbaum 2013a, 79f *ad* §4; for the names of the city-gates see Cancik-Kirschbaum 2013b, 86f *ad* §3.

⁶ Edzard 1998, 102 *ad* §12ff and 116 *ad* §12.4; we note incidentally that E'anatum, in the passage cited in footnote 4 above (*Stele of the Vultures*, col. V, 9-19), is giving a name to a new canal.

⁷ See in general Pongratz-Leisten 2013, 107f *ad* §4; Alivernini - Grotti 2013; for the famous names of the clothes of Inana see Verderame 2009.

⁸ See *ex.g.* the inscription on a cup in Gudea 69, 2'-5': REC 477.LA₂-ba / diġir arhuš-su₃-ġu₁₀ / ki-ša-ra ba-an-zige / mu-bi, "The name of this cup is: 'My deeply compassionate goddess (= Ninizimu'a) chose me from afar (lit. let me stand up [among all other men] just seeing me from the horizon)", Edzard 1997, 160; also Edzard 1998, 101 *ad* §9 for other references.

⁹ See Frayne 1997, 373f *ad* Ibbi-Sîn 4, an Old Babylonian copy on tablet of a dedication to the god Nanna of a statuette of an North-West Indian (Meluhha) "speckled" dog (leopard?) that was brought to Ur as a tribute from Marhaši, whose name is "It will [ca]tch (everything)!" (l. 17: he₂-[d]ab₅); in general, see also Lion 1996, where Old Babylonian names of cattle are collected (and the note of Farber 1982).

¹⁰ See in general, for the Sumerian tradition, Edzard 1998, 100ff *ad* §7.

¹¹ A clear statement of what is to be expected by a statue put in front of a god is to be found *ex.g.* in Namhani 6 (Edzard 1997, 193f, with bibliography), II, 2-6: ^dLama TAR-sir₂-sir₂-ra / kisal ^dBa-u₂-ka ku₄-ku₄-da-ni / alan-e nin-ġu₁₀ / ġeštug₂-ga-ni-a mu-na-ni-ru-gu₂ / sizkur₂-ġu₁₀ he₂-na-be₂, "(Nininiġina dedicated a statuette to the goddess Ba'u saying:) 'When the protective Spirit (= Ba'u) of TARSirir enters the courtyard of Ba'u, this statue will remember me to my Lady: may it (= the statue) intone my prayer for her (= Ba'u) on my behalf'", translation in part according to Sallaberger 1993, 41, fn. 176. For the distinction between dedicatory statues in temples and (elusive) funerary statues see Braun-Holzinger 2007, 45f and Suter 2012, 67f.

¹² On the formation and redaction of these blessings see the interesting remarks in Zólyomy 2019 (we wonder whether we can hypothesize on this base that the names - blessings on the statue could also *de facto* represent abridged forms of longer denominations).

¹³ See Radner 2005, 60f, but Suter 2012, 68 (Suter 2012, 64 for the ritual of the opening of the mouth of the statue, with bibliography).

¹⁴ It is worth stressing that the gesture of the clasped hands could not necessarily be that of a praying, see Suter 2000, 60f and fn. 62.

be commensurate.¹⁵ In any case, before reaching their final position the statues underwent a ritual that allowed them to be suitable for cultic purposes, especially in order to be a mediator between men and gods.¹⁶

The oldest name of a statue probably belongs to the ruler Enmetena of Lagaš, where the blessing is “Enmetena (is) beloved of Enlil”,¹⁷ but undoubtedly the most striking example of naming statues is represented by the famous 24 images of Gudea of Lagaš,¹⁸ in the 22nd century BC, many of which have a specific name that identifies them.¹⁹

In the following chart are collected the passages of the statues where a name is recorded:²⁰

	Siglum	God(dess)	Text
1	St. A (standing diorite ²¹)	Ninhursaĝ (as Nintu in the name)	III, 4-IV, 2: nin an-ki-a nam-tar-re-de ₃ / ^d Nin-tu / ama-diĝir-re-ne-ke ₄ / Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a // lu ₂ e ₂ -du ₃ -a-ka / nam-ti-la-ni mu-su ₃ , “The Lady who decides destiny in the sky and on earth, Nintu, the mother of all the gods, has made long the life of Gudea, the builder of the temple (Eninnu)” ²²
2	St. B (sitting diorite)	Ninĝirsu	VII, 14-17: lugal-ĝu ₁₀ / e ₂ -a-ni / mu-na-du ₂ / nam-ti niĝ ₂ -ba-ĝu ₁₀ , “To my master I built his temple: a (long) life (is / will be) my gift!” ²³
3	St. C (standing)	Inana ²⁴	III, 18-IV, 1: Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a / lu ₂ e ₂ -du ₃ -a-ka // nam-ti-la-ni he ₂ -su ₃ , “May the life of Gudea, the builder of the temple (Eninnu), be long!”

¹⁵ In this way can be understood the mention of the provenance of the diorite from the distant place of Magan used to fashion the statue: it is a way to stress the great effort of the offeror to accomplish the pious task (but see Steible 1994 and below). Other hypotheses have been made, see Edzard 1998, 100 *ad* §7.

¹⁶ See in general Winter 1992 and Suter 2012, 63f (with bibliography).

¹⁷ Enmetena 17, col. III, 11: En-me:te-na ^dEn-lil₂-le ki-aĝ₂ (Frayne 1998, 221); simple as it may appear, the name has a very clear political meaning, given the importance of the head of the pantheon Enlil, and consequently of its abode Ekur in Nippur, as centre of the consecration of power in the Early Dynastic cities; the same laconic but meaningful content is to be found in the brick inscription attributed to Lugal-anda, himself a sovereign of Lagaš, where the following name to a stele is given: ^dNin-ĝir₂-su en Nibru^{ki}-ta u₄-su₃-še₃ mah, “Ninĝirsu (*i.e.* Lagaš) is the lord exalted in Nippur for eternity!”, Lugal-anda 2, col. II, 6’, for which see Frayne 1998, 242f and Edzard 1998, 100.

¹⁸ Statues have the *siglum* from A to AA, of which the ones bearing a name are A, C-I, K, M-R, see Edzard 1998, 100f (on the ‘special’ status of Statue L, a *kudurru*, and Statue R, a gift for Namhani, see Steible 1994, 82ff) - Statue P is a fake, Steible 1994, 96f; for the question of the authenticity of the statues see Johansen 1978 and Suter 2012, and for a formal analysis Colbow 1987, Braun-Holzinger 1991 and Winter 1989, 574ff; for the name of the statues of Gudea see Suter 2000, 148ff and below.

¹⁹ We can recall here the words of Winter 1989, 575, who synthesizes in the following way the formal characteristic of the statue as highlighted in the scholarly literature: “Virtually universal are references to the basically cylindrical form maintained in the block ...; the sense of overall mass; the muscular arms; the clasped and therefore immobilized hands, associated with an attitude of pious concentration; the enlarged eyes, recognized as part of a continuing Mesopotamian tradition; and the characteristic facial features of broad, flat cheekbones and prominent chin (that have led some to speak of “portraiture” and others of ideal “essences”); to these criteria the Author adds the one of the “expression”, Winter 1989, 155ff.

²⁰ For dimensions, material and excavation details see Spycket 1981; Steible 1991a, 154ff (and Steible 1994, 84, fn.17); Suter 2000, 328-333; Suter 2012: 68ff (see also Edzard 1997 *ad siglum*, with bibliography). For the expression mu-še₃ ~ sa₄, “to give a name, as name”, which is to be found in these passages, see D’Agostino *et al.* 2019, 88f *ad* 3 and Jagersma 2010, 185f (and Jagersma 2010, 181f); for the reading /še/ (še₂₁) of sa₄, inferred from *Proto-Ea* and *Proto-Diri*, see Radner 2005, 15, fn. 65.

²¹ See Suter 2012, 61, fn. 9.

²² So translates Steible 1991a, 157.

²³ See the comment of Steible 1991b, 28 *ad* 81 (niĝ₂-ba = Zuteilung).

²⁴ In the caption it is stated that Ninĝešzida is the god of Gudea (I, 1-6) - cfr. fn. 22.

	diorite)		
4	St. D (sitting diorite)	Ninġirsu	V, 2-7: lugal a ₂ -dugud-da-ni / kur-e nu-il ₂ -e / ^d Nin-ġir ₂ -su-ke ₄ / Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a / lu ₂ e ₂ -du ₃ -a-ra / nam-du ₁₀ mu-ni-tar, “The master whose heavy arm no foreign land can lift, Ninġirsu, decreed a good fate (= a long life) to Gudea, the builder of the temple (Eninnu)”
5	St. E (standing diorite)	Ba`u	IX, 1-3: nin-ġu ₁₀ ba-zi-ge / nam-ti ba / u ₄ du ₁₁ ¹ (SAG)-gaba ²⁵ i ₃ -du ₃ , “My Lady, I’ll stand up (to realize what I promised)! Give me (a long) life! In the decreed day I’ll do my task (lit. build)!” ²⁶
6	St. H (standing diorite)	Ba`u	III, 1-5: nin dumu ki-aġ ₂ an-ku ₃ -ga-ke ₄ / ama ^d Ba-u ₂ / e ₂ TAR-sir ₂ -sir ₂ -ta / Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a / ‘ nam-ti’ mu-na-šum ₂ , “The Lady, the beloved daughter of holy An, mother Ba`u, from Etarsirsir gave (a long) life to Gudea”
7	St. I ²⁷ (sitting diorite)	Ninġešzida	V, 3-6: Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a / lu ₂ e ₂ -du ₃ -a-ka / nam-ti-il ¹ / mu-na-šum ₂ , “he (= Ninġešzida) gave (a long) life to Gudea, the builder of the temple (Eninnu)”
8	St. K (standing diorite)	[...]	II, 6-8: [sipa] lugal-ne ₂ / [ki] aġ ₂ -me / [nam]-ti-ġu ₁₀ he ₂ -su ₃ , “May my life, [of the sheperd ²⁸ whom] his master [lo]ves, be long!”
9	St. M ²⁹ (standing alabaster)	Ġeštinana	III, 2: nam-šita-e ba-gub, “it (= the statue) stands for (perpetual) prayer” ³⁰
10	St. N (standing calcite)	Ġeštinana	III, 4-5: ^d Ġeštin-an-na-ke ₄ / nam-‘ti’ mu-na-šum ₂ , “Ġeštinana gave him (= Gudea) (a long) life”
11	St. O (standing steatite ³¹)	Ġeštinana	III, 2-3: ^d Ġeštin-an-na-ke ₄ / igi-zi mu-ši-bar, “Ġeštinana looked at him (= Gudea) approvingly (lit. gave him a faithful look)”
12	St. P (sitting diorite)	Ninġešzida	V, 3-6: Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a / lu ₂ e ₂ -du ₃ -a-ka / nam-ti-la-ni / he ₂ -su ₃ , “May the life of Gudea, the builder of the temple (Eninnu), be long!”
13	St. Q (sitting diorite)	Ninġešzida	II, 4: e ₂ mu-ni-tum ₂ , “It (= the statue) is perfect for the temple!” ³²

²⁵ For *u₄ du₁₁-ga-ba, *u₄ dug.a=bi=a, see Steible 1991b, 51 *ad* 29; for another phonetic use of the sign /gaba/ see NRVN 1, 236, l.e. 1: na-an-gaba-ti-la-/da (*a.na a.nga.ba.til.Ø=a=da), “as long as (Ur-sukkal) will live”, see D’Agostino *et al.* 2019, 163 *ad* 5.9.8; Jagersma 2010, 624, ex. 181.

²⁶ See Steible 1991b, 50 *ad* 27 for other interpretations: cfr. also St. E, VII, 22-VIII, 15: e₂ ^dBa-u₂ / ki-be₂ ġi₄-a-da / he₂-ġal₂-bi // pa e₃ ak-da / ^{ġe}s^ġguza (DUR₂.ĠAR) Lagaš^{ki}-ka / suhuš-bi ġi-na-da / Gu₃-de₂-a / ensi₂ / Lagaš^{ki}-ka / ġidri inim ġi-na / šu-na ġal₂-la-da / nam-ti-la-na / u₄-bi su₃-a-da / diġir-ra-ni / ^dNin-ġeš-zi-da / ^dBa-u₂ / e₂ iri ku₃-ga-<ka>-na / mu-na-da-ku₄-ku₄, “Ninġešzida, the god of Gudea, the governor of Lagaš, brought (the bridal gifts) to Ba`u into her temple of the pure city, in order to make the abundance of the restoration of the temple of Ba`u flourish, to make firm the foundation of the throne of Lagaš, to entrust into his (Gudea’s) hand the scepter of his firm command and to make the days of his life long” (see also Suter 2000, 148 f and fn. 311).

²⁷ The text of Statue I is identical to that of Statue P, only the name being different.

²⁸ Old integration according to F. Thureau-Dangin, SAK 86; other proposed integrations are [ġe₂], “I”, Edzard 1997, 54; [arad₂], Steible 1991b, 67f *ad* 2 (with bibliography); [lu₂³], “the one who”, Suter 2000, 149.

²⁹ Statues M, N and O share the same identical text, where only the name of the statue is different.

³⁰ See Steible 1991a, 231; 1991b, 75f *ad* 4 (subject the goddess, not the statue as here); it is perhaps interesting to recall here the name of the EN-priestess of Eridu installed by Šulgi in his 28th regnal year: en-nam-šita-^dŠulgi-ra-ke₄-ba-gub, “the priestess stands for the perpetual prayer of Šulgi”, Frayne 1997, 104.

³¹ See Steible 1994, 84, fn. 17 *ad* Statue O.

³² On Statue R, where privileges to Namhani are bestowed, see Steible 1994, 84, fn. 18 above (here we have the formula, IV, 5-7: [a]lan-b[a] / [G]u₃-de₂-a ma-ba⁷ / [m]u-bi, “the [n]ame of th[is st]atue is: ‘[G]udea ‘gave’⁷ it to me!”).

3. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to the formula of the blessing used in texts, we can draw up the following chart:

nam-ti ~ su ₃ , “to make life long”		nam-ti ~ šum ₃ , “to give / grant (a long) life”		other “to decree destiny”; “to receive as a gift”; “to approve”	
realized	not realized	realized	not realized	realized	not realized
A: mu-su ₃ ³³	C: he ₂ -su ₃ K: he ₂ -su ₃ P: he ₂ -su ₃	H: mu-na-šum ₂ I: mu-na-šum ₂ N: mu-na-šum ₂		D: mu-ni-tar O: igi-zi mu-ši-bar	B: niġ ₂ -ba-ġu ₁₀ E: ba

As we can see, the blessings can be divided, regardless of the specific formula used by the scribe, in two main categories, the ones hinting to something already happened, and those that represent a wish that something will happen in the future.³⁴ These formulas have a parallel in the blessings to Gudea that can be found at the end of Cylinder B, XXIII, 6’-XXIV, 8:.³⁵

³³ gu-za gub-ba-bi lu ₂ nu-kur ₂ -e / diġir-zu en ⁴ Nin-ġeš-zi-da dumu-KA an-na-kam / diġir-ama-zu ⁴ Nin-sun ₂ -na šagan (AMA.GAN) numun zi-da / numun-e ki-aġ ₂ -ġa ₂ -am ₃ / ab ₂ zi-de ₃ munus ba-du ₂ -da-me / mes zi ki Lagaš ^{ki} -[ta] e ₃ -a // ⁴ Nin-ġir ₂ -su-ka-me / sig-ta nim-še ₃ mu-zu he ₂ -ġal ₂ / Gu ₃ -de ₂ -a [du ₁₁]-ga-za / [saġ]-bi-še ₃ ‘lu ₂ ’ na-e ₃ (<DUL>.DU) / ‘x’-KA ġuruš [(x)] an-ne ₂ zu-me / [en]si ₂ [zi]’ e ₂ -e nam tar-ra-me / [Gu ₃]-de ₂ -a dumu ⁴ Nin-ġeš-zi-da-ka / nam-ti ha-mu-ra-su ₃ ³⁶	“‘Its (Lagaš’s) established throne nobody will overthrow! Your god is Lord Ninġešzida, firstborn of An; your mother is Ninsun, the mother who begot a faithful offspring and (still) loves (her) offspring: you are the one whom the good cow, a woman, has generated! You are the faithful young man whom Ninġirsu made come out [from] (the men of) Lagaš:’ ³⁷ your name will be known (lit. present) from below to above!’ ³⁸ O Gudea, nobody will [es]cape your command! ... you are the youth whom An knows! You are the [faith]ful? [gover]nor (who was) predestined to (build the) temple! O [Gu]dea, son of Ninġešzida, your life will be long!’” ³⁹
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³³ It is interesting to note that Edzard 1997, 30 interprets routinely the formula as an optative.

³⁴ A special case, as far as the temporal aspect is concerned, is represented by the peculiar formulas of Statues M and Q, which can be considered ‘atemporal’ (or representing a quality of the statue that must be considered intrinsic).

³⁵ Before the cited passage there is a gap of an unknown number of lines; because of the fragmentary condition of many lines different reconstructions and interpretations have been proposed; here we collect a series of integrations (*ex.g.* Edzard 1997, 100; Suter 2000, 398 - speech by Enlil or Enki; CDLI, P232300).

³⁶ On the possibility that the speech is held by Enki or Enlil see Suter 2000, 101ff.

³⁷ The translation relates this text with *ex.g.* Statue B, III, 6-11: u₄ ⁴Nin-ġir₂-su-ke₄ / iri-ni-še₃ igi-zi im-ši-bar-ra / Gu₃-de₂-a / sipa zi-še₃ kalam-ma ba-ni-pa₃-da-a / ša₃ lu₂-216.000(ŠAR₂×U-gunū)-ta / šu-ni ba-ta-an-dab₅-ba-a, “when Ninġirsu looked to his City approvingly and chose Gudea to be the faithful shepherd of our Land taking just his hand from 216,000 men (Gudea purified the City)”. For the use of the genitive structure and the translation here proposed see D’Agostino *et al.* 2019, 73 *ad* 4.9, E.

³⁸ Perhaps it is worth recalling here the strange and unique Old Babylonian text MS 2814 (Schøyen Collection), where it is cited the incredible amount of rations for 537 statues of Gudea, V, 1ff: whatever tradition hides behind the text, which should probably not be taken historically speaking to seriously, the cultural program of Gudea, hidden behind the expression “from below to above”, can be part of it (see Wilcke 2011, 22 and 46).

³⁹ On the external possession construction see Zólyomy 2017, 228 *ad* 15.3 and D’Agostino *et al.* 2019, 140 *ad* 5.5, C.

There have been some attempts to reconstruct a chronological grid of the Gudea statues,⁴⁰ the most exhaustive one being represented, to the best of my knowledge, by Steible.⁴¹ The Author, on the base of a series of different parameters, both iconographic and textual,⁴² proposes the following chronological distribution of the statues:⁴³

Non diorite statues

M
N Ĝeštinana
O

Diorite statues

Q
I Ningêšzida

D Ningîrsu

A-C; E-H; K Great Gods of Lagaš

Now, we wonder whether it is possible to consider the aspect of the name given to the statues as a clue, or rather a hint, that can help establishing a possible chronology of the statues. Indeed, C. Suter, on commenting the blessing in the statues, notes: "It is interesting that some names treat the blessing as an event in the past, like the Cylinder Inscriptions, while others treat it as a wish, like the passage in Statue E".⁴⁴ If we have to take seriously what the names seem to declare, there are situations in which a form of thanksgiving for having got a long life is more appropriate than a wish.

Is it possible to hypothesize that the statues with future blessings have been fashioned, and written, in a different, earlier moment from the others, and *a fortiori* the Cylinder B? In this case, for instance, statues M, N and O could be dated to a later period than proposed by Steible, where the attribution to an older period for them is there based on the consideration of the material they are made of, assuming that Gudea had no access to the Magan⁴⁵ trade at the beginning of his reign.⁴⁶

This brief contribution was aimed at evaluating the possibility that the names of the statues of Gudea can represent a hint, together with other aspects, for their possible chronological distribution, further study is needed in order to clarify the validity of this proposal.

⁴⁰ See Winter 2010, 575, fn. 8 (with bibliography) and Steible 1994; for the historical aspects of Lagaš II see Sallaberger - Schrakamp 2015, 28ff and 119ff with fn. 413.

⁴¹ Steible 1994.

⁴² The chosen parameters are the following: material of the statue (Steible 1994, 84f); posture of the statue (Steible 1994, 85); dimension of the statues (Steible 1994, 85f); addressees of the statues (Steible 1994, 92); captions (Steible 1994, 92f) and the dedication formulas (Steible 1994, 94ff).

⁴³ Steible 1994, 103.

⁴⁴ Suter 2000, 150.

⁴⁵ But see Schrakamp 2015, 198, fn. 13 and 234f.

⁴⁶ Steible 1994, 84f.

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