At least three loci for agency or animacy are identified in the material remains of ancient Mesopotamia, including the *eṭemmu* ("body spirit" or "ghost"; Abusch 1999; Steinert 2012, 299–347, 365–84; MacDougal 2014, 110–12), the *napištu* ("animating force"; Steinert 2012, 271–93), and the *zaqīqu* ("breath," wind," or "spirit"; Steinert 2012, 347–84). These overlapped in nature and in function (similar to contemporary concepts of mind, soul, and spirit), but the *eṭemmu* was central to the selfhood of the deceased and appears in a variety of contexts and ways.[28] It frequently represented the spirit of a deceased person that could leave the underworld and invade the bodies of the living, usually through the ear (Black and Green 1992, 88–89; Stol 1999; Verderame 2017). This ghost/spirit was also associated with ideologies related to mortuary practices, and as with the Egyptian *ba*, the Akkadian *eṭemmu* could remain tethered postmortem to the corpse's bones (Asher-Greve 1997, 447), suggesting the *eṭemmu* functioned more like a "body-soul" than a "free-soul" (which seems to align more with the *zaqīqu*).[29] Much like the *ka*, the *eṭemmu*, which was often marked with the divine determinative DINGIR (Abusch 1999, 309; Hays 2015, 45), could be petitioned for help and had access to strategic information (Hays 2015, 43).

Some elite practices suggest the relationship of these loci of agency to the deceased individual did not necessarily require a *biological* body. Julia Asher-Greve (1997, 452) asserts that "The self is located in the inseparable unity of body and spirit," but goes on to note that the self,

> can replicate itself in other manifestations such as statues or monuments which are more than symbolic proxies but less than distinct duplicates. The spirit, not a replica but a unique entity, can apparently inhabit several objects simultaneously. In a sort of reciprocal interaction the deity bestows life not only on the human individual but also on all its subsequent images (such as statues or monuments) and these in turn can independently and eternally converse or negotiate with the deity.[30]

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[28] The Mesopotamian anthropogonies all included clay as a fundamental element of the creation of humanity, but the Akkadian tradition includes the spit from the igigi and the flesh and blood of the slaughtered deity, Wê-ila. From that blood is drawn the *ṭēmu*, or "intelligence," and from the flesh is drawn the *eṭemmu*, the "ghost/spirit" (see Asher-Greve 1997, 447–52; Abusch 1998; Bauks 2016, 186–89; Putthoff 2020, 62–66).

[29] On the *zaqīqu* as a "free-soul" that may have been conceptualized as a bird, see Hays 2015, 44; Steiner 2015, 56–57.

[30] Cf. Scurlock 2002, 1–6. Asher-Greve (1997, 453) notes that while the *eṭemmu* can thus inhabit other "bodies" in life and in death, reifying the "body and spirit" pairing, it is never associated with intelligence or "mind." For this reason, she asserts the "mind/body dichotomy was absent" from early Mesopotamia. Steinert (2012, 337–40) points out that there are texts which discuss thought and emotion among the dead, but more directly related to the heart (*karšu* and *libbu*).