

SARAH GLAZ

Twenty-Eight Lines for the En-Priestess Enheduanna

In the beginning there is no beginning.
Eternity's dark fingers hold a lantern
casting a glow
over the city-state of Ur,
where the Sumerian princess,
Enheduanna,
high priestess of the Moon God, Nanna,
daughter of King Sargon,
stretches the cord
measuring land and irrigation canals,
tall ziggurats
and massive ramparts.
Her other task is time reckoning,
Nanna dictates the calendar
expecting priests
to iron out the details.
She measures the heavens
to keep his lunar months
in sync with the four seasons,
and to exalt the pantheon of gods
and let her heart
be at peace,
conceives the words.
Poet and mathematician —
the first
to sign her own work:
The compiler of this tablet, Enheduanna.
My lord, that which has been created [here] no one has created [before].

A slightly different version was first published in *The Mathematical Intelligencer*, 2020

Note: Enheduanna (circa 2300 BCE) [Sumerian for “Ornament of Heaven”] is the first recorded author in history. She is the author of several poems, written on clay tablets in Sumerian cuneiform script, and as high priestess of the moon god, Nanna, she is likely to have been involved in the mathematical activities of her days. More information about Enheduanna's poetry and mathematics can be found in my paper, [Enheduanna: Princess, Priestess, Poet and Mathematician](#), *The Mathematical Intelligencer* 42 (2), 31-46, 2020. The two lines in Italics are from Sjöberg and Bergmann translation of Enheduanna's Temple Hymn 42.