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PROFESSOR DAVID HAWKINS

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ENTRUSTING THE WITCHES TO HUMUT-TABAL: 
THE UŠBIRRUDA RITUAL BM 47806 +

By Daniel Schwemer

The hitherto unpublished Late Babylonian fragment BM 47806+ adds another example to the group of rituals which counteract witchcraft by banning sorcerers to the netherworld. Samat is asked to hand them over, on his journey to the netherworld, to Humut-tabal, the ferryman of the dead. The edition of BM 47806+ is preceded by a brief overview of rituals of this type, including a discussion of the relationship between ritual burial of figurines — symbolising the dismissal of sorcerers to the netherworld — and their ritual burning, the other single most important technique of figurine magic deployed to kill warlock and witch.

1. Burn or bury? Two ways to kill a witch*

Most Babylonian anti-witchcraft rituals aim at a simple reversal of the patient’s and the witches’ fates. The ritual returns the witchcraft to its originators, thereby imposing on the evildoers themselves the deadly fate they had intended for the patient. This reversion is neatly summed up by the final line of an ušburruda-incantation that was recited over an amulet necklace: e-piš-ti lu-an a-na qa-b-rim-ma anu-ku lu-an a-na nu-r(ālag) elati(ta)mē “May my sorceress (descend) to the grave, but may I (rise) to the light of the upper world!” An Old Babylonian anti-witchcraft incantation puts the idea that the sorcerers perish of their own deeds into words reminiscent of wisdom texts:

<incantation put into words reminiscent of wisdom texts>

The evildoer — his evil deeds will not fail to catch him, his evil will not release his offspring.

The one who sows evil, his hands will harvest (it), the . . . from which he escapes, his sons will double (it).

Burning and burial are the two methods of figurine magic that the sorcerers are most commonly accused of and also, as to be expected within the logic of ritual reversal, the two most prominent

*Thanks are due to Mark Weeden for correcting my English.

²Note that epēšu has a special meaning “to practise (witchcraft)”, “to bewitch”; since the present incantation is used within an anti-witchcraft ritual epēšu may well have this more specific connotation here.

³The meaning of this line hinges on the interpretation of the problematic ka-a-ad, which must be a construct-state noun followed by a relative clause; the lexical ambiguity of uṣṣum produces further uncertainty. If ka-a-ad is taken as a form of kūdū “guard” (otherwise not so far attested in OB, though underlying kuddu “to watch” is), it is difficult to see how it can be a meaningful object of uṣṣum “they alter” or “they repeat”.

CAD K 35a tentatively proposes to regard a-ka-ad in the OB “Cutean Legend” as derived from an otherwise unattested kūdū “to be distressed” (cf. AHw 1565a, but see Westenholz 1997: 318 ad l. 88). If one accepted the existence of this verb, one could assume a corresponding noun kūdū “distress”. Then the meaning of the line could be that any evil from which the perpetrator himself escapes will afflict the following generation twice over.

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techniques employed to kill one’s witches ritually. A short witchcraft diagnosis preserved on the small fragment K 9046 brings the two methods together in a few words: amelu (na) su (bi) sa[l]mi[u]meli-šiḫu ana ɠira u guš-gulu-paqa-du “Figurines of that man have been handed over to Girra and to a skull” (rev. III 6–7). One figurine representing the patient has been burnt or melted by exposing it to the voracious appetite of the fire god Girra, while another figurine has been entrusted to a ghost (represented by a human skull) who is asked to take the patient with him to the netherworld.

1.1. Burning as a symbol of complete annihilation

In a culture like that of Mesopotamia, where the bodies of the deceased were not cremated, the burning of figurines representing fellow-humans not only symbolised a horrible and painful death, but also deprived the victim’s body of burial and thereby prevented his ghost from entering the netherworld, where the miserable lot of the dead was at least alleviated by the supplies provided by the living in the form of funerary offerings. This concept is nowhere as clearly expressed as in the Sumerian narrative Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld, when Enkidu’s ghost replies to Gilgamesh’s question about the afterlife fate of someone burnt to death: “I did not see him. . . . His ghost does not dwell in the netherworld, his smoke went up into the sky.”4 The final sentence of Enkidu’s reply resonates in the formulaic wish of many anti-witchcraft incantations that the smoke of the sorcerers’ figurines steadily rise into the sky,5 and burning evidently served as a powerful symbol of the total annihilation of the evildoers.

It is worth noting that burning rites are employed in only a few groups of Babylonian rituals: (a) anti-witchcraft rituals that use burning for the destruction of figurines of the sorcerers; (b) rituals against curses resulting from the transgression of a taboo (māmittu) in which materials representing the patient’s sins are burnt;6 (c) rituals for undoing evil omens (numburbi) that occasionally use burning to destroy the concrete object that was interpreted as a bad omen for the client;7 (d) finally, rituals against field pests in which representations of vermin are burnt.8 All these rituals focus on a complete elimination of the evil; the special position of anti-witchcraft rituals results from the fact that there the burning rites themselves are supposed to have been used against the patient, who then responds by reflecting the same rites upon his evildoers. Many of the materials used for figurines of warlock and witch, like wood, reed, tallow, wax, bitumen and sesame pomace (to name only the most common ones), would, when set on fire, present the materials used for figurines of warlock and witch, like wood, reed, tallow, wax, bitumen and sesame pomace (to name only the most common ones), would, when set on fire, present the observer with a striking demonstration of what it meant to annihiliate someone; other materials like clay or dough would burst or be charred, but apparently the destruction of their original form was regarded as a sufficient symbol of their obliteration. All remains of such burning rites, whether ashes, a smudge of wax or the fragments of a burst clay figurine, had to be disposed of at the end of the ritual. Usually they were either thrown into a river9 or taken out into the uninhabited steppe.10 While both actions, sinking objects in a river and removing them to the

4 Abusch 2002 (first published 1990): 129, 1998: 375, 2002: 67–9, 229 drew attention to the importance of this passage with regard to ritual burning in anti-witchcraft rituals. For the text, see now George 2003: 769, 776: 1–2; most manuscripts have “his ghost is not there” instead of “his ghost does not dwell in the netherworld” (so in UET 6:1, 58).

5 Cf. already Abusch 2002 (first published 1990): 129 and 2002: 68; for the phrase, see Maqlu 1 141, V 146, 161 (cf. also V 47 [all quotations from Maqlu follow the line count established in Abusch and Schwemer 2008])). KAR 80 = KAL 2, 8 rev. 23, AMT 21/2 + K 3648 + 15966 + Sm 1280 rev. 4 // K 431 + 1853 + 6262 + 6789 + 11260 + 13358 + 13813 (+) K 9216 + 17321 rev. IV 8 // K 10533 + 1159: 13’ (here with regard to witchcraft); cf. also Lambert 1957–8: 294: 75, 299: 43. The same motif is already attested in a Sumerian astururada-incipit of the Old Babylonian period (VS 17, 31 obsv. 6).

6 The prime example is, of course, Surpac; but cf. also the use of the motif of the rising smoke and the extinguished embers in the Liptur lituaries (Reiner 1956: 140–1, II 7, 10’, 23’, 26’).

7 See Maul 1994: 92 with reference to burning a scorpion (see ibid. 345: 5′–6′) and ants (see ibid. 352: 22). The prescription to burn a person suffering from a seizure of the “Spaun of Sulpae” in STT 89 rev. IV 180–6 has to be understood along the same lines: his frightening symptoms were interpreted as a serious bad portent for his family, and he, as the physical manifestation of this omen, had to be obliterared; note that the same could be accomplished by buring the “patient” alive (ibid. 174–9; for both passages, see Stol 1993: 15, 96).

8 See the article by George and Taniguchi in this volume [Ed.].

9 So explicitly in BAM 317 rev. 8 // KUB 4, 99: 13′–14′; // KAL 2, 43 m. col. 7’ (variant) // KAR 275 = KAL 2, 45 r. col. 5′–6′; ḫûṣa dā ṣiql[t]u anu nûta [tanadil “[you throw] the disposable pot together with the burnt remains (of the sorcerers’ figurines) into the river”.

10 So explicitly in Maqlu (ritual tablet 91’, cf. 123’, 139’) and in Lambert 1957–8: 297: 11, where I read: diškmey(di)-tā-nu tege(tu) tuḫaḫtu tanusak “you take their ashes, you discard them in a deserted place” (PBS 10/2, 18 rev.
wilderness beyond the borders of human habitation, could symbolise a transfer to the netherworld,\(^{11}\) it is significant that the relevant burning rituals do not dwell on these associations.\(^{12}\)

Moreover, a few texts seem to allude to an exclusion of the witch’s ghost from the netherworld: *Maqlû VIII 121\(^{-2}\)* may be restored as ‘[er]eš\(^{-1}\)-ki-gal\(^{-1}\) ana etsut\(^{-1}\)(ki)\(^{-1}\)um a-\(\tilde{a}\)-\(\tilde{u}\)-\(\tilde{e}\)-[i-do-kî\(^{-1}\)]. [ana] p[agir\(a\)][adda]-ki ēri\(t\)\(^{-1}\)um u zihu\(n\)[nu um ma\]\(^{-1}\)um lı-im-na-ad-ru “May Ereshkigal prevent [you]”\(^{13}\) from descending to the netherworld, may eagle and vulture prey [on] your corpse’’.\(^{14}\) Within the ritual *Bīt rinkî* the king addresses various parts of the body of a slaughtered goat with requests for its evildoers. In the ritual *Ishtar*, whose imprisonment in the underworld, like the disappearance of Venus, lasts only for a limited time. Meanwhile warlock and witch are sent on their journey to the “Land of No Return” to the uninhabited wilderness (his evildoers.\(^{15}\) For sinking in a river as symbolic burial, see §1.2; for the uninhabited wilderness and the mountains as a haunt of demons that is associated with the netherworld, especially within the framework of a “horizontal” conception of the netherworld (kur), see Wiggermann 1996 and Katz 2003, esp. 102–12.\(^{16}\) But see *infra*, §1.3, for references to banning the witches to the netherworld by burning in *Maqlû* and the text published in Lambert 1957–8.\(^{17}\)

I.e., the witch; of course, we cannot exclude a restoration -ni “me”; this would reverse the sense of the sentence.\(^{18}\) The text is preserved in K 11990: 3’–4’. K 2981 + 3991 rev. IV 1 and K 9575 + 82-3-23, 52 rev. III 1’.\(^{19}\) *SpTU* 2, 12 obv. I 32: kam.\(^{20}\) *BAM* 449(+) obv. I 10\(^{-}\)-10 in Schwemer 2007b: 222–4 (note that p. 223, l. 24’ ikammas\(du_{10,gam}\) must be corrected to tuskum\(a\)(\(du_{10,gam}\)-su-\(mu\)). For the use of burial rites within therapeutic rituals generally, see Tsukimoto 1985: 125–45 and Nasrabadî 1999: 34–67.\(^{21}\) Edited by Farber 1977: 226–59 (“Hauptritual B”); for the interpretation of the ritual, see Schwemer 2007b: 215–17.

### 1.2. Burial as symbol of eternal imprisonment in the netherworld

The dismissal of the witches to the netherworld is the main concern of another group of anti-witchcraft rituals,\(^{22}\) in *BM 47806*, edited and discussed below, the patient asks the sun god to take warlock and witch with him on his cosmic journey and hand them over to the powers of the netherworld. *LKA* 44 // applies the myth of *Istar’s* descent to the netherworld to the patient and his evildoers.\(^{23}\) The patient, represented by a figurine, returns to the upper world together with *Istar*, whose imprisonment in the underworld, like the disappearance of Venus, lasts only for a limited time. Meanwhile warlock and witch are sent on their journey to the “Land of No Return” together with Dumu-zî who, according to the myth, is held captive in the underworld as a substitute for *Istar*. In the ritual the patient squashes their figurines with his feet before they are finally buried in the wilderness (*ina šeri iqeher*, l. 76’). Other rituals use funerary rites for entrusting sorcerer and sorceress to a ghost who will carry them off to the netherworld. In the fragmentary

\[ \text{šarru(ugal) } ' \text{ana} ' [x x x x] x [x x] k i - a - a m \]  
\[ \text{lu } \text{paris(ku}, y) ' [x] ' \text{em}, \text{lum} [x x x x] - \text{ma} \]  
\[ \text{lit-ta-k[ir]} a \text{mi-na-tu-ša } [l i s - s a], \text{l i - i l}]  
\[ \text{tē-em-šu-m[a]} \text{ m i - i l-ša} [s a] ]  \text{l i - n i} \]  

\[ \text{BBR } 26 + K 10131 (\text{Læssøe } 1955: 21) + K 8194 + 8921 \text{ obv. I} 6'–14' \text{(collated, preserved on K 8194 + 8921) // SpTU} 2, 12 obv. I 32'–8' (requires collation) \]
ritual *BBR* 52, figurines of sorcerer and sorceress receive funerary offerings in the presence of Šamaš together with the ghosts of the ancestors of the patient’s family.\(^{19}\) In *KAR* 227 // the warlock, witch and the personified “Any Evil” are handed over to Namtar, the demon of death.\(^{20}\) Prayers invoke Šamaš, as the judge of the upper and lower world, Gilgameš, as ferryman and judge of the dead, and the Anunnakki, as gods of the netherworld. Finally the patient’s deceased ancestors and a foreign ghost (represented by a skull) are addressed and asked to take the evildoers with them. Actually the figurines of the sorcerers were probably sunk in the river at whose bank one performed the ritual in a clay pit. That sinking figurines in a river could symbolise a transfer to the netherworld should not be surprising; the dead had to cross the subterranean waters (in mythological cosmology the river Šubur)\(^{21}\) to get to the underworld, which was located deep in the clay beneath the groundwater. Naturally the subterranean ocean (apsû) and the underworld were regarded as neighbouring cosmic realms, and in a number of texts the inhabitants of the apsû are associated with the underworld and vice versa.\(^{22}\) The ritual *KAR* 227 // mentions the sinking of the figurines in the river only in a short address to the personified clay pit that was spoken after the symbolic purchase of clay at the very beginning of the proceedings. While the incantation addresses the clay pit, the reference to the clay pit’s water shows that the river is here considered to be part of the clay pit as the ritual’s locale:\(^{23}\)

\[\text{[kul]-}[a-tu] \\
\text{[x] \text{[ninda] \times [ši]}^{-}\text{[ki]}^{1} \text{an (x) ak nu sumu ur-tum}^{24} \text{[x]} \times \text{[ki]}^{3} \text{ku-la-tu kasap} \text{(kù, babbar)-ki mah-ra-ti} \text{[qīštat} \text{(nig.b-a)}^{-}\text{[ki]} \text{le qa-ti su-bat-ki ta-ri-īs} \text{[ki-ma] mi'\text{(a)\text{[mès]}}, ki māḫiri(gaba.ri)m\text{25 lā̱[nu] šā-tu(tuk)\text{[ka]-}libba}\text{(ša)-ki rap-sā itt(i) ki mē(a)mès-ki ū\text{[l-sā}]^{-}} \text{itt(i) ki mē(a)mès-ki liqē（ti）-sā itti(ki) mē(a)mès-ki li-ta-rīd ana māḫri(igi)-ki saṭ-ḫi-ri-sā} \text{a-na maḥrī(igi)-ki ter-ri-sū li-qē₂-sā \text{na}-siḫ₂ \text{lit-ta-rīd} \text{a-na arki(egi)-šu a-a ʾitūra(gur)}^{-} \text{a-a isniqat(dim₃) a-a ʾitāh(te)\text{[ka]} \text{a-i qiriha(ku}^{-}\text{[nu]}^{\text{bu}} \text{LKA 89 + 90 obv. I 11'–19'} \text{KAR 227 obv. I 14–22 (coll.)} \right]

You recite (the incantation) “[Clay] pit, (you are) the creator of god and man.” “[Clay] pit, you are the creator of god and man, [\ldots] your price … command,\(^{26}\) your … (or: \ldots you), clay pit, you have received your silver, you have taken your gift, your garment has been spread out. Since your water has no rival (and) your inside is wide, guide it\(^{25}\) (away) with your water, take it (away) with your water, let it be expelled with your water! Restore it into your presence, take it back again into your presence so that it may be removed (and) expelled! Let it not return to me, not approach me, not come near me, not come close to me!”

A number of other anti-witchcraft rituals use either a river or a hole in the ground to bury figurines of warlock and witch without elaborating on the transfer to the netherworld implied by these actions. In *UET* 6/2, 410 obv. I 1’–27’ models of the sorcerers’ slanderous tongues (and in


\(^{20}\) First edited by Ebeling 1931: 122–33; for an overview of the manuscripts known today and a summary discussion of the text, see Abusch 1986: 159–1 and 2002: 76–8.

\(^{21}\) For this function of the Šubur river, and sometimes the Ulaya river, in Babylonian cosmology, see Horowitz 1998: 355–8 and Wiggermann 1996: 211–12. The reference to the Ulaya (in Elam) within these contexts shows that this journey to the end of the world and, ultimately, to the land of the dead could be conceptualised as a journey on the earth’s surface (the same is true for Šubur, if it is really to be connected with the Šubur).


\(^{23}\) For a similar incantation addressed to the clay pit, see Wiggermann 1992: 12, ill. 151–7, and the comments ibid. 26 ad 145 with further literature; cf. also Mayer 1976: 433.

\(^{24}\) *LKA* 89 + obv. I 13’: [x x] ninda \times še\text{-}[ki]^{1} an x (ak\text{not excluded}) [x x sumu ur-tum; *KAR* 227 obv. I 16 [. . .] ak nu sumu ur-tum.\(^{25}\)

\(^{25}\) In *LKA* 89 + obv. I 16: [gim\text{a} mès\text{-}ki gaba.ri].

\(^{26}\) The exact reading of sumu remains unclear; possible readings include nādin, i(na) ḍdin, a(na) ḍdin and innealdh in.

\(^{27}\) Here and in the following lines referring to minuma lemmu “Any Evil”, which includes the sorcerers; for a discussion of the relationship between “Any Evil” and the sorcerers within the present ritual, see Abusch 2002: 76–7.
a variant ritual instruction also figurines of the sorcerers themselves) are put in a clay boat and sunk in a river or well; the ritual is to be performed at the end of the month Abu, when the ghosts of the deceased come up to receive their provisions. 28 A fragmentary ritual prescribes enclosing figurines of sorcerer and sorceress in a hollow reed (takkussu) which is then thrown into a river; the accompanying incantation indicates that by doing this the witches were handed over to Namtar and sent to the netherworld. 29 In another ushrurudu ritual, to be performed before Scorpius, the patient washes() over dough figurines of warlock and witch which are then dissolved in a bowl of water and discarded in a river. 30 In KAL 2, 13 rev. IV 3–13 a group of figurines representing warlock and witch is beaten 31 and mistreated, before some of them are disposed of in a river and others buried under a washer’s mat or in a lavatory. Several rituals prescribe the washing of the patient over the sorcerers’ figurines, which are then buried in the ground. 32 Sometimes the figurines are simply buried without any prior treatment, 33 but one ritual emphasises the funerary connotations of the ritual burial by covering a representation of the witch’s slanderous tongue with cobwebs. 34

1.3. Burn and bury: combining the two motifs

Tzvi Abusch (2002: 69–76) drew attention to the fact that incantations recited during the performance of two burning rituals (LKA 154 + = KAL 2, 24 // and Lambert 1957–8) refer to the fire god Girra as the one who entrusts the witches to the netherworld, thereby combining the motifs of burning and banning to the netherworld in a way that “is, in and of itself, a mixed metaphor, a conflation, as it were, of two ideas that are mutually exclusive” (p. 71). In the case of KAL 2, 24 this combination of the two motifs is also reflected in the fact that the ritual prescribes some figurines to be burnt, but others to be submerged in the river, to be buried (qebēru) in a hole, probably dug in the “steppe” and oriented towards sunset (rev. 47–51); it seems likely that this hole also served as the recipient of the remains of the figurines that had been burnt. In Lambert 1957–8 the burnt remains are to be discarded (nasāku) outside the city in a deserted place (see supra, fn. 10).

To these two examples a few more can be added. 35 In Maqlu II 219–20 the “fire of the grave” is mentioned in a short invocation of the deified oven: utiānu(udun) elie(tu) mu(maru)(dumu. munuš) “a-nim rabī(gal)”, ša ina līb-bi-sā na-an-hu-za-at i-sāt qab-‘rim(ī) “Pure oven, great daughter of Anu, inside whom the fire of the grave flares up”. 36 In Maqlu III 29–30 the fire god is asked to send the witch on a journey with no return, an unambiguous allusion to a descent to the netherworld: har-ra-an la ta-a-ri li-sā-as-bit-kī 4 4 4 girra ḫa-bi-lī-kī, 4 girra ez-zu zumur (su)-kī li-li-lī-muṭ “May Girra, who harms you, send you off on the Road of No Return, may Girra burn up

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29 SpTU 5, 241. For the enclosure of the figurines in the reed tube, see obv. 3 and 7, for its disposal in the river, see rev. 3–6. For Namtar, see obv. 14; (“nam-ta-rekkal (sukkal) ānu-bi(kī)šum šerd”) x x du-[iš] šimansarikākkal (sukkal) er-e-ri-[r]ī(kī)]36om tē-er-sā līs-pa-ah(copy: u) “[May] Namtar, the vizier of the netherworld, . . . her, may Namtar, the vizier of the netherworld, thwart her plan”; a transfer to the netherworld is mentioned in obv. 17; at the very end of the incantation: x ete[nu]d(iš[u]) šī anā kur-ni-gīa “and let a ghost guide her to the Land of No Return”.

Th 1905–4-9, 72–73 obv. II 7–16 // 80–7–19, 146+ K 10559 + = KI 1330 obv. 1 6–12 // BM 38635 rev. 1–8 // K 10358(+) l. col. 2–10; for a full edition, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 7,8, 4.


32 Th 1905–4-9, 72–73 obv. II 7–16 // 80–7–19, 146+ K 10559 + = KI 1330 obv. 1 6–12 // BM 38635 rev. 1–8 // K 10358(+) l. col. 2–10; for a full edition, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 7,8, 4.


your body!" 37 More importantly, during the opening section of Maqlū, right before the long series of burning rites that fill the first half of the night, the patient turns to the gods of the netherworld and asks them to imprison his witches forever for their crimes. 38

Apart from Maqlū two other rituals must be mentioned here. BAM 231 (+) /, an extensive anti-witchcraft ritual, a digest of which is preserved as K 888, involves the burning of a number of pairs of figurines representing warlock and witch in various poses. Within the same ritual another pair of figurines of the sorcerers is entrusted to Lamasṭu and to a ghost represented by a skull. The whole lot is then sent to the netherworld, as is most evident from the following adoration of the ghost towards the end of the ritual: 39

[BAM 332 rev. IV 5'–17' (coll.) 40


38 For this interpretation of the opening section of Maqlū, see Schwemer, forthcoming a, especially with regard to the incantations Ersetu eretu ersetunnma and Akla nēberu aktuḫ kāras.

39 For K 888, see Schwemer 2006; the following manuscripts of the extensive library version have been identified: BAM 231 (+) / KAL 2, 26 (+) // KAL 2, 27, BAM 332, CBS 1498 and O 193. For a brief overview of the ritual and an edition of O 193, see Abusch and Schwemer 2009. For a full edition of the text, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.7.

40 The restorations in ll. 11'–17' follow the parallel passage I/1 0 // KAL 2 rev. III 44–50 // LKA 89 + 90 rev. I 1–4.

41 K 3292 + 7788 + 7798 + 17984 (Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.8).

42 For a list of the duplicates and an edition of the main text, see KAL 2, pp. 31–6; in the meantime W. Meinhold has identified among the unpublished Assur texts another small fragment whose reverse (?) duplicates KAR 80 (VAT 11567).
cedar and tamarisk wood are burnt, while figurines of clay and dough are put in water, squashed underfoot by the patient and then buried in the wilderness (probably together with the burnt remains of the other figurines).

In his discussion of the texts that combine burning and burial rites Abusch comes to the conclusion that “the sending of the witch to the netherworld is one further consequence and indication of the incorporation of anti-witchcraft responsibilities into the duties of the exorcist” (2002: 78). Originally, at a stage before anti-witchcraft rituals became part of āšipātu, the destruction of the witches would have been achieved only by burning their figurines; the motif of sending warlock and witch to the netherworld and the pertinent burial rites represent — so Abusch — a secondary development, owed to influences from other exorcistic ritual genres. Thus an originally coherent concept that focused on the annihilation of the witch became conflated, and while the tension between the burning and the burial motif was never resolved, the introduction of the latter led to the creation of new forms of anti-witchcraft rituals that systematically integrated elements of anti-ghost rituals (2002: 65–78).

While Abusch is certainly right to regard texts such as KAR 227 // and BAM 231(+) // as the product of a combination of different ritual genres by well-educated exorcists and scholars, the observation of a joint use of the burning and the burial motif outside such cross-genre rituals gives rise to the question whether a diachronic model — the interpretation of logical tensions as the result of a secondary contamination of an originally coherent concept — provides the most plausible explanation of the evidence, especially when, as in this case, the hypothesised coherent stage of development remains vague and is not represented in the preserved corpus of sources. If one further takes into account that all burning rituals against witches include the disposal of the burnt materials in places associated with the netherworld (see supra, §1.2) and that ghosts of persons burnt to death were feared as roaming the upper world deprived of any funerary care, one must ask whether the relationship between the two motifs is not better described as additive and supplementary than as conflated — one action symbolising complete annihilation, the other eternal imprisonment.

If so, it becomes unnecessary to regard the combination of the two motifs as the result of a secondary development, and it is worth noting that both motifs are already attested in the earliest known anti-witchcraft rituals. In a Sumerian incantation from the Old Babylonian period the sorcerer is accused of having performed funerary offerings for the patient, thereby banning him to the underworld. Another incantation from the same period states, in all probability with reference to figurines representing the witch:

| saḫar-bi id-da | Its (or: this) earth is thrown into the river, |
| i-bi bi an-na | its (or: this) smoke went up into the sky. |
| ı̄b-e₂₁ | |

YS 17, 31 obv. 5–6

An Old Babylonian Sumerian incantation, partially preserved on a Persian period fragment, contains ritual instructions by Enki to his son Asalluḫi which are in their essence, despite all differences in language and style, strikingly similar to those of the first millennium Akkadian ritual KAR 80 = KAL 2, 8 (cf. supra): figurines representing warlock and witch are made of clay, dough, tallow, bitumen and wax. After offerings to the sun god have been made, the exorcist burns the figurines of tallow, bitumen and wax (rev. 6), while the patient squashes the figurines of clay and dough with his foot (rev. 5). The instructions for the disposal of the squashed figurines and the

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43 For this interpretation of ina mē ma āšipātu sa’ervešumātī in rev. 18 //, see Schwemer, forthcoming b, commentary on BM 40568 rev. 5 (for nēra, see now also George 2009: 91–2).
44 Abusch 2002: 76–8 discusses only KAR 227; the reconstructed text of BAM 231(+) was not known to him at the time of writing.
45 See LKA 84 obv. 27, ed. Scurlor 2006: 503–6. The fact that ruthless kings disinterred the bones of their enemies’ forefathers and left their slain opponents unburied on the battlefield does not invalidate this general notion. They act from a position of superior power, whereas the patient of an anti-witchcraft ritual is only just in the process of being delivered from the hands of his powerful evildoers and naturally seeks to rule out any possibility of a further aggression from their side (differently Abusch 2002: 234 fn. 57).
46 CT 58, 79 obv. 9–10 //, ed. Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi 1995: 21: “tuṭu an-na-sē a im-ina-an-zi, ertigal₂⁻la a-pap gaš-tag,gia-a a ba-ni-in-da” “For him he presented water to Utu in the sky, he poured the water into a grave, into the open libation pipes” (cf. also Schwemer 2007b: 104).
47 BM 40568 (Sumerian with a partial Akkadian translation); see Geller 1995–6: 247–8 for a copy and a provisional transcription; for a full edition and commentary, see Schwemer, forthcoming b.
burnt remains are lost, but there can be little doubt that they were buried in the ground as in the later Akkadian ritual.

Overall the evidence points to a continuity of the basic gestures and symbols used in anti-witchcraft rituals from at least the Old Babylonian period onwards, a continuity that persisted over centuries, despite major changes in the composition of individual rituals and in the language and format of the texts. It seems therefore unlikely to me that such a basic concept as banning the evildoers to the netherworld and the ritual gestures that symbolise this act (burial, sinking in a river) should have been introduced only secondarily into anti-witchcraft rituals; but of course we can say little about developments that would have to predate the earliest sources available. A passage from yet another Sumerian anti-witchcraft incantation from the Old Babylonian period shows how the obvious tension between the annihilation of the witch through burning (which, as seen in the quoted passages from Maqlû VIII and Bit rimki, in some cases may have implied an actual exclusion from the netherworld) and her being banned to the netherworld could be resolved in the image of an extraordinary, terrible fate of the witch’s ghost in the netherworld:

May Utu, the judge of heaven and earth, decide a harsh fate for her, so that Nergal, the lord of the underworld, may not reckon her ghost as a ghost! May Ningišzida, the throne-bearer of the netherworld, cut off the cold water from her ghost!

The ghost of the witch suffers a horrible fate assigned to her by the sun god who judges the newly arrived dead when he visits the netherworld at night. Her ghost, though imprisoned in the netherworld, is excluded from the normal status the deceased acquire when entering the city of the dead; it is deprived of the few comforts that other ghosts are entitled to. A ghost, yet not a ghost, imprisoned in the netherworld, yet deprived even of the reduced form of existence of the deceased: a fitting image of someone burnt and buried.

2. The ušḫurrud Ritual BM 47806 + 48445 + 48977 + 49040

The Late Babylonian fragment BM 47806 + (see Figs. 1–2) forms part of the British Museum’s Babylon collection; though the text itself offers no clue that could confirm its provenance, its collection context (81-11-3) indicates that it was excavated at Babylon or Borsippa. The single-column tablet, the upper half of which is missing, contained the text of probably only one anti-witchcraft ritual. The beginning of the text is now lost, but it seems likely that the prayer addressed to Ea, Šamaš and Asalluh, whose second half is partly preserved in obv. 1–14, was preceded by a short section indicating the ritual’s purpose, possibly including a description of symptoms and a witchcraft diagnosis. The final plea of the prayer, which is fittingly characterised by its rubric
as a recitation for undoing witchcraft (obv. 15'), asks for the witchcraft affecting the patient to be returned to warlock and witch and for the evildoers themselves to be handed over to the deities of the netherworld. The following ritual instructions prescribe this prayer to be recited three times before Šamaš (rev. 7), which may suggest that a major section of this recitation, possibly the whole text up to obv. 6', addresses Šamaš alone. The recitation is preceded by the usual offerings which are set up for Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi, the gods in charge of exorcistic rituals (rev. 16–18').

54 For this triad of gods and their function in magical rituals, see Bottéro 1987–90: 228–31.


56 For the use of Gilgamesh’s role as ferryman of the dead in anti-witchcraft rituals, see Abusch and Schwemer 2009: 107, commentary on O 193 obv. II 5; for the use of Gilgamesh’s role as netherworld judge within this genre, see Schwemer, forthcoming a, commentary on Maqlû I 37–41. Livingstone 1989: 71, no. 32 rev. 5.

57 Livingstone 1989: 71, no. 32 rev. 5.

58 George 2003: 500–1; note that in the Neo-Assyrian burial ritual K 164 tables are set up before Gilgamesh and the ferrymen of the netherworld; the latter, unfortunately, remain anonymous (rev. 44, ed. von Soden 1939, Nasrabadi 1999: 36–8).

59 Note that Šamaš is called murteddîka “your (i.e. the ghost’s) guide” within these contexts, see KAR 227 rev. III 44 and BAM 332 rev. IV 12’ (Koehler’s copy incomplete); for a new copy and full edition of the latter, see Abusch and Schwerner, forthcoming, text 8.7: BAM 231 (+’1) KAL 2, 26 (+’1) 27 // BAM 332 // CBS 1498 // O 193 (RIA 3 023 3) with the parallel memorandum version K 888 (cf. Schwemer 2006).

The instructions then turn to deities of the netherworld that are not mentioned in the preserved parts of the ṣuḫurrûda-prayer. For Gilgamesh, judge and ferryman of the netherworld, a full offering arrangement is set up (obv. 22’–rev. 2); if our restoration of obv. 22’ is correct, he also receives hot soup, a typical provision for the dead. Gilgamesh is not mentioned elsewhere in the preserved portions of the text, and his precise function within the proceedings must remain undetermined for the time being. Since all other inhabitants of the netherworld that are named in the present texts are supposed to imprison warlock and witch (obv. 11’, rev. 10), Gilgamesh’s role must have been the same, whether he was asked to render his judgement over them or ferry them across the river ῤubur, the waters of death.

The following passage is badly broken, but it seems that beside Gilgamesh a figurine of ῥumut-tabal was set up and provided with water and beer flavoured with roasted barley — proper offerings for an underworld creature (rev. 2–3). This ῥumut-tabal (“Carry-off-quickly”) is as yet attested in only one other text, the Assyrian “Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince” that recounts how a certain Kumma visits the netherworld in his dream. Among the horrible gods and demons he encounters is the monstrous ῥumut-tabal, who is identified as a “ferryman of the netherworld”, a function that other sources associate with Gilgamesh and probably also with Ūršanabi. Here the sun god Šamaš, who passes through the underworld during the night, is asked to take the warlock and witch with him to hand them over to ῥumut-tabal, who will then, it is understood, carry them off across the ῤubur to the Land of No Return (rev. 9–13). Šamaš takes on a similar role in rituals which entrust in his presence figurines of the warlock and witch to a ghost whom the sun god then accompanies on his way to the netherworld. Here, several pairs of figurines representing warlock and witch are set up before Šamaš when the offerings have been completed (rev. 4–7). When all these figurines have been arranged, one recites three times the first incantation with its plea for banning the witches to the netherworld; then the patient addresses Šamaš again and asks that he hand over his evildoers to the netherworld judge within this genre, see...
2.1. Transliteration

obv.

1’ [x x x x x] x-šaš šaš x [...]

2’ [x x (x) x ḫu di du x [...]

3’ kaš-šap 'kaš-šap'-te e-piš e-piš-te" [...]

4’ šaš [u-piš šaš]-ti šar-giš īpušú(dù)ša-[ni ...]

5’ [ina-an-nu] salnī(nu)šu-[nu ab-ni-ma ina mašar(igi) di-e-ti-a ...]

6’ ina 'di-ni'-ka si-[i]-ri ša lā-(nu) uttākkuru(kūr)" ina 'qi-biti'-[ka šarti(?)] ša lā innennā]

7’ ina 'ti'-i ša 'ašal-li-hi [ina šiptī ša Ea(?)]

8’ ina qi-biti ša iliya(dingir-šu-mu') u 'dištarīya(ištar-mu) kiš-piššaš'-nu[u ruḫēšunu rusēšunu (...)]

9’ KUR \ ana muḫ-ši-šu-nu 'li-šu-ru-ma ia-šaš'[li-paṭ]-ru-[i-ni]

10’ ina ši-it piš(ka)i-ku-nu ka-bit-ti ša la 'ušš'-t[e-p]el-[i-a]

11’ ana 'a-nun-a[k]-a[ki]-gul 4hi-[dùš][(g)] udēq[a],[i[G],G.G] erṣēti(k[u])i[n] p[i-i]q-da-ši-[n][u-ti]

12’ [x x x] x [x x x x]itti(ki) ḫalūt[i(la)]mēš la 'i[-i]-ma-nu-u

13’ [x x x (x) k]šiš-[nu̱-šu-nu ru-h]uši-šu-nu up-šā-saši-[šā]-nu lemmūti(ḫul)meš ana zumrēya('šu-mu') 'a-a ʾīḫā(ṭe)ša-[ni]
Fig. 2  BM 47806 + 48445 + 48977 + 49040 rev.

14' [xxxxxxxxxxxxx|a dâ-lî-|li-ku-nu lu$-d$-

15' [ka.im]ī.m.a[+ ušš,.bûr.ru.da.kam

16' [dû.dû.bi ana ma$h(igi)] 'dî-a $tamaš(utu) u $asal-lî-hi pâtîra(gi.dû) tukûn(gin)$
šalâš(3) kurummâti(kurum,â) akal(ninda) kunâši(zîz.ât) tašakkan(gar)
17' [sul]appî([zû].lumî.mâ) $sasqâ(esâ) tasarrag(dub)$'m miris(ninda.î.de 'a') dišî(lâl)
hûmûtî(nun.na) tašakkan(gar)$'m salâsh(3) hûmûtûni(la.âh.ân)
18' [mê(a)()] $šî$[kaš.(kaš)-mah tašakkan(gar)$'m nignâkkâ(nîg.î'nî) pêmi(îne)
g[i]tûgi(în) tu$$mâlû(sa,î-ma tašakkan(gar)$'m nignâkkâ(nîg.î'nî) pêmi(îne)
19' [ı$hên(1) ina $hûbûsiti(li) $ı$hên(1) ina qê$mi(zi,da) ta-$sa[ra$$q ana $tamaš(utu) jê(a)
$sasqâ(esâ) tanaqqi(bal)[û]
20' [a'na] 'dî-a mê(a) $erêni(êre) tanaqqi(bal)[û] [a'na $asal-lî-hi] mê(a') $hûm$burâši(li)
tanaqqi(bal)[û]
21' ana ili(dingir)-$$šu u $î$štari(15)-$$šu nignâkkâ(nîg.na) $hû[ûn x x x] a-sár-raq $ikar[a(kaš.îa[g)
tanaqqi(bal)[û]
22' a-na $gilgîmeš(êri.ên.în.êma) um[nara(t[û,û]') bûhr(a(kûm)(û) t]a-tab[û]bâk]
2.2. Translation

The tablet breaks

2. Translation

obv.

1'–2' too fragmentary for translation

3' (My) warlock (and) witch, (my) sorcerer (and) sorcerer(s ...)

4' who secretly performed evil witcheries [against me ...] —

5' now I have made figurines representing them and [ ... ] before Ea, [ ... ].

6' (O Šamaš), by your supreme command which cannot be changed, at [your superlative command [which cannot be altered],

7' through the spell of Assalūhi, [through the incantation of Ea],

8' at the command of my god and my goddess let their witchcraft, [their magic, their sorceries ...]

9' return to them so that they60 [may be] removed from me.

10' (O Ea, Šamaš and Assalūhi), by your respected order, which cannot be overturned.

11' hand them over to the Anunnakki-gods, to Ereshkigal, to Bidu, the chief doorkeeper of the netherworld!

12' [ ... ] ... [ ... ], let them not be counted among the living.

13' Let [ ... , their] witchcraft, their [magic,] their evil machinations not come near my body.

14' [ ... ] then I will sing your glory!"

15' It is the [wording] (of an incantation) to undo witchcraft.

16' [Its ritual]: You set up portable altar(s) [before] Ea, Šamaš and Assalūhi. You put three offering portions — emmer bread — (on them).

17' You strew dates (and) sasqā-flour; you put mirsu-confection (made) of syrup (and) ghee (on the altars).

60 The witchcraft and sorceries.
18’ You fill three laḫamu-jars [with water (and)] beer and put (them on the altars). You fill censer(s) with aššū-thorn coal; then you stew one with cedar (shavings),
19’ [one with] juniper (and) one with flour. [For Šamaš] you pour a libation of water with sasqū-flour,
20’ for Ea you pour a libation of water with cedar (shavings), [for Asallūhī] you pour a [libation] of water with juniper.
21’ For his god and his goddess you stew a censer with [...]
22’ For Gilgames̄ you pour [out hot soup].

rev.
1 [You place] twelve emmer breads (and) mīrsu-confection (made) of syrup [and ghee (before Gilgamēš). You place a] censer with [juniper (next to it)],
2 you pour a libation of beer. To the left of [Gilgamēš you place a figurine of H]umut-tabal).
3 ... [ ] ... you pour a [libation of cold water (and)] beer (flavoured) with roasted barley.
4 You place [figurines of warlock and witch, of a man] and a woman — two figurines of tallow,
5 two figurines of wax,
6 [two figurines of sesame pomace, two figurines of] bitumen, two figurines of tamarisk-wood,
7 two figurines of cedar-wood,
8 [two figurines of dough (made)] of innimnu-barley [flour], two figurines of clay, two figurines of beer-bread
9 [ . . . before] Šamaš. Then [you recite] this incantation three times.
10 When you have recited (the incantation), he shall speak thus before Šamaš:

9 “O Šamaš, I have [placed before] you the figurines of my sorcerer and my sorceress.
10 Hand them over to Ɵumut-tabal of the ea[rth] . . .
11 I have poured a [libation of] water for Ɵumut-tabal, [ ] . . . [ ]
12 Ɵumut-tabal . . . Šamaš [ ] ... [ ]
13 figurines of my sorcerer [and my sorceress . . .].”
14 This he say[s . . .
15 he/you tell(s)/order(s)/call(s) the[m . . .
16 too fragmentary for translation

The tablet breaks

2.3. Commentary
Obv. 4’: For this motif, see Schwemer 2007b: 149–50.
5: The second half of the line describes the presentation of the figurines in the presence of the deities. In its closing lines (obv. 10’–14’) the prayer addresses a group of gods, and the ritual instructions show that these must be Ea, Šamaš and Asallūhī (obv. 16’). Within the presentation formula one would expect these gods to be directly addressed; cf., e.g., ēpuš salam kaššīptiya u kaššīptiya . . . aššu ina šaplikaunu (Maqlīt II 15–17), Šamaš salam kaššīptiya kaššīptiya usēpišna ina nábrika aššar nuṣupātī in K 3196+3344 obv. 9’–10’ (Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.1) or Ɵamaš salmi annūti ša ina mahar ilittika rabiti nasāku (KAR 80 = KAL 2, 8 obv. 26–7 with duplicates). Instead of the expected ina nábrikaunu or ina mahar ilittiku the present text addresses the gods in the third person. A restoration ina mahar Ea Šamaš u Asallūhī aššar nuṣupāti seems most plausible, even though Šamaš (alone) is directly addressed in the following lines.
6: Ea is probably named in the second half of the following line in parallelism to Asallūhī. If so, the god addressed in the present line must, by default, be Šamaš.
7: Cf. ina ti ṣe Ea ina šipi ša Asallūhī in Maqlīt VII 41 and its parallels KAL 2, 7 obv. II 5’–6’, K 11725: 10’ and Rm 2, 480: 6’–7’.
9: The significance of the keš sign in the margin (cf. rev. 12) remains unclear here; usually it marks scribal mistakes, see Lambert 1982: 216, Farber 1989: 22 fn. 21, Maul 1994: 191, 440 fn. 13, Borger, MesZ, p. 264 (cf. p. 269). With passive forms of paštāru and pašāru the accusative of relation often has a separate meaning: a-a-ši lu patra(du),pi mes-ni “may the sorceries be removed from me” (KAL 2, 15 obv. I 18’), i[a-a-ši] lu pat-ra-an-ni a-na lu-a-ši lu pa-as-ra-a-[ni] “let it (i.e. witchcraft) be released from me, let it be undone with regard to me” (ABRT 2, 18 r. col. 12–13), kišša raḫu ruṣa . . . lippašammina anu nāḫišatu u ramaššantu lītur “may witchcraft, magic sorcery . . . be removed from me and return to them, themselves” (KAL 2, 22 rev. V 4’–9’ // LKA 156 = KAL 2, 23 rev. 15’–17’), cf. also KUB 37, 55 obv. II 27’ // LKA 160 = BAM 140 = KAL 2, 46 rev. 9, Lambert 1974: 284: 8, Šurpu VIII 47.

61 The name of an aromatic plant is to be restored.
11: For the reading 4hi-duš, see Lambert 2002: 209 and Borger, MesZ, p. 314, both with further references.

13: The phonetic complement in te₄-₅i indicates an incorrect fem. plural form where one would have expected ṭiḥanim or, perhaps, ṭiḥani (lists of witchcraft types such as the present occasionally show singular agreement, cf., e.g., KAL 2, 22 rev. V 4–9 //, quoted supra).

16: An offering arrangement for Ea, Šamaš and Assuršu should include a portable altar for each deity. That the singular gi₄di₄ša indeed refers to three altars, rather than one, is proved by obv. 18’, where simple negative clearly stands for three censers which are then loaded with different aromatic substances (obv. 18’–19’). The food portions provided for the gods consist of breads, usually made of emmer, which are placed on the offering tables in bundles of twelve (cf. here rev. 1) or sometimes seven (Maul 1994: 49–51, Scurlock 2006: 44; for anti-witchcraft rituals, cf., e.g., PBS 10/2, 18 rev. 33: three portions of twelve emmer breads each for Šamaš). Here the quantity of bread is not specified; probably each god received one (or three?) bundle(s) of twelve breads.

17’–18’: Drinks for the gods are provided in lāḥammu-jars, probably one jar for each god. At the beginning of obv. 18’ there is room for one further sign preceding kāṣ.sag. Since mulūḫ demands two accusatives, another liquid rather than a preposition must be restored. Rituals for banishing ghosts to the netherworld prescribe beer and water to be provided in separate lāḥammu-jars (CT 23, 15–22 + obv. II 37◦//, ed. Scurlock 2006: 206, no. 14 A: ii 37; KAR 267 obv. 32, ed. Scurlock 2006: 359, no. 120 A: 32), but the mixing of water and beer in one jar is also attested: bēṣēšamû (laḫa-an) me₄(a)m₄šu u šikarī (kāṣ.sag) tukān (gin)²° “you set up a jar with water and beer” (Farber 1977: 129, l. 20). It seems that each god received one (or three?) jar(s) of diluted beer.

18’: At the end of the line one could restore [ta-sūr-raq], but then one would also expect tasarraq after ina burāši in obv. 19’.

18’–20’: The fragmentary text suggests that for incense and libation the same substances are employed for each god. The restoration of Šamaš in obv. 19’ and of Assuršu in obv. 20’ (rather than the other way round) is based on the observation that the latter break offers slightly more space. If these restorations are correct, the libations associate Ea with cedar, Assuršu with juniper and Šamaš with flour. The text does not specify which censer belongs to which god, but probably the same correlations apply, even though the substances are named in a different order. The use of cedar shavings, juniper and flour as successive fumigations is not restricted to the present text; cf. especially BBR 75–8: 62 (cedar), 68 (masbatha-flour and juniper), 75 (masbatha-flour). Juniper-scented water is otherwise used for washing and sprinkling (see the attestations collected in CAD B 327b), cedar-scented water seems to be attested only here (but note that cedar wood is one of the additives used for preparing the “holy water”, see Maul 1994: 42); the libation of water flavoured with sasqî-flour is better known, especially from rituals of the diviner, see Mayer 1976: 488–9 (add OECT 6, pl. xii, K 3507 obv. 25, ed. CAD S 194a).

22: The restoration of ṭattabak at the end of the line is fairly certain. Within the context of offerings for the dead tabûšu is used with reference to hot soup that is poured out, see KAR 32 obv. 15, ed. Scurlock 2006: 510, no. 219 A: 15, and KAR 184 = BAM 323 rev. 83 ◦//, ed. Scurlock 2006: 537–8, no. 228 A: 83; cf. the same offering for Lamasû in Myhrman 1932: 164 rev. IV 6 // KAR 239 rev. III 7²° (together with a libation of water and beer) and for Ereškigal and a kid buried as a substitute for the patient in LKA 79 obv. 22 (Ebeling 1951: 68). It seems very likely that Gilgamesh as judge and boatman of the netherworld here received the same funerary offering.

Rev. 1: Or did the scribe really intend 12 ninda gar°° “You set out twelve breads”?

3: For the libation of cold water and beer flavoured with roasted barley as part of funerary offerings, cf. Farber 1977: 129, l. 29. That water formed part of the libation for Ḫumûṣ-tabal is shown by the statement in rev. 11. Beer flavoured with roasted barley was a typical element of funerary offerings and is used as such in anti-ghost rituals (see Scurlock 2006: 45 with fn. 682, cf. also Nasrâbadi 1999: 65 with references). In view of KAR 184 = BAM 323 obv. 7 one could argue that šikar laḫi refers to beer to which one added flour made of roasted barley: qin(t)u laḫi(st)u (se.ṣa.a) ina me₄(a) u šikarī (kāṣ.sag) tamâḫṣas(u)ṣu (sag)²°=ma ṭanuqti(bal)²°-šu “you stir flour made from roasted barley into water and beer, then you libate (it) for him” (ed. Scurlock 2006: 530). On the other hand a very dark beer made of roasted barley would seem a very appropriate beverage for the inhabitants of the netherworld.

6: immi₄nu-barley was hardly used as such for the fabrication of figurines. Dough is one of the standard materials for figurines of sorcerers and not mentioned elsewhere in the preserved text. It therefore seems most likely that the present line refers to dough made of immi₄nu-barley. For figurines made of beer bread, see K 888 obv. 6 (ed. Schwemer 2006) and the parallel text KAL 2, 26 rev. III 5. Alternatively one could of course read 2 nu imi₄nu, but figurines made of an aromatic plant are otherwise unknown.

7: Since the traces at the beginning of rev. 8 cannot be reconciled with the tamânu that certainly followed šalâtîša, one is forced to assume that the scribe squeezed in tamânu(sid) at the end of rev. 7; note that the scribe did write on the margin elsewhere (obv. 17’, rev. 10).

10: An epithet ša qaqqar “of the earth” is not attested elsewhere, and the reading remains quite tentative (hardly šakin(gar) qaqqar “governor of the earth”); for qaqqar as one of the designations of the underworld, see Horowitz 1998: 292. It is unclear whether the undeciphered traces at the end of rev. 10 belong syntactically to the preceding or the following sentence. A reading kaš še.ṣa.a.a (cf. rev. 3) is excluded, but a restoration
t[a-b]a[l] seems worth considering. The line would then have to be translated “Hand them over to Ḥumūt-tabal of the earth (saying) ‘Carry off!’”.

12: The traces between Ḥumūt-tabal and Šamaš are unclear to me. They seem to be written in a slightly smaller script; therefore perhaps ḫ[p-p] “break”? Note that the line is marked by a kūr sign in the margin (see note on obv. 9).

References

Abbreviations follow CAD and AHw; KAL = Schwemer 2007a; MesZ = Borger 2004.


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