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# The Study of Terminology of the Netherworld in Sumero-Akkadian Literature (4)

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## 3.15. *apsû*<sup>1</sup>

See 2.6. ABZU in the Sumerian section.

Since the general concept and understanding of *apsû* has already been discussed in the ABZU entry, there will be minimal discussion on the issue here.

### a. Word level

- 1) deep water
- 2) cosmic/mythological subterranean water

This is an exclusively Mesopotamian concept representing a component of the cosmos in the underground. *apsû* holds two aspects: 1. the real source of rivers and deep water where fish live, 2. the cosmic or mythological domain where gods, such as Ea and Marduk dwell, as well as the place from which demons come. Apparently the cosmic sense dominates the entire semantic range of *apsû*. In terms of the distribution of meaning, it lies in a distributional inclusion or equivalence to the Netherworld because it consists of a part of the Netherworld itself.

The mythological character of *apsû* sometimes comes to be personified.<sup>2</sup>

b. Sentence level

- (66) gû.bi an.da ab.sá.a abzu.kû.ga.bi suh.bi uš.uš.e // uru<sub>4</sub>.uru<sub>4</sub>.  
e: ša rēšāšu šamāmi šannā *apsû* ellim šuršudu uššūšu

“(Imhursag) whose top rivals the heavens, whose foundations are based firmly on the holy Apsu”

4R 27 No.2: 15f.

*apsû* in this context is regarded as “the cosmic subterranean water” on which foundations are established. The same as *eršetu*’s relationship with *šamû*, *apsû* occurs in opposition to *šamû*, the other vertical edge of the cosmos. Therefore, as far as the semantic distribution is concerned, the *apsû* is almost the distributional equivalence by a code of cosmology.

- (67) ana šamê ellima ana <sup>d</sup>Igigi anamdin urta  
[urr]ad ana ABZU <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki upaqqad  
gallê šamrūti ana KUR.NU.GI<sub>4</sub>.A atarradma

“Up to the heaven I shall go, and give orders to the Igigi.  
I shall go down to the Apsu and keep the Anunnaki under control.

I shall chase the wild *gallû*-demons into the land of no return”

Cangi *Erra* I 183-5.

As we have observed in (1), two cosmic structures, *šamû* and *apsû* where the Anunnaki gods dwell, are noticed. In addition to that, KUR.

NU.GI<sub>4</sub>.A “the land of no return” comes up as the general term for the Netherworld. It is used for the cosmic foundation as a structure of the underworld.

- (68) *300 Igigi ša šamāmi u 600 ša ABZU kalīšunu pahrū*  
“The 300 Igigi of the heavens and the 600 of the Apsu all  
of them gathered” *Enuma Elish* VI 69.

Just as in (66) and (67), this reference preserves *apsû* in opposition to *šamû*, but here it is synonymous to the Netherworld.

- (69) *ašib Ea kî apsû apsû tâmtim tâmtim Ereškigal*  
“Ea is present as the Apsu, the Apsu is sea, sea is Eresh-  
kigal” *RA* 16 147: 2.

This reference represents *apsû* as identical to the Netherworld where Ereshkigal presides as the queen through a code of theology.

- (70) [šā.abz]u.sû.ud.rá.gin<sub>7</sub> dingir.na.me. nu.mu.un.pād.da.e.dē:  
*ša kīma qereb apsî rūqu ilu mammam la uttû*  
“Into which no other god can see any more than he can  
into the midst of the distant Apsu” *BA* 5 646: 5-6.

*apsû* implies a place where no one can see because it is as deep as the Netherworld. In this sense it shares the same semantic distribution with the Netherworld through a code of a socio-psychological aspect by which darkness overpowers the entire Netherworld.

- (71) *urradma ana ABZU itti Ea bēlīja asbāku*

“I shall go down to the Apsu, and dwell with my lord Ea”

*Gilg.* XI 42.

(72) <sup>d</sup>Amar. utu dumu. sag. abzu. ke<sub>4</sub>: *Marduk māru rēstû ša  
apsî*

“Marduk, fist-born son of the Apsu” *CT* 17 1: 38f.

There are gods who dwell in *apsû*. It is known primarily as the abode of Ea (71), his spouse Damkina, Marduk (72), Nusku, Ninurta and others. In certain texts they are particularly connected with *apsu*, differentiated from the Netherworld, even though it is a part of the total structure of the underworld.

(73) *ummâni sunûti ana apsî ušeredma elâšunu ul aqbi  
ša <sup>giš</sup>mēsi elmēši ašaršun unakkirma ul ukallim mamma*

“I sent those *ummânu*-sages down into the Apsu.

I did not order their coming up again.

I changed the place of the *mesu*-tree and of the *elmesu*-  
amber.

I did not reveal (the new place) to anybody.”

*Cagni Erra* I 147–148.

(74) *ali sibat [ap]kallu<sup>meš</sup> aps[î] purādî ebbūte ša kîma <sup>d</sup>Ea  
bēlišunu*

“Where are the seven *Apkallu* of the Apsu, pure *puradu*-  
fish who are like Ea, their lord”

*Cagni Erra* I 162a.

*apsû* also is the domain of the *apkallu*-wise men who are associated with Ea, the magician.

- (75) é<sup>n</sup> imin.na.meš imin.na.meš, idim.abzu.ta imin.na.meš, še.  
er.ka.an du<sub>11</sub>. ga.na imin.na.meš, idim abzu.ta É.NUN.ta è.  
a.meš: *sibitti šunu sibitti šunu, ina nagab apsê sibitti šunu,*  
*zu'unūti ina šamê sibitti šunu, ina nagab apsê ina kumme*  
*irbû šunu*

“They are seven, they are seven, from the depths of the  
Apsu,

They are seven, adorned (akk. adds in the heavens) they  
are seven

From the depths of Apsu, from the Agrun, they came forth  
(akk. in the depths of Apsu, in the *kummu*, they  
grew” *CT* 16 15 v 28ff.

The other residents of *apsû* are the demons who come out from there. Dizziness and sickness come forth from it, because the demons are involved with sickness and human suffering.

*kummu* “private room of temple or palace,”<sup>3</sup> which is applied to the deities’ chamber in the Netherworld should be referred in conjunction with *apsû*. The lexical reference endorses *kummu*’s association with *apsû*.<sup>4</sup>

- (76) *qirbiš kummišu šupšuhiš inūhma imbišumma apsû*

“He (Ea) rested in peace in his chamber which he called  
the Apsu” *Enuma Elish* I 75.

- (77) <sup>d</sup>UTU E.NUN. na.ta e.a.na: *“Samas istu kumme ina asesu*  
*“Shamash goes forth from the chamber” CT* 16 36: 36f.

*kummu*, in mythological context, is primarily Ea’s chamber in the Apsu (76), but also at night Shamash enters his *kummu*-chamber (77).<sup>5</sup>

- (78) IDIM abzu.ta É.NUN è.a.meš = *ina nagab ap̄sî ina kumme  
irbû šunu*

“They (seven demons) grew up in the kummu in the depth  
of the Apsu” CT 16 v 34.

Not only deities but also demons reside in the *kummu* in the Apsu. These references prove that *kummu* is in a distributional inclusion to the Netherworld through the codes of cosmology (the Apsu’s involvement) and theology (resident of the Netherworld).

On the other hand, É.NUN corresponds to <sup>d</sup>Ma-nun-gal,<sup>6</sup> who is an underworld goddess, spouse of Birdu, who is a Nergal figure. Her epithet is nin.e.kur.ra.ke<sub>4</sub>: <sup>d</sup>MIN *bēlet šibitti* “mistress of the Netherworld/prison.”<sup>7</sup> She also is called *šabbutītu* “female snatcher”.<sup>8</sup>

Two other *apsû* related words<sup>9</sup>: *asurrakku* and *anzanunzû*<sup>10</sup> should be considered here. Both of them have in common the semantic distribution “depths, subterranean waters.” The cosmic sense of the depths is retained much more in the term *anzanunzû*:

- (79) *tušelli ārid anzanunzê tušakkan kap̄pa*

“You (Shamash) bring up him who goes down to the deep,  
you equip him with wings” Lambert *BWL* 130: 70.

Here *anzanunzû*<sup>11</sup> is a synonym of *apsû*, semantically both share a distributional equivalence.

- (80) *ajû tēm ilī qereb šame ilammad milik ša anzanunzê ihak-  
kim mannu*

“Who can know the will of the gods in heaven, who can  
understand the plans of the gods of the Netherwor-

ld” Lambert *BWL* 4037 (Ludlul II).

Several texts mention the Anunnaki as gods who dwell in the Apsu; this phrase refers to the gods of the underworld whose domain is in the subterranean waters. Since the Anunnaki are gods of the Netherworld, the distribution of meaning should be at least in a distributional inclusion.

3.16. *kummu* See 3.15. *apsû*

3.17. *anzanuzû* See 3.15. *apsû*

3.18. *asurrakku* See 3.15. *apsû*

3.19. *hubur*<sup>12</sup>

This is the cosmic river of the Netherworld located between the world of life and the land of the death. In Sumerian this river is known as *i<sub>7</sub>-lú-ru-gú* “the river which opposes man”. Akkadian mostly uses *hubur* for this river. The *hubur*-river is crossed by a boat whose ferryman is *Uršānabi*<sup>13</sup> or the demon *Hummut-tabal*.<sup>14</sup>

a. Word level

The *hubur*-river belongs exclusively to a Sumero-Akkadian concept of the cosmic component, which actually composes a part of the Netherworld. It is also mythologically personified: <sup>d</sup>Hubur<sup>15</sup> or *umma hubur pātiqat kalamu* “Mother Hubur (=Tiamat), she fashions all things.”<sup>16</sup> The river Uлай will be considered as a similar concept to *hubur*-river.<sup>17</sup> In terms of distribution of meaning it has a dis-



tributational inclusion or equivalence through a code of theology according to which all humans cross the river after death on a journey to enter the Netherworld.

b. Sentence level

(81) *illakû uruh mûte nāri hubur tebbiri qabû ultu ulla*

“They (mankind) go the way of death, they have been told from of old to cross the river of the Netherworld”  
*ZA 43 46: 17, Lambert BWL 70: 16-17, (Theodicy).*

After death all have to cross the hubur-river to enter the Netherworld. This concept can be seen commonly in the Dumuzi-Damu texts.

(82) *ša šamê rūqūti mīlašunu hītu ... ša hubur palkāti šupulša īdi*

“(I am Marduk) who has explored the height of the distant heavens, who knows the depth of the broad Hubur-river”

*Lambert Marduk’s Address to the Demons A 8-9.*

*hubur* occurs here as a cosmic structure in opposition to the heavens. Considering a common vertical representation of the Cosmos, such as heaven and earth, it is rendered either as the Netherworld or a part of it.

(83) *lissu sar(?) bēri(?) ina zumurīja*  
*ana <sup>d</sup>Namtar sukkal ersetim piqissu[nūti]*  
*itti <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki abulla lirubūma a[j-tūrū]*  
*<sup>i</sup>hubur lirubūma aj-issahr[ū]*

*bāb ālī mūtī līrubū [itti baltūti] aj-innamrū [ ]*

“Let them (the evil spirits) be faraway 3600 miles from me!

To Namtar, the vizier of the Netherworld entrust them!

With Anunnaki let them enter in the main gate, and not

return,

The Hubur-river let them enter, and not be turned back,

The gate of the city of the dead let them enter, and not be

seen with the living. *TuL* 128: 4-8, *vat* 13657 II 6ff.

In this reference hubur is given some characteristics shared with the other components of the Netherworld. It is situated far away from this world (see 82),<sup>18</sup> no one can return once they have entered.

### 3.20. *nagbu*<sup>19</sup>

#### a. Word level

*nagbu* shares the semantic range with *apsû*. On the one hand, *apsû* is the source of *nagbu*, “spring, fountain”.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, it is used of “(cosmic) underground water” and shares this with *apsû*. The latter extension of the semantics of *nagb* implies definitely an area of the Netherworld.

#### b. Sentence level

(84) *Adad zunna umašširamma Ea upattira nagbušu mesrû  
nuhšu u hegalla ina mātija iškun*

“Adad brought rain, Ea opened his springs, brought forth  
wealth, abundance, and fertility in may land”

*BBS*. No.37: 4 (Nbn.).

The springs as sources of water for rivers like the Tigris and Euphrates, in contrast to Adad's rain (84), along with *tâmtu* sea, and in the phrase *mê nagbi*, do not primarily have anything to do with the Netherworld. At this point *nagbu* is in a complementary distribution to the Netherworld. However, since Ea, lord of the Apsu in (84) is involved in opening his springs it may be in overlapping distribution to the Netherworld, through a code of theology in which the Apsu is Ea's abode.

(85) *uridūma ilišunu uridūma nagabbīšs*

"Their gods went down, they went down to the underground water" *MVAG* 21 88: 12 (Kedorlaomer text).

(86) *zunnīšu Adad lišaqqi [...] aji-illika mīlu ina [na]gbi*

"May Adad withhold his rain [...] the flood does not come up from the deep" *Atrahasis* II 11ff.

*nagbu* in references (85) and (86) render more like the Apsu in its semantic range. Yet it is still a part of the general Netherworld. Its semantic distribution can be in distributional inclusion to the Netherworld in terms of a code of theology in which some gods dwell in underground water (85) or the flood derives from the depths of water (86).

(87) *Ea šar apsī bēl nagbi mê la balāti lišqikunu*

"May Ea, the king of the Apsu, the lord of the deep waters, give you death-bringing water to drink"

*Wiseman Treaties* 521.

(88) *Arahsamnu ša bēl nagbi apkalli ilī Marduk*

"Arahsamnu (month name) belongs to the lord of the

underground water, the sage of the gods, Marduk”  
4R 33 i 1, iii 49.

Certain gods' epithets, here Ea and Marduk, undoubtedly retain *nagbu* as a synonym of *apsû*. In these cases *nagbu* carries a distributional equivalence to the Netherworld through literary juxtaposition.

3.21. *šēru*<sup>21</sup> See 2.9. EDIN.

We have pointed out that EDIN in Sumerian literature occurs in association with the Dumuzi-Damu cult as an entrance to the Netherworld, while Akkadian *šēru*, equivalent to Sumerian EDIN does not retain this meaning, even though it retains the geographical character which EDIN holds.

a. Word level

- 1) back
- 2) as preposition, such as “upon”
- 3) hinterland

According to the lexical references for *šēru*, the geographical location of EDIN, “open country” provides the other semantic range as its extension: with association with ZAG “side,” BAR “outside, aside,” MURGU “back, shoulder,” UGU “top.”<sup>22</sup> These references are sufficient evidence that “back” and “upon” stem from “hinterland”.

“Hinterland” carries a wide range of meaning from a place for bringing produce to haunting demons, from positive to negative images. But a distinction is clear. *šēru* differs decisively from the urban area.<sup>23</sup>

This clarification results from the fact that it is situated apart from the mountains (*šadû*), the plains (*bamâtu*)<sup>24</sup> and the deserted regions (*namû*). However, *šēru* does not mean the desert, but rather is arable land for agriculture, that is a field in the countryside. In *šēru* there are wild animals such as lions, gazelles, leopards, lizards and birds along with domestic cattle, as in the African steppes of contemporary times.

Another semantic characteristic of *šēru* indicates possible connection with the Netherworld.

b. Sentence level

- (89) uru šà.ba uru bar.ra edin.edin.na sìg-sìg bí.in.si a.ri.a mu.  
un.gin.gin: *libbi āli ahāt āli šēru bamāti šaqummatu*  
*ušamlīma ušālik namuiš*

“He filled the center of the city, the outside of the city, the open country, the hill country with silence and made (them desolate) like the deserted region”

4R 20 No.1: 3f.

- (90) *šuharruru šēru parkā dalāti*

“The open country is silent, the doors are barred”

OECT 6 PL. 12: 8.

Silence is a character of *šēru* which also belongs to the Netherworld, even though these references do not deal primarily with the Netherworld. This atmosphere of *šēru* has the potentiality of an overlapping distribution through a code of socio-psychology shared by both *šēru* and the Sumero-Akkadian Netherworld.

- (91) *etlu šaggāsā ša qabalti EDIN*

“(Enkidu) the murderous man from the heart of the ste-

pppe land” *Gilg.* I iv 7.

- (92) *šumma awilum lū wardam lū amtam halqam ina šērim  
išbatma*

“If a man seizes a runaway slave or slave girl in the open  
country” *CH* § 17: 52.

*šeru* in these references as the home of nomads (91) or lawless persons (92) gives an impression that it is a home for uncivilized or outcast people. This environment of *šeru* is filled with the notion of the haunt of demons.

- (93) [udug].hul a.lá.[hul] [edin.na.t]a é.tūr.ra ba.an.dib: *utukku  
lemnu alû lemnu ina šēri tarbaša ibta’u*

“The evil *utukku*-demon, the evil *alu*-demon from the  
steppe have passed through the fold”

*4R* 18\* No.6: 4f.

- (94) *etemmu murtappidu ina EDIN išbassu*

“A ghost that roams about in the steppeland has seized  
him” *KAR* 182 r.20.

This typical association of *šeru* with demons suggests its relationship with the Netherworld. In terms of the semantic distribution, *šeru* in (93) and (94) lies in an overlapping distribution to the Netherworld through a code of theology by which demons, dwellers of the underworld, haunt in steppeland.

- (95) *enūma tebbiru Hubur  
tummīšuma Eama aj itūra  
enūma tallaku šēra*

*tummīšu qerbitamma aj issahra*

“When you cross the Hubur-river,  
Swear him (the evil) by Ea, so that he may not return.  
When you walk through the steppe,  
Swear him by the field, so that he may not come back”

*BID* A II a 181-184; *TuL* 55.

The context of the reference (95) is set totally in the description of the Netherworld: *šaplātu* “the Netherworld” (v.177), *hubur* “the river of the Netherworld” and *šēru* “steppe.” In this case *šēru* in (95) serves as a part of the Netherworld, an entrance through which demons come forth. Therefore, it has a distributional inclusion to the other domain in terms of the theological and literary environment (Dumuzi’s evolution).

Also of interest are the deities residing in the wilderness. Among them is a goddess; dNin. gestin. na dub. sar. mah. [...]: *ᵃBēlet šēri* DUB. SAR [...] “*Bēlet-šēri* the scribe of [the Netherworld].”<sup>25</sup>

3.22. *bamātu* See *šēru*<sup>26</sup>

3.23. *namû*<sup>27</sup>

Basically the connotation of *nam* is similar to that of *šēru*.<sup>28</sup> The difference between them will be found the lexical references. *šēru* corresponds primarily to EDIN “steppe”, and *namû* to A.RI.A “wasteland,” and Á.DAM(.MEŠ) “habitat.”

a. Word level

1) pasture land

2) uncultivated area

*namû* is used of the extended pasture land around a city where nomads dwell and flocks graze, and it also signifies the wasteland, deserted region. It is not easy to clarify this polarity of connotation, but one possible interpretation is that *namû* either has deserted regions within it or lies directly next to the desert. That is, it may refer to fringes of cultivated area within which there is desert or which is next to wasteland. Another term, *hurbu*, signifies the notion of a deserted region. The second meaning of *nam* coincides with that of *hurbu*, Sumerian A.RI.A, a logogram shared with *namû*.

b. Sentence level

(96) *litba lištappidu namê*

“Let (the demon) rise and run around in the steppe”

*BRM* 4 18: 23.

(97) *ana šēri usšima... ana n[a]mê errub*

“When I go out to the steppe, when I enter the desert”

Cagni *Erra* I 117f.

Like EDIN / *šēru* “steppe”, *namû* can also be a place of demonic haunting. In this respect it has overlapping distribution to the Netherworld. In reference (97) *šēru* parallels *namû* in association with the Netherworld.



3.24. *hurbu* See 3.23. *namû*.

3.25. *šadû*<sup>29</sup> See 2.1. KUR and 2.4. HUR.SAG in the Sumerian section.

a. Word level

1) mountain

2) steppe

*šadû* corresponds to both Sumerian KUR and HUR.SAG, but is chosen more regularly KUR as a logogram for *šadû* “mountain” in Akkadian literature. *šadû* is also used for “steppe in the west.”<sup>30</sup>

b. Sentence level

One meaning of *šadû* should be noted: its use in the sense of “cosmic mountain”:

(98) *aj itha aj isniqa a[j iqr]iba aj ikšudanni*  
*libir nāra libbalk[it] šadâ*  
*lissi šar[bē]ru in zumrija*

“Let it (the evil) not be near, not come near, not approach,  
 not reach me!

Let it cross the river, pass over mountains.

Let it go 3600 miles away from my body”

*BID* A IIa 86b-98.

Demons, inhabitants of the Netherworld, often come forth from rivers and mountains. It may not be the case that *šadû* in this reference that *sadu* bears the meaning “habitat of demons”, but it is at least set in the context of cosmic description. The river and mountains here

represent objects far away from this world. So, according to this text, the Netherworld exists beyond the river and mountains. In terms of semantic distribution, *šadû* here is in an overlapping distribution to the Netherworld through cosmology and theology in which demons are involved in cosmic representations, such as river and mountains.

- (99) *ša šadi šemušu Māšu[šu]*  
*ana šad Māši ina kaš[ādīšu]*  
*ša ūmišamma inašaru aš[i ʹSamši u ērib ʹŠamši]*  
*elūšunu šupuk šamē ka[šdā]*  
*šapliš arallē irassunu kašdat*

“The name of the mountain is Mashu.

As he arrives at the mountain Mashu,

Which every day keeps watch over the rising and setting  
of the sun,

Whose peak reaches to the vault of heaven,

Whose breasts reach to the Netherworld below”

*Gilg.* IX ii 1-5.

*The Epic of Gilgamesh* preserves a few examples of the cosmic description of the mountains, of which this reference is one. In the text, *šadû* bears the meaning of the cosmic mountain which is an entrance to or on the edge of the Netherworld through a code of the cosmology.

### 3.26. *huršānu*<sup>31</sup>

This is a Sumerian loan from HUR.SAG “mountain range,” which is used as a logogram and a determinative for mountains. It is prob-

ably in opposition to *tâmtu* “sea”<sup>32</sup> which also means high mountains.<sup>33</sup> They can be juxtaposed to express the totality of the mountains.

(100) *malku šadê u huršāni*

“King of all the mountain ranges” *KAH* I 3: 19.

Sometimes the usage of *huršānu* is not different from *šadû*.

(101) *galtu melammūšunu sahip huršāni*

“Their frightful splendor covers the mountain”

*Gilg.* IX ii 8.

This phrase is decorated by the cosmic mountain *šadû* (*Gilg.* IX ii and iii), semantically they are identical to each other. In this case, *huršānu* lies in an overlapping distribution to the Netherworld through a code of cosmology.

Finally with respect to the Netherworld, that the phrase HUR.SAG *īmid* (*šadâ(šu) īmid*) “He reached (his) mountains” means “to die”.

3.27. *qabru*<sup>24</sup> See 2.12. URUGAL in the Sumerian section.

*qabru* “grave” is used for obvious reasons, for an entrance to the Netherworld. This idea can be reinforced by a phrase *bit qebērišu epūšu* “the house of his burying I made.”<sup>35</sup> It shares a similar feature of the Netherworld environment namely darkness.<sup>36</sup>

(102) [*ša ū*] *ridu qabri ātūra ana KÁ* <sup>d</sup>U[TU.È]

“I who went down to the grave have returned to the Gate-of-the-Sunrise”

Lambert *BWL* 60: 78 (Ludlul IV).

This reference indicates an interesting perspective from the Netherworld's point of view. Here, going down to the grave is equated with returning to the gate of the sunrise, which is elucidated as an edge of the Netherworld, at the eastern mountains. Through the gate of the Cosmos, that is the east as the edge of the other world, and the logical reality of burying the dead, *qabru* bears a distributional inclusion to the Netherworld.

(103) udug.edin.na udug.hur.sag.gá udug.a.ab.ba udug.urugal<sup>37</sup>.

la.ke<sub>4</sub>: *utuk šēri utuk šadî utuk tâmti utuk qabri*

“*utukku*-demon of the steppe, *utukku*-demon of the mountain, *utukku*-demon of sea, *utukku*-demon of the grave” *ASKT* 82-83: 3, *AOAT* I 3: 3.

(104) <sup>a</sup>Nam.tar udug.gal urugal.la kur nu.gi<sub>4</sub>.gi<sub>4</sub>.ke<sub>4</sub>: <sup>a</sup>*Min utukku rabû qabri eršeti la târi*

“Namtar, great *utukku*-demon of the grave, the land of no return” *STT* 173: 1f.

*qabru* is an abode of demons which is even identified with the Netherworld (104). Along with the steppe, mountain, etc, it is a typical place that demons and evil ghosts haunt. By a code of theology, the demons' association with *qabru*, its semantic range has a distributional inclusion (103) or equivalence (104) to the Netherworld.

(105) dingir.dib.dib.bi.e.ne urugal.la.[ta] im.ta.è.a.[meš] líl.lá.e.  
ne hul.a.meš urugal.la.ta im.ta.e.a.mes ki.se.ga a.de.am  
urugal.la.ta im.ta.è.a.meš: *ilū kamûti ištu qabrim ittashûni*

*zaqīqū lemnūti ištu qabrim ittasūni ana kasāp kispi u nāq  
mê ištu qabrim* MIN

“The captive gods have come out from the grave, the evil  
ghosts have come out from the grave, they (all) have  
come out from the grave for the funerary offerings  
and libations” *CT* 17 37: 1ff.

Not only demons and ghosts but gods of death are involved in *qabru*  
(105). Nergal is called *en.urugal.ke<sub>4</sub>=bēl qabri* “the lord of the  
grave.”<sup>38</sup>

Words similar to *qabru* are *naqbaru* “tomb, burial place” and  
*kimāhu* “grave, tomb”.

*naqbaru*, like *qabru* is derived from *qebēru* “to bury”. Semantical-  
ly they share the meaning of the distribution. However, its Sumerian  
correspondence differs from that of *qabru*=(URUGAL): *ē.kur.BAD=*  
*er-se-tu, É mu-ti, na-aq-ba-ru* “earth, house of the dead, burial place.”<sup>39</sup>

*kimāhu* “tobm” obviously derives from the Sumerian word KI.  
MAH “great exalted place.”<sup>40</sup> Its semantic range overlaps *qabru*, but  
a difference would be that *qabru* retains the verbal meaning “burial” for  
grave while *kimāhu* is used of the grave as a formal construction. A  
*kimāhu* could be located within a house.<sup>41</sup>

(106) <sup>d</sup>Allatum <sup>d</sup>Allatum

*bēltu erseti [ar]allî...*

*nād[in] kimāh (KI.MAH) meš ša...*

“Allatu, Allatu,

The lady of the earth,...the Netherworld,

Giver of the tombs of...” *Vision of Crown Prince* obv. 30ff.

The text is broken and so the context is difficult to understand, but it is sufficient to say that *kimāhu* here is set in the context of the Netherworld. At least *kimāhu* overlaps its semantic distribution to the Netherworld.

3.28. *šaplītu, šaplātu* (pl.)<sup>42</sup>

The derivative terms of *šapālu* “to be below” should be examined: *šaplu, šaplānu, šapliš, šaplītu*. Some of them have already been mentioned in conjunction with *eršetu* and *arallū*.

Apparently the semantic range of *šaplītu* includes the cosmic bottom half as a symbol, just as *elātu* implies the upper world as opposed to the Netherworld. As a cosmic description, *šaplītu* (*šaplātu*) occurs often in opposition to *elātu*.

(107) *šaplāti malki ʰkubu ʰAnunnaki taṣaqqid elāti ša dadmē  
kalīšina tustēšser rē’ū šaplāti nāqid elāti*

“In the Netherworld you(Shamash) assign (tasks to) the  
malku-demon, the Kubu-demon, the Anunnaki,  
Above you direct all the people in the right path,  
Shepherd of that beneath, keeper of that above”

Lambert *BWL* 8: 31-33 (Shamash Hymn).

A pair of cosmic opposition, *šaplātu* and *elātu*, along with an entity of the Netherworld and the appearance of Anunnaki in the text provide sufficient indication that in this reference *šaplītu* designates the Netherworld. It is in a distributional equivalence through the code of cosmology (a set of the cosmic description) and theology (Anunnaki, residents of the Netherworld).

- (108) *ina elâti šumšu lidmiq*  
*ina šaplâti etimmušu mē zakûti liltu*  
“May his fame be great in the upper world,  
May his ghost in the Netherworld drink pure water”  
*OLZ* 1901 5ff.; *Or NS.* 6 62.

Almost the same position of *šaplîtu* is recognized in reference (108) as in (107) above: the pair *šaplîtu* and *elâtu* co-occurring with the ghost, a resident of the Netherworld.

- (109) *bēl elâti u šaplâti*  
“(Marduk) lord of the upper and lower parts”  
*VASI* 37 i 10 (NB kudurru).
- (110) [*n*] *ūr elâti u šaplâti*  
“(Shamash) light of the upper world and the Netherworld”  
*AMT* 71 I: 28.

The juxtaposition of *elâtu* and *šaplîtu* signifies the whole universe, representing the vertical edges of the cosmos: heaven and the Netherworld. Without doubt the semantic range of *šaplîtu* is in a distributional equivalence to the Netherworld through a code of cosmology.

- (111) *šaptu attunu* <sup>d</sup>*Anunnaki ilāni rabûti pārisū purussē*  
*ana nišē šaplâti dāinū dīni ša kala tenēšē[te]*  
“Incantation: you, the Anunnaki, great gods who make  
decisions to the people of below and render judgement of all mankind. *TuL* 130: 13.
- (112) *Anunnaki ina šaplâti*

“Anunnaki down below” *Kish* 1 pl. 34: 2 b 12.

*šaplâti*, of course, can denote the Netherworld without *elâtu* by such a code as theology as in (111) and (112).

### 3.29. *bābu*<sup>43</sup>

A paradigma of *bābu* is “opening, door, gate” which can be expanded to a cosmic sense.

(113) *girtablullû inaššaru bāb (KÁ)-šû*

“The scorpion-men watch its (the sun’s) gate”

*Gilg.* IX ii 6.

(114) *amēlūtu Šamaš ina libbi KÁ Ê-šû imurū*

“Mankind saw Shamash at the gate his house”

*STC* 2 PL. 49: 13 (SB lit.).

The sun comes forth from his gate which would be situated at the horizontal edge of the Netherworld; east.

(115) <KÁ>. ABZU <ab>.ta.è: *bāb apsî ippatte*

“The gate to the Apsu is being opened”

*KAV* 218 A ii 27 and 35 (Astrolabe B).

As well as the sun the Apsu also has the gate.

(116) *Ištar ana KÁ KUR.NU.GI<sub>4</sub>.A ina kašādīša*

“When Istar arrived at the gate of the land of no return”

*CT* 15 45: 12 (Istar’s Descent).



Traditionally the entrance to the Netherworld is equipped with the seven gates called inclusively the “gate of the land of no return” or the “gate of Ereshkigal.”<sup>44</sup>

*abullu*, “city gate, entrance gate of a building”, corresponding to Sumerian KÁ.GAL, is also utilized in connection with the cosmic regions, and it is like with *bābu* in its semantic distribution:

(117) *tepetti KÁ.GAL KI-ti DAGAL-ti*

“You (Shamash) open the main gate of the ‘wide land’ (= the Netherworld)” *KAR* 32: 30.

(118) *iptēma KÁ.GAL.MEŠ ina šīlī kilallān šīgaru uddannina  
šumēla u imna*

“He opened gates at both sides (of heaven), he fastened the bolt, left and right” *Enuma Elish* V 9.

Both references are set in the cosmic locality, so KÁ. GAL (= *abullu*) in (117) undoubtedly lies in a distributional inclusion with the Netherworld through a code of cosmology (wide land=the underworld).

### 3.30. *arūtu*<sup>45</sup>

Sumerian A. PA<sub>4</sub> corresponding to *arūtu* “Pipe for offering and libation to the dead” is a juncture to the Netherworld.

(119) *šaplānu arūtašu mē kasūti aj ušamhir*

“May he (Shamash) never let his pipe receive cool water down below (=in the Netherworld)”

*BBS*t No.2 col. B 20 (MB kudurru).

(120) a.pa<sub>4</sub> ki.sē.ga pà.da zag ki.a.nag.gá.mu: *pāqīdu arūtu kisege*

*ašar maltūš*

“(Shamash) who (in the Netherworld), where its (ghost’s) drinking place is, takes care of the pipe through which the offerings to the dead are made”

*UVB 15 36: 11.*

Like Sumerian usage of A.PA<sub>4</sub>, the references here also are involved with the Netherworld. Sumerian references<sup>46</sup> show the cosmic sense of *arūtu*. Based on such use, *arūtu* may represent the Netherworld. Its semantic range would be in a distributional inclusion through a code of the theology (libation for dead through the pipe).

### 3.31. *takkapu*<sup>47</sup>

Sumerian AB.LĀL.<sup>48</sup> Basically the term means a “hole” or “window” through which a gatekeeper watches 2) through which ghosts come up from the Netherworld.

(121) ab.lāl.kur.ra gāl im.ma.an.tag<sub>4</sub>: *luman takkap*

*KI-tì iptēma*

“He (Shamash) opened a hole in the Netherworld: he immediately opened a hole in the Netherworld”

*Gilg. XII 83. Cf.79.*

The ghost of Enkidu comes forth through a hole from the Netherworld. In this sense, the hole functions as an exit. The semantic distribution of *takkapu* to the Netherworld is in a distributional inclusion through a code of theology (ghost comes out through a hole).

3.32. *Kutha*<sup>49</sup>

Kutha is a geographical name, a city in Northern Babylonia. The writing in Sumerian is Gú-du<sub>8</sub>-a<sup>ki</sup>, whose etymology is unknown. The name Kutha is based on Akkadian reading *Kuta'um*.

This city was the cultic center for Nergal (=Meslamtaea), and Laš (Nergal's spouse). The name itself occasionally implies the Netherworld.

(122) enegi<sup>ki</sup> a-pa<sub>4</sub>-gal a-pa<sub>4</sub>-ki-a <sup>d</sup>Ereš-ki-gal-la-ka  
gú-du<sub>8</sub>-a ke-en-ge-ra gú-si-a nam-lú-ulū

“Enegi, great pipe, pipe of the earth, which belongs to  
Ereshkigalla,

Kutha of Sumer, (the place) where all mankind is gathered” *TCS 3 TH No.14 179-180.*

(123) *erbī bēlti* GU.DU<sub>8</sub>.A<sup>ki</sup> *lirīški*  
É.GAL KUR.NU.GI<sub>4</sub> *lihdu ina pānika*

“Enter my lady that Kutha may rejoice,

That the palace of the land of no return may be glad at  
your presence” *Istar's Descent 40-41.*

Two elements of Kutha as a cultic center for Nergal and a place where the dead gather (122) elevate its position from a geographical name to a name denoting the Netherworld. In terms of semantic distribution, Kutha lies in a distributional equivalence to the Netherworld through a code of theology (Kutha as a city of Nergal, the place where the dead gather).

3.33. *anduruna*<sup>50</sup>

The paucity of textual references makes it difficult to elucidate the concept of *anduruna* in relation to the Netherworld.

(124) *dalhūnimma ša ti'amat karassa ina šu'āri šuduru qereb andurunna*

“They troubled the mood of Tiamat,

they caused worry (to the gods) with in the *anduruna* with their boisterous behavior”

*Enuma Elish* I 23-24.

(125) *bēl eršetim rubû ša arallî bēl ašri u māti lā târi šadû ša Anunnaki*

*pārîš purssê eršeti markas rabû ša anduruna*

“The lord of the Netherworld, the prince of the Arallu, the lord of the place, and of the land of no return, the mountain of Anunnaki

Who makes decisions for the Netherworld, the great link of *Anduruna*” Craig *ABRT* 2 13 r. 1-3.

Literally *anduruna* “the inhabited heaven” derives from Sumerian AN.DURUN.A (124). In reference (125) it is clear that the Netherworld corresponds to the dwelling of the other side, the heavenly abode. Therefore, the semantic range of *anduruna* to the Netherworld is only in a complementary distribution; no semantic connection is recognized.

3.34. *nigissu*<sup>51</sup>

This term means “crevice, crack,” equivalent to Sumerian KI.IN.DAR.

(126) ki-in-dar kur-ra-ke<sub>4</sub> durun-na-a-meš: *ina nigissu eršeti ittanāššabu*

“They (demons dwell in the crevices of the earth”

*CT* 16 44: 88f.

(127) <sup>d</sup>A-nun-na-ke<sub>4</sub>-e-ne hu-mu-un-si-ir-gin<sub>7</sub> du<sub>6</sub>-du<sub>6</sub>-da im-ma-ra-an-hal<sub>4</sub>-hal<sub>4</sub>-[ge-es]: *Anunnaki kīma humširi ina nigissate uštarm[û]*

“The Anunnaki gods have dwell in the cracks in the earth like mice” *Angin dimma* III 22 (cooper).

*nigissu* is primarily characterized by the notion of darkness and inaccessibility, dwelling-place of snakes, bats. Such a notion easily is extended to the place of demons and gods of the Netherworld because of an atmosphere in common. *nigis(su) eršeti* “crack of the earth” refers to Anzu’s abode.<sup>52</sup> The references (126) and (127) represent the overlapping distribution to the Netherworld in terms of a code of the theology in which the demons and the Anunnaki gods are the residents of the underworld.

3.35. Miscellanea

There are some miscellaneous terms which have only lexicographical references, such as *kukkû*.

*kukkû* means “darkness.”<sup>53</sup> The following lexical references indi-

cate that it also signifies a name of the Netherworld:

ku-uk-uk ki-ki = [ku-u] k-ku-ú, ma-a-tu šapl[i-tu]

“darkness,” “land down below”.

CAD K 498, *Diri* III d.

Some predicative modifications represents the land of the dead.

a) *bīt(É) ikleti* “house of darkness”.

(128) *ireddanni ana bīt(É) ikleti šubat irkalla ana bīt ša eribusu  
lā asu*

“He brings me down to the house of darkness, the dwelling  
of Irkalla, and to the house what those who enter do  
not come forth” *Gilgamesh* VII iv 33f.

b) *bīt epri* “house of dust,”

(129) *ana bīt (É) epri ša erubu anaku*

“in the house of dust (=the Netherworld), which I entered,  
” *Gilgamesh* VII iv 40, 45.

c) *ekal salali* “house of rest”, *kimāh tapšulti* “tomb of repose”, and  
*šubat darāti* “eternal abode”. These are in distributional equivalence  
to the Netherworld through a code of socio-psychological aspect  
implicit in the modifications like *salali* “rest.”

## Notes

Abbreviations for journals and reference works are those found in:

- (1). *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago*, ed. E. Reiner, et. al.  
(Chicago-Glückstadt, 1959-1989.); (2). W. von Soden’s *Akkadisches Handwör-*

*terbuch* (Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-1981.); (3). R. Borger's *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* vol.I (Berlin, 1967) 611-672.

1. CAD A/II 194; *AHw* 60; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 8.
2. ABZU-*ma rēštu zārūšun* "the promordial Apsu, their progenitor" *Enuma Elish* I 3.
3. CAD K 533; *AHw* 506.
4. See 2.6. ABZU in Sumerian section. É. NUN<sup>ag-ru-um</sup> = *ku-um-mu*.
5. Šamaš *iterub ana kummīšu* RA 32 1935 180: 13.
6. *HGT* 106 iv 20.
7. BA 10/1 1913 93 No.15 r.5f.
8. *Surpu* III 77.
9. *an-za-na-an-zu-ú a-sur-rak-ku, a-ru-ru* = A. MEŠ *šup-lu-tum Maklu* II 62ff.
10. Cf. Lambert *BWL* 290.
11. *ibid.*
12. CAD H 219; *AHw* 352; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 33-34.
13. *Epic of Gilgamesh* X.
14. *Vision of the Crown Prince* 45.
15. RA 33 178, Mari.
16. *Enuma Elish* I 133.
17. [uše] *bbirki Ula'â tâmta qerbiš Tiamat* "Let me cross you the river Ulai, the sea nearby Tiamat" Lamaštu text II col.I 1: 46. See Thureau-Dangin, RA 18 186f. "Rituel et Amulettes contre Labartu." According to him the Ulai river was located to the east of Babylon. Cf. CT 22pi. 48. the world map, *nār marratu* circle.
18. However, it is also described as nearby this world: [ina *nāri*] *hubur iš dudanni* "He pulled me out of the river of the Netherworld." *BWL* 58:7 (Ludlil IV)
19. CAD N/I 108; *AHw* 710. CAD has a separate entry, *nagbu* A "underground water" from *nagbu* B "totality," but *AHw* does not. It is probably better to make a separate entry, because it is difficult to discover anything in common between them.
20. *idim abzu.ta É.NUN.ta è.a. meš: ina nagab apsî ina kumme irbû šunu* "They grew up in the springs of the Apsu, in the cella" CT 16 15 v 34f.

21. *CAD* S 138; *AHw* 1093; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 17-22.
22. See *CAD* lexical section.
23. *libbalkitūšima* DINGIR. MEŠ ša EDIN u URU “May both the contry and the town dogs turn against her” *Maklu* v 42.
24. Cf. The epithet of the goddess of the Netherworld: *‘bēlet* EDIN u *bamāti*.
25. See *Dumuzi’s Dream* 20-21, *the Epic of Gilgamesh* VII iv 51-52.
26. *šēru* and *bamātu* in “Landsberger’s Lexicographical Contributions” by Anne D. Kilmer and D. Foxvog,” *JCS* 25 (1973).
27. *CAD* N/I 249; *AHw* 771.
28. [n]a-mu-ú=*še-e-ru* *LTBA* 2 2: 8.
29. *CAD* Š/I 59; *AHw* 1124; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 23-25.
30. Cf. A. Heidel, *JNES* 8 233-235; Lambert, *BWL* 273.
31. *CAD* H 253; *AHw* 359; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 23f.
32. *mīl tāmti huršāni eršeta šamāmi* “The flood of the sea, the mountains, the earth, the heavens.” Lambert *BWL* 126: 29. Here two sets of cosmic components are acknowledged: ‘the sea and the mountains’ and “the earth and the heavens.”
33. *huršānu appunāma lu šēhū* “Certainly the montains are high” *KAR* 158 ii 39.
34. *CAD* Q 17; *AHw* 888; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 2-3.
35. Lambert *BWL* 58 (Ludlul IV 28).
36. Cf. *ikleti qereb qabrim* “Darkness of the grave” *CT* 17 36: 84ff.
37. The costruction of the urugal sign is AB (i.e. èš) x GAL which signifies “great sanctuary.” *qabru* “grave” can be considered as an entrance to the great sanctuary, namely the Netherworld.
38. *ArOr* 21 388 53, 55.
39. *CT* 18 30 iii 28ff.
40. See 2.2. KI in Sumerian section. Perhaps we can call attention to the similar phrase KI. GAL “great place,” > *kigallu*.
41. *bīt...KI. MAH ina libbi uppīšma* “He built a house with a grave in it” *ADD* 326: 7.
42. *CAD* Š/I 464; *AHw* 1174; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 12-13.
43. *CAD* B 22; *AHw* 95.
44. *KÁ ša ‘Ereš-[ki-gal] Nergal and Ereshkigal* col. VI 19.



45. CAD A/II 324; AHW 72. A.W. Sjöberg, TCS 3. 87f.; AS 20, 63f.; JAOS 103 (1983) 320, comment on 111. Apa-pipe leads down into the Netherworld. See RLA 7 (1987) 1-7 “Libation,” also *Incantation to Utu* 24, A rev. 23.
46. For Example:  
    enegi<sup>ki</sup> a-pa<sub>4</sub>-gal a-pa<sub>4</sub>-ki-a <sup>4</sup>Ereš-ki-ga-la-ka “Enegi, big pipe, pipe of the eath which belongs to Ereshkigal.” TCS 3 TH No.14.
47. AHW 1306.
48. [Ab]-LĀL = *tak-ka-pu*, CT 19 20 b 9.
49. “Kutha” RIA 6 (1980-1983) 384-387; G. Castellino Or 24 (1955) 246.
50. Tallqvist StOr 5/4 9, 38.
51. CAD N 214, AHW 787.
52. STT 21 I 6.
53. Cf. ki-ūr kur-ra-ka-ke<sub>4</sub> kúku-zu-sè gan-ba “go to the base of the Netherworld, to your darkness” (*Udug hul* 854).