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Babyloniaca Hethitica:
The “babilili-Ritual” from Boğazköy (CTH 718)

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I am presently preparing an edition of CTH 718, the textual group known to Hittitologists as the “*babilili*-ritual” after the adverb which here introduces Akkadian incantations within the larger Hittite-language context. This composition comprises:¹

1. **A.** KUB 39.71
B. KUB 39.70 + KUB 32.1 + KUB 39.81 + KBo 39.169² + KBo 39.173³
C. KUB 32.2 + FHG 3 + KBo 39.228
D. KUB 39.85
E. KUB 39.73
F. HT 5
G. KUB 39.72
H. KUB 39.74
J. Bo 92/102
2. **A.** KUB 39.78
B. KUB 39.80
3. **A.** KBo 7.29
B. KUB 39.90
C. KUB 39.75

Author's note: Abbreviations for Hittite text publications and Hittitological works are those given in *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Volume L–N, Fascicle 4 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1989) xv–xxviii. All other abbreviations are those of *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, Volume 17 (Š), Part III (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1992) v–xxii.

1. I am grateful to Professor Heinrich Otten for permission to utilize the unpublished fragments listed here, as well as for sending me copies of the relevant pieces in KBo 39 before the appearance of that volume.

2. See *CHD* L–N, 74, where this fragment is cited as 1885/u.

3. See D. Groddek, “KUB 32.1 + KBo 39.173 (++),” *NABU* (1996) 115.

unplaced fragments:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. KUB 39.94 | 8. KUB 39.83 | 16. KUB 39.96 |
| + KBo 17.97 | 9. KUB 39.84 | 17. KBo 39.172 |
| 2. KUB 32.3 | 10. KUB 39.86 | 18. 645/z |
| 3. KUB 39.69 | 11. KUB 39.88 | 19. KUB 39.68 |
| 4. KUB 39.76 | 12. KUB 39.89 | 20. 99/f |
| 5. KUB 39.77 | 13. KUB 39.92 | 21. Bo 5664 |
| 6. KUB 39.79 | 14. KUB 39.93 | 22. KBo 32.206 |
| 7. KUB 39.82 | 15. KUB 39.95 | |

While it is by no means unusual for a Hittite religious composition to feature speech in a foreign tongue—for example in Hattic, Palaic, Luwian, or Hurrian—only one other known rite (the so-called “Ritual against Insomnia,” CTH 432⁴) contains more than a sentence or two of Akkadian. Given the general dependence of Hatti upon Mesopotamian culture in such matters as writing system, literary genre, and forms of religious expression,⁵ a consideration of the character of the Akkadian incantations in the *babilili*-ritual promises to shed light beyond the limited area of Hittite ritual studies.

The best-preserved portion of CTH 718 is a tablet (1.A above) detailing the activities beginning just before dawn on the second day of the ritual regimen. From at least four different manuscripts, I have reconstructed 200 of the approximately 220 lines originally present on this tablet.⁶ In addition there are two damaged parallel texts for these same ceremonies, each preserved in multiple copies, as well as some twenty fragments of varying length of whose placement I am not yet certain. From the diverse content of these latter pieces, it seems unlikely that they give the text of only one or two original tablets, but there is within them no clear indication of division into days to aid reconstruction. One of these fragments may possibly be assigned paleographically to the Middle Hittite period (Fragment 4),⁷ and several to the fourteenth century (1.C, 2.A, Fragment 11), but most of the material displays late—that is, thirteenth-century—script.

While E. Laroche presumably assigned tablets and fragments to this text group solely on the basis of the presence of the word *babilili*—it does not occur in any other ritual—these texts also display a number of other common features. Chief among these are the use of the *šāhu*-drinking vessel⁸ (invariably written with the Sumerogram ZA.ḪUM), and the frequent denotation of the *ša(n)kunni*-priest by the writing ^{LÚ}SANGA-*níš* (GIŠ), a spelling unattested elsewhere.

4. I plan to publish an edition of this text in the near future.

5. See my “Mesopotamians and Mesopotamian Learning at Hattuša,” *JCS* 35 (1983) 97–114.

6. Two of the exemplars (B and F) continue beyond the material presented in Text A.

7. Note the DA-sign in line 11. This piece should be collated in order to date it securely.

8. *CAD* Š/1, 105–6.

Externally, this text group shows strong affinities in specialized vocabulary, personnel, and deities worshiped with CTH 481,⁹ which describes the resettlement of DINGIR.GE₆ from Kizzuwatna to Šamuḫa in the latter part of the fifteenth or the early fourteenth century, and CTH 482, the record of the reformation of this same cult by Muršili II about fifty years later. Indeed, H.-M. Kühnle suggested that this latter text constitutes the missing initial portion of the *babili*-ritual.¹⁰ However, since little of CTH 482 is preserved beyond the list of ritual materials, I remain uncertain on this question.

The deity addressed by the *babili*-incantations is the *IŠTAR*-type Pirinkir, equated in the An = Anum list from Meskene/Emar with Nin.si₄.an.na.¹¹ In turn, standard An = Anum defines ^dNin.si₄.an.na as ^dIŠTAR MUL.¹² That is, Pirinkir is a star, probably our Venus or morning star.¹³ This harmonizes well with her occasional representation in Hittite sources as a disc (AŠ.ME)¹⁴ of precious metal and with the ornamentation of her image in CTH 481 by several *wannupaštalla*- ‘stars’.¹⁵ Note also that rites performed on behalf of Pirinkir, in our text and elsewhere, often involve activities at night and upon the roof, “under the stars.”¹⁶

Already in 1929, F. W. König proposed the identification of this goddess with the Elamite deity ^dPini(n)kir.¹⁷ This suggestion now finds welcome confirmation in one of the *babili*-incantations:

O *IŠTAR*!
 [Let] Sin, your father, eat!
 <Let> Ningal, your mother, <eat> well!
 Let Šamaš, your twin, e[a]t!
 Let Ellabrat, your vizier, eat!
 Let Ea, the king, your creator, eat!

9. Edited by H. Kronasser, *Schw.Goth.*

10. Review of KUB 38, ZA 59 (1969) 323.

11. See E. Laroche, *GLH*, 201. According to the entry for Pirinkir, no. 185 of the reconstructed series from the Middle Euphrates joins Sumerian nin.si₄.an.na to Hurrian ^dWu-re-en-gi-ru-un. Unfortunately, the text as presented by D. Arnaud does not include the Hurrian portion (*Recherches au pays d'Aštata* [Emar 6/4; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1987] 34–36).

12. R. L. Lidtke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God Lists, An : ^dA-nu-um and Anu ša anēli* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1958) 180, iv 172: ^dNin.si₄.an.na : ^dEš₄-tār MUL.

13. See W. Heimpel, “A Catalogue of Near Eastern Venus Deities,” *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 4 (1982) 72.

14. KUB 29.4 i 13: 1 AŠ-ME KÙ.SIG₁₇ ŠA 1 GÍN ŠUM-ŠU ^dPi-ri-in-kir.

15. KUB 29.4 i 11—see n. 23 below.

16. For example, KUB 39.71 i 22: . . . ku-ít-ma-an [^dUTU-u]š nu-u-wa še-er . . . ; see KUB 29.4 i 62–63: (They take the ritual materials) na-at-ša-an šu-uh-ḫi ti-an-zi na-at ŠA-PAL MUL. ḪIA / še-eš-zi.

17. “Pinikir,” *AfO* 5 (1928–29) 101–3.

Indeed, let all the gods lift up . . . (*unintelligible*) (to you),
O Elamite goddess.¹⁸

In CTH 481 worship is directed to both “the deity” within the temple of DINGIR.GE₆ and Pirinkir. I have not yet decided whether Pirinkir is to be identified with DINGIR.GE₆, or if she is rather only a satellite of this latter variety of *IŠTAR*. In any case, O. Carruba’s interpretation of DINGIR.GE₆ as ‘Deity of the Night’¹⁹—although recently questioned by A. Ünal²⁰—is certainly correct. In another context the second heterogram of the expression DINGIR-LUM GE₆-ŠI²¹ must be interpreted as *mūši* ‘of the night’. The new image of DINGIR.GE₆ prepared in CTH 481 is also easily recognizable as a rendering of the firmament above and its lights:²²

The smiths fashion the deity from gold. . . . Stuck on her back like beads are discs of gold, lapis, carnelian, “Babylon-stone,” chalcedony(?), *dušū*-stone, and marble, as well as life-symbols and stars of silver and gold.²³

In light of what we have just seen of the origins of Pirinkir, it is significant that CTH 481 summons the Deity of the Night “. . . from Agade, Babylon, Susa, Elam, (and) Ḫursagkalamma (that is, Kish)²⁴—the city which you love.”²⁵ (The final clause

18. KUB 39.94 + KBo 17.97 ii 2’–8’:

2’. . . .^dIŠTAR^dXXX A-BU-KI
3’. [LI-KU-UL]^dNIN^l. [GAL U]M-MA-A-KI ṬÁ-A-BI-IŠ (LI-KU-UL)
4’. [^d]UTU-AŠ TU-U-AN-KI L[I-KU-]UL^dEL-LA-AP-RA-AT
5’. ŠU-UK-KAL-LI-KI L[I-K]U-UL^dA-A LUGAL
6’. BÁ-A-NU-KI LI-KÚL LU-Ú[?] DINGIR.MEŠ GÁB-BÁ
7’. E-LI-IŠ-ŠU-PI-MA x [o] x E-LA-MI-TI-YA

19. O. Carruba, “^dGi₆,” *RIA* 3 (1957–1971) 355.

20. A. Ünal, “The Nature and Iconographical Traits of ‘Goddess of Darkness,’” in *Aspects of Art and Iconography—Anatolia and Its Neighbors: Studies in Honor of Nimet Özgüç* (ed. M. Mellink, E. Porada, and T. Özgüç; Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993) 639–44.

21. KBo 2.8 i 17.

22. See Emar 6.43, line 12: 1 *Aš-tar*-MUL KÙ.BABBAR *qa-du* 3 *ru-uš-ti* KÙ.BABBAR 9 KI.LAL.BI.

23. KUB 29.4 i 6, 8–11:

6. LÚ.MEŠ[?]SIMUG.A-*ma* DINGIR-LAM KÙ.SIG₁₇ *i-en-zi* A-NA DINGIR-LIM-*ma*
8. . . . EGIR-*an iš-ga-ra-an-ta-ya-aš-ši*
9. NA₄*ku-un-na-na-aš ma-aḫ-ḫa-an ŠA* KÙ.SIG₁₇ NA₄Z.A.GÌN
10. NA₄GUG NA₄.KÁ.DINGIR.RA NA₄NÍR NA₄DU₈.ŠÚ.A NA₄AŠ.NU₁₁.GAL
11. AŠ-ME^{HI.A} ZI-TUM^{MUL} *wa-an-nu-up-pa-aš-tal-li-iš-ša ŠA* KÙ.BABBAR KÙ.SIG₁₇

24. For Kish, see A. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 5; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 101, no. 482.

25. KUB 29.4 iii 43–45:

43. . . . URU[?]A-*ag-ga-ta-az* URU[?]KÁ.DINGIR.RA-*az*
44. URU[?]Šu-*u-ša-az* URU[?]E-*lam-ta-az* URU[?]ḪUR.SAG.KALAM.MA-*az*
45. I-NA URU-LIM ŠA TA-RA-AM-MI . . .

quoted here is the only Akkadian-language passage in this text.) Thus CTH 481, 482, and 718 are each concerned with the night sky and its stellar bodies, several of which are conceived as forms of the Mesopotamian/Elamite *IŠTAR*.

The ritual action of the well-preserved second day of CTH 718 centers upon a meal offered to Pirinkir, interrupted at frequent intervals by incantations explicating the activities and requesting favors in return. Initially a *katra*-woman goes to draw ‘water of purification’ (*šeḫelliyaš watar*), making suitable offerings to the spring. This water is then employed throughout the ceremonies by the *šankunni*-priest and the offerant (EN.SISKUR), who might be any member of the royal family. An aromatic (*lueššar*) is burned before the goddess, and she receives libations of beer. A sheep is sacrificed, butchered, cooked, and served, accompanied by baked goods. The *šankunni*-priest performs a waving ceremony with fish and a rite of analogic magic featuring a model boat.

Near the end of the tablet, the scene shifts to a river bank, where two additional sheep—one for the deity and one for the offerant—are introduced as substitutes (*nakkuššeš*). Unfortunately, the ultimate disposition of these animals is obscured by a break in the text.

The Akkadian incantations of CTH 718 are on the whole simple. The most frequently-attested calls upon the goddess: “Wash your hands, My Lady, Great Queen! Let your fingers feed you morsels for your lips!”²⁶ Many others urge acceptance of an offering. Thus: “Receive (or eat, or drink), O Lady of Gods and Kings!”²⁷ and “*IŠTAR*, Lady of the Lands, may my bread(-offering) be pleasant (to you)!”²⁸ The longer incantation quoted earlier is a summons to feasting directed to the family and entourage of the goddess.

Another type of Akkadian incantation here seeks to remove sin. For example, “O Lady [of the Lands(?) re]lease [my offense]! Queen of Heaven, release my sin!”²⁹ And again: “I have purified the man. [. . .] I have purifi[ed] (him from) his errors.

26. For example, KUB 39.71 iii 9–10:

9. *MI-I-ŠI ŠU.ĪA-KI BE-EL-TI₄ MUNUS.LUGAL.GAL ŠU.SI.ĪA-KI
BU-UĪ-ĪA-R[(I-K)]*

10. *ŠA ŠAP-TI-KI ŠU-UK-KI-IL₅*

27. For example, KUB 39.71 iii 16–17:

16. *MU-UĪ-RI BE-EL-TI₄ DINGIR.MEŠ-[N]I*

17. *LUGAL.MEŠ-[N]I*

28. KUB 39.70++ iv 14’–15’ (= KUB 32.1 iv 13’–14’):

14’. *ḏIŠTAR BE-EL-TI₄ ŠA KUR.KUR.ĪA*

15’. *AK-LI LU-Ú TA-AB*

29. KUB 39.70++ i 24’ (= KUB 39.70 i 8’):

24’. *[GAŠAN[?] MA-TA-TI ĪI-TÌ PU-U]T-RI MUNUS.LUGAL ŠA-ME-E AR-NI[!]
PU-UṬ-RI*

For the uncertain restoration at the beginning of the line, compare [. . .] x *BE-EL-AT* x [. . .] in KUB 39.71 ii 48’, for which writing there is certainly insufficient space here.

Turn (your) breast (to him) [today]! The fish to [the sea] (and) the bird to the sky I have ma[de go up]!”³⁰

The Akkadian of these speeches, to which we shall devote more attention in a moment, is not the dialect familiar from the treaties and diplomatic correspondence of the Hittite Empire. This much is certain from the rather consistent employment of the correct forms of the verb and pronouns of the second person singular feminine in addresses to the goddess.³¹ Therefore it is unlikely that these incantations were created ad hoc by the Hittite scribes who produced our texts, although the frequent garbling of the more complex passages is certainly to be laid to their account. However, a search based thus far largely on *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* entries for relevant lexemes has turned up only one clear correspondence between our material and an incantation in a fully Akkadian context: the wish that fish and fowl might carry off one’s transgressions appears in a first-millennium *namburbi* found at Küyünjik,³² in a similar Sultantepe text,³³ also of course late in date, and in one of the compositions which E. Reiner has called the “*lipšur*-litanies.”³⁴

On the basis of several older orthographic features, Reiner postulates that an Old Babylonian tradition lies behind her “litanies.” Thus we have very indirect evidence for the existence already in the early second millennium of a native Akkadian tradition from which the fish and bird incantation in CTH 718 might have derived.

Returning to the Akkadian language of CTH 718, two features in particular show that it should be categorized as what J. Huehnergard terms “West Peripheral Akkadian.”³⁵ These characteristics are a general indifference to the inherent voiced or voiceless value of a syllabic sign and a tendency to write—and probably pronounce—*samēkhs* with syllabograms indicating *šin*. The parade example of the second feature in this composition is the frequent—and consistent³⁶—writing *MI-I-ŠI* ‘you (fem. sg.) wash!’ It is interesting that the only examples cited by the *CAD* of *mesû* written with *šin* are from Alalah and Ugarit.³⁷

30. KUB 39.78 i 22’–25’:

22’. A-MI¹-LA Ú-UL-LI-IL₅ [. . .]

23’. HI-IṬ-ṬÁ-TI-ŠU Ú-UL-L[I-IL₅ I-NA UD.KAM AN-NI-I]

24’. GAB-TA ŠU-UK-NA KU₆ I-NA [A.AB.BA]

25’. MUŠEN I-NA ŠA-ME-E Ú-Š[E²-EL-LI]

31. But note ŠU-UK-NA for correct *šukni(m)* in KUB 39.78 i 24’ in the previous note.

32. R. Caplice, “Namburbi Texts in the British Museum I,” *Or* 34 (1965) 116, line 13 (K 3365): *u* EME.ŠID *an-ni-i* KU₆ *ana* ZU+AB MUŠEN *ana* AN-*e* *li-še-[li]*.

33. *STT* 75, line 9: *ar-ni* MUŠEN *ana* AN-*e* [I]*i-še-li ar-ni* KU₆ *ana* ZU[+AB] *lu-še-riid*.

34. “LIPŠUR Litanies,” *JNES* 15 (1956) 140, line 22: *ar-ni* MUŠEN *ana* AN-*e* *li-še-li ar-ni* KU₆ *ina* ZU[+AB] *li-še-riid*. See also W. G. Lambert, “An Incantation of the Maqlû Type,” *AfO* 18 (1957–58) 292, line 25: (images of me) [UR.GI₇ I]*u-u ú-šá-ki-lu ŠAḪ MIN MUŠEN AN-*e* KU₆ ZU+AB MIN*.

35. “Five Tablets from the Vicinity of Emar,” *RA* 77 (1983) 11, 35–43.

36. Note only KUB 39.71 iii 44: *MI-E-ŠI*.

37. *CAD* M/II, 31; Alalah: *AT* 126, line 38 (Old Babylonian); Ugarit: RS 15.92 (*PRU* 3, pl. XXI) line 13.

The final feature of the Akkadian of these incantations that I wish to consider is an unusual feminine plural nominative manifestation of the determinative pronoun ŠĀTU, written ŠA-A-TU. This declined form of *ša* is found in the query: “Where are those who (go) before you? Whe[re are those who (go) after you], your attendants, your courtesans?”,³⁸ a reference to the minor figures who accompany the Hurrian IŠTAR/Šaušga.³⁹ W. von Soden⁴⁰ records only one attestation of *šātu*, in an Old Babylonian hymn to Nanaya.⁴¹ Unless it is a back-formation,⁴² this grammatical element belongs to a period earlier than the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to which almost all of the manuscripts of CTH 718 are to be dated.

Thus there are a number of indications that the Akkadian of our incantations goes back in time, probably to the Old Babylonian period, and that it was imported to Hattuša from a peripheral area. Since many of the ceremonies, ritual practices, and implements found in CTH 481, 482, and 718 are of Hurrian background, it is obvious to which segment of the periphery we must turn. I should also point out that the god Ea appears in the Akkadian material of CTH 718 under the Hurrian spelling ^dA-a.⁴³

Of course, it was from the southern Anatolian region of Kizzuwatna, home in the Hittite period of a hybrid Hurrian/Luwian culture, that the Deity of the Night was brought to Hatti. I would suggest, however, that we must look beyond fifteenth-century Cilicia to earlier northern Syria and even as far afield as the trans-Tigridian area in search of forerunners to our incantations. Such antecedents are surely to be sought, along with those of Kumarbi and the *karuileš šiuneš* ‘former gods’,⁴⁴ in the poorly-documented Sumero-Hurrian culture of the late third and early second millennia. Given the paucity of direct textual evidence of this pivotal cultural constellation, the task I have set for myself is not an easy one, but I hope that the eagerly-awaited publication of Hurrian material from Enar and Ortaköy, as well as continuing research into Boğazköy Hurrian, will help me to advance my inquiry.

38. KUB 39.93 obv.² 4–5:

4. A-LI ŠA-A-TU ŠA PA-NI-I-KI A-L[I ŠA-A-TU ŠA AR-KI-KI]

5. MUNUS.MEŠSUHUR.LÁL-KI MUNUS.MEŠKAR.KID-KI . . .

39. See H. G. Güterbock, “A Hurro-Hittite Hymn to Ishtar,” *JAOS* 103 (1984) 159.

40. W. von Soden, “Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen, Teil I,” *ZA* 40 (1932) 196; see also his *GAG*, §46 and *AHw*, 1199a.

41. VS 10, 215, line 3 (Samsuiluna): *ša-tu ki-ma ar-ḫi-im a-na-ta-li-im*.

42. Note that *šātu* in VS 10, 215 is singular, whereas in our context it is plural and must therefore be transcribed *šātu*.

43. E. Laroche, *GLH*, 39.

44. For Kumarbi, see V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Handbuch der Orientalistik I.15; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 82–83; for *karuileš šiuneš*, see A. Archi, “The Names of the Primeval Gods,” *Or* 59 (1990) 114–29.