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Demons and Tutelary Deities from Heaven

The Hyleme-Pattern “X Descends from Heaven” in Akkadian Incantation Literature

Abstract: This paper is concerned with the phenomenon of heaven-sent entities in Mesopotamian magical texts. The heavenly travellers can be malevolent (demons bringing diseases) as well as benevolent (tutelary deities coming to the aid of ailing humans), and their descent from heaven to earth can take place in a variety of ways, and with the aid of various implements such as a rope, by being transformed into falling stars, or simply falling down to earth by accident.

1 Introduction

When studying the Mesopotamian incantation corpora, one notices multiple differences between the Sumerian and Akkadian traditions. One of the innovations of the Akkadian incantation corpora is the use of the hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven”.¹ This hyleme-pattern is incorporated in the hyleme-sequence of mythical introductions (historiolae) in incantations describing the origins of mostly malevolent entities, such as diseases and demons descending from heaven to earth. Although aspects of this feature within Akkadian incantations have been recognized and briefly discussed by various scholars (Farber 1990; Stol 1993, 12-14; Cunningham 1997, 177; Wasserman 2007, 40-61), a systematic overview has never been presented. This study seeks to provide a novel approach to investigating “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven” as a hyleme-pattern within Akkadian incantations by deploying the innovative method devised by Christian Zgoll (2019).

Note: This paper is the result of a collaboration with the *Collegium Mythologicum* in Göttingen. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Annette and Christian Zgoll for inviting me to participate in this innovative approach to the investigation of ancient texts. Furthermore, I am thankful for the rich and fruitful discussions with all members of the *Collegium Mythologicum*.

¹ For the terminology (hyleme, hyleme-pattern etc.) see C. Zgoll, *Grundlagen der hylistischen Mythosforschung*, in this volume; for an earlier version in English see C. Zgoll 2020.

2 “X₁ (=Malevolent) Descends from Heaven”

2.1 Origins of Malevolent Entities in the Sumerian Incantation Literature

From the perspective of the Sumerian incantation tradition, the entities of evil² are described to be present (i.e., to mainly originate from) geographical places such as the Abzu and the Netherworld, which aligns well with the general Sumerian belief that evil spirits have their actual dwelling place in the Netherworld, see Katz (2003, 44 f and passim).³ In the selection of examples presented below (§§ 2.1.1-2.1.5), we find unilingual Sumerian incantations from the third and second millennium BCE describing the evil occurrences that are said to have emanated from such places. A full study on hyleme-patterns occurring in Sumerian incantations, such as “X₍₁₋₂₎ comes out the Abzu”, describing this transfer from the Abzu and the Netherworld to earth is certainly warranted, but is beyond the scope of the present study.

2.1.1 (Ur III) *La trouvaille de Dreheme*, 1 (Ist D –): 3 (spell against snakes)

Recent edition: Conti 1997, 268 f; Rudik 2015, 282-287

piriĝ-e a-gal-a še e-ni-ib₂-gi₄ Lion, who roars in high water

2.1.2 (Ur III) *YOS 11, 37 (MLC 1093)*: 2 f (spell against scorpions)

Recent edition: Cavigneaux 1994, 157 n. 6; Rudik 2015, 372

gud-kukku₅.g abzu piriĝ Black bull from the Abzu! Lion from
e₂-kukku₅.g-ga the dark house!

² The phrase “entities of evil” is preferred here, since Mesopotamian incantations do not differentiate between dangerous animals, diseases, demons and evil spirits.

³ For a full discussion on the transfer, along with its related terminology, from earth to the Netherworld, see Katz 2003, 32-42.

2.1.3 (Ur III) *PBS 1/2, 131 (CBS 8230): 4-6 (spell against snakes)*

Recent edition: Van Dijk 1969, 542; Rudik 2015, 278-281

muš lugal-zu mu-ši-gi ₄	Snake, your king has sent you!
lugal-zu ^d nin-a-zu mu-ši-gi ₄	Your king Ninazu has sent you!

The fact that the snake originates from the Netherworld is clear from the fact that it has been sent by Ninazu, a deity well-connected with the Netherworld, see Wiggermann (1998-2000, 330).

2.1.4 (OB) *Udugḫul Forerunner (Ni 623+2320): vii 47 f (spell against Utukku-demons)*

Recent edition: Geller 1985, 34 f; Geller 2016, 135

a-ra-li-a ḡiri ₃ [mu]- ^ʾ un-ne ¹ -e- ḡar ^ʾ irigal-la ¹ kan ₄ mu- ^ʾ un ¹ - ne- ^ʾ e ¹ -ḡal ₂	In the Netherworld, the path is laid out for them (i.e., the heptad-group Sebettu), in Hades, the gate is open for them
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2.1.5 (OB) *Udugḫul Forerunner (Ni 631): i 33 (spell against Utukku-demons)*

Recent edition: Geller 1985, 42 f; Geller 2016, 211

[idim ab]zu- ^ʾ ta agrun-ta ¹ e ₃ .d-a-me-eš	They (i.e., the heptad-group Sebettu) came out of the [source] of the Abzu, from the sanctuary
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This Sumerian perception survives in Akkadian incantation literature, but mainly appears in incantations that originate from the Sumerian tradition, especially the *Udugḫul-series* of the first millennium.⁴ Another interesting example is displayed in a bilingual passage of the *Šurpu-series*:

⁴ This is reflected in the examples §§ 2.1.4-2.1.5, which are precursors to the later series. However, this input from the Sumerian tradition is continued and preserved in the later standardized series, see Geller 2016, 135.211.

2.1.6 (SB) *Šurpu-series VII 1 f* (spell against a malevolent oath)

Recent Edition: Reiner 1970, 36

bu[ru₅] ša₃.g abzu-ta
im-ta-[e₃.d]-a-na
di-me-tum ul-tu qe₂-reb Ap-si-i
it-ta-ša-a

Sum: Locusts came out of the midst
of the Abzu!
Akk: The *dimētum*-illness came out
of the midst of the Apsû!

Interestingly, this Sumerian imagery is occasionally continued in other genres of Akkadian literature, as is demonstrated below in the *Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* (here cited after its incipit *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*).

2.1.7 (SB) *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi II 51-55*

Recent Edition: Oshima 2014, 88 f

šu-u₂-lu lem-nu it-ta-ša-a AB.ZU-uš-šu₂
ʽu₂-tuk¹-ku la n[e₂]-ʽi u₂-ša-a ul-tu
e₂-kur la-maš-tum u[r]-da iš-tu
qe₂-reb KUR-i it-ti A.ME[š] ILLU
šu-ru-up-pu-u i-nu-šu

The evil cough-demon went out from
his Apsû
The unstoppable Utukku-demon left
from the Ekur
Lamaštu descended from the midst of
the mountains
with the water of the seasonal flood,
the *šuruppû*-disease surged (towards
me)

Note that the same sequence is repeated in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi III 70-74*, where all evil entities are said to have been driven back to their point of origin, see Oshima (2014, 98 f).

2.2 Overview Attestations: “X₁(=Malevolent) Descends from Heaven”

Starting from the Old Babylonian period, we can observe a new tendency to ascribe heavenly origins to malevolent entities who had come down to earth. Whereas the unilingual Sumerian incantations simply state the origins of evil, the Akkadian incantations often extend the description by naming a specific instru-

ment of transfer (i.e., *ṭurru* “string”, *ṣerretu* “(leading-)rope”, *kakkabu* “star” often described with a predicate of the verb (w)*arādu* “to go down, to descend”). One exception is found in example § 2.2.5.1, where the verb *maqātu* “to fall down” is used.⁵ Whether the use of the hyleme-pattern in incantations is a pure Akkadian innovation can now be called into question by one Old Babylonian unilingual Sumerian example (§ 2.2.1.1). However, without further evidence, the thorough adaptation of the hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven” in Akkadian incantations – starting in the second millennium and extending to the first millennium – and the meagre occurrence in the Sumerian incantations inclines one to suppose that, in case of the example § 2.2.1.1, the hyleme-pattern in question could regressively be used in Sumerian compositions.

In the following, all examples for the hyleme-pattern “X₁(=malevolent) descends from heaven” are listed after their specific instrument of transfer.

2.2.1 “X₁(=Malevolent) Descends from Heaven” – No Specified Instrument

2.2.1.1 (OB) *CUSAS* 32, 12 (MS 3096): i 26’ (spell against the Namtar-demon)

Recent Edition: George 2016, 41

[n]am-tar saĝ an-ta	Namtar came down from heaven’s
e ₁₁ .d-[d]e ₃ -de ₃	heights

2.2.1.2 (OB) *AMD* 14, 191 (A 663): 9 (spell against the *maškadu*-disease)

Recent Edition: Collins 1999, 234 f

iš-tu ša-mi ur-da-am	From heaven, it (i.e., <i>maškadu</i> -
	disease) descended

2.2.1.3 (OB) *Semitica* 61, 13 f: 6 f (spell against various diseases)

Recent Edition: Guichard 2019, 8-12

⁵ In this respect, we should note AN.TA.ŠUB.BA/*miqit šamê* “that what has fallen from heaven”, which is a scientific expression in Mesopotamian medical literature for epilepsy. For a full discussion and further literature on AN.TA.ŠUB.BA/*miqit šamê*, see Stol 1993, 7-21. It has been debated whether in § 2.2.5.1 a form of epilepsy is meant by RI.RI.GA/*miqittu* “collapse” due to its obscure context. An alternative translation of this incantation, affirming its allusion to a form of epilepsy, is provided in Zomer 2018, 90 n. 391.

*iš-tu ša-me-im ur-¹du-ni-im*¹

From heaven they (i.e., various diseases) descended

2.2.1.4 (OB) JCS 9, 9 (Spurlock 1913.14.1465): 10 (spell against various diseases)

Recent Edition: Goetze 1955, 8-18; Collins 1999, 279-282⁶

iš-tu zi-qu₂-ra-at ša-me-e ur-du-ni

From the *ziquurat* of heaven, they (i.e., various diseases) descended

2.2.1.5 (OB) RA 88, 161 (M. 15289): r. 11' (spell against various diseases)

Recent Edition: Cavigneaux 1994, 156 f

i-na zu-qu₂-ra-an ša-me-e ur-da-ma

From the height of heaven, it (i.e., a group of various diseases) descended

2.2.1.6 (MB/MA) Priests and Officials, 199 f (Private Collection): 27 (spell against fever)

Recent Edition: Tsukimoto 1999, 187-200; Scurlock 2014, 417-421

*ina u₄-mi ina an-e ib-ba-ni ¹x¹ [... i]š-
t[u an-e u]r-d[a-am]*

In the day when [...] was created in heaven, it descended from heaven

2.2.1.7 (MB/MA) Ugaritica 5, 17 (RS 17.155): 20 f (spell against various diseases)

Recent edition: Rowe 2014, 48-58; Zomer 2018, 249-251

*[ki k]I.MIN ib-nu-šu₂-nu-ti ki u₂-rab-bi-
šu₂-nu-ti
[ki nam]-ri-re MI.IR.ME.RI⁷-šu₂-nu-ti TA
AN-[e ur-du-ni]*

[When DIT]TO (i.e., the god Ea) created them; when he raised them; when he had covered them with a (terrifying) brilliance, [they (i.e.,

⁶ Identifiable in both publications by its former siglum UIOM 1059.

⁷ For later parallels of *Muššu'u* V/d read *u₂-šal-mi-šu₂-nu-ti* (BM 46276+) and *u₂-šar-me-šu₂-nu-ti* (K 8487), see Böck 2007, 191-196. As for *MI.IR.ME.RI-šu₂-nu-ti*, Dietrich 1988, 98 proposes *namriri* *i(u²)mermeri-šunūti* interpreting a preterite of *√mrmrī*, a denominative form of *namririū* (awe-

various diseases) descended] from
heaven

**2.2.1.8 (SB) AMD 8/1, pl. 31 (K 8112+K 9666 (+)): i 13'-16'//TCL 6, 49
(AO 6473): 16-18//KAL 2, 36 (VAT 14151+14152+14153+): v 31'-33' (spell
against witchcraft)**

Recent edition: Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 159-198

*it-tar-da-ni ana ma-a-ti kaš-ša-pa-a-
tu₂ e-li-ia-na-ti i-ša₂-as-sa-a il-lu¹-ru
i-saḥ-ḥa-ru za-ma-ra na-ša₂-a me-e
a-ab¹-ba¹ tam-tim DAGAL-tim*

The witches, the lying ones, have
descended to the land. They shout out
'illuru!', they start to sing, they carry
water from ocean, the wide sea

2.2.1.9 (SB) LKU 32 (VAT 14505): 12 (spell against Lamaštu)

Recent Edition: Farber 2014, 271

La-maš-ti iš-tu an-e ur-dam-ma

Lamaštu descended from heaven

2.2.1.10 (SB) KAR 165 (VAT 10072): r. 5 (spell against a malevolent oath)

Recent Edition: Reiner 1958, 4 f

*ma-mit DUMU.MUNUS [Anim ittarad ištu
AN]-e*

māmītu (the malevolent oath),
daughter of [Anu, has descended
from heaven]⁸

**2.2.1.11 (SB) CT 51, 142 (BM 38586): 11 // JCS 31, 218 f (CBS 11304): 9 (spell
against Utukku-demons)**

Recent Edition: Geller 2016, 54

a-pi-a-at ^dIM ša iš-tu ša-me-e ur-dam

The *apiātu*-disease of Adad, which
descended from heaven

inspiring radiance), with a transitive meaning; Arnaud 2007, 83 prefers a phonetic rendering of GIR_{5/6}.GIR_{5/6} (*ḥalāpu* D) "to clothe s.o. with".

⁸ Restoration after Reiner 1958, 4 f.

2.2.1.12 (SB) Šurpu-series VII 3 f (spell against a malevolent oath)

Recent Edition: Reiner 1958, 36

nam-erim₂ ša₃.g an-na-ta
im-ta-e₁₁.d-d[e₃]
ma-mi-tu₄ ul-tu qe₂-reb AN-e ur-da

māmītu (the malevolent oath) de-
scended from the midst of heaven

2.2.1.13 (SB) Muššu'u-series V/d 25 (spell against various diseases)

Recent Edition: Böck 2007, 191

TA AN-e DIM₃+AŠ.RU⁹ ur-du-ni

From heaven, the ...-demons de-
scended

2.2.2 “X₁(=Malevolent) Descends from Heaven”–with ṭurru “String”**2.2.2.1 (MB/MA) Ugaritica 5, 17 (RS 17.155): r. 20' (spell against fever)**

Recent Edition: Tsukimoto 1999, 189 f; Arnaud 2007, 77-89; Rowe 2014, 48-58

[IZI] me-ḥu-u₂ IZI MURU₂ iṣ-bat ṭur-ra TA
AN-e ur-da

Fire of a violent storm! Fire of battle!
It (i.e., fire = fever) grasped a string,
it descended from heaven

2.2.2.2 (MB/MA) AuOr Suppl. 23, 14 (RS 94.2178): 1 (spell against fever)

Recent Edition: Arnaud 2007, 55-58; Rowe 2014, 59-61; Zomer 2018, 259 f

IZI.MEŠ me-ḥu-u₂ IZI.MEŠ qab₂-^lel^l
^liṣbat^l(IZI) ṭur-ra iṣ-tu U[GU]

Fire of a violent storm! Fire of bat-
tle! It (i.e., fire = fever) grasped a
string from above

2.2.3 “X₁(=Malevolent) Descends from Heaven”–with šerretu “(Leading-)Rope”**2.2.3.1 (OB) JCS 9, 10 (HTS 2): 10 f (spell against various diseases)**

Recent Edition: Goetze 1955, 8-14; Collins 1999, 282-286

⁹ Böck 2007, 215.

[iš]-tu še₂-re-et [š]a-me-e ur-du-ni From the (leading-)rope of heaven,
they (i.e., various diseases) descend-
ed

2.2.3.2 (SB) BAM 543 (K 2419+): iv 26' (spell against various diseases)

Recent Edition: Farber 1990, 316-318; Collins 1999, 292-295

iš-tu še₂-ret AN-e ur-du-u-[ni] From the (leading-)rope of heaven,
they (i.e., various diseases) descended

2.2.3.3 (SB) BAM 182 (O 194): 14' (spell against the *maškadu*-disease)

Recent Edition: Collins 1999, 238 f

maš-ka₁₅-du₃ iš-tu še-er-«ret»
ša₂-ma-me ur-di The *maškadu*-disease descended
from the (leading-)rope of heaven

2.2.4 “X₁(=Malevolent) Descends from Heaven”—with *kakkabu* “(Falling) Star”

2.2.4.1 (OB) YOS 11, 8 (NBC 6321): 5 (spell against various diseases)

Recent Edition: Goetze 1955, 11-18; Collins 1999, 286-288

iš-tu MUL ša-me-e ur-du-nim From a star of heaven, they (i.e., vari-
ous diseases) descended

2.2.4.2 (MB/MA) AS 16, 287 f (Rm 376): ii 1 (spell against the *maškadu*-disease)

Recent Edition: Böck 2007, 261-265.290-293.304 f.311-313; Zomer 2018, 270-272

KI MUL AN-e ¹u₂¹-[ri-da-am-ma] With a star from heaven, it (i.e., the
maškadu-disease) [descended]

2.2.4.3 (SB) STT 136 (Su. 51/102+): iv 18 (spell against the *maškadu*-disease)

Recent Edition: Collins 1999, 235 f

KI MUL AN-e ¹u₂¹-[ri-da-am-ma] With a star from heaven, it (i.e., the
maškadu-disease) [descended]

2.2.4.4 (SB) OECT 6, 23 (K 3209): 5' (spell against the *maškadu*-disease)

Recent Edition: Collins 1999, 253-255

*iš-tu MUL.MEŠ ša₂-ma-mi ur-da*From the stars of heaven, it (i.e., the *maškadu*-disease) descended**2.2.4.5 (SB) CT 23, 2-4 (K 2473+K 2551): r. 15 // CT 23, 5-14 (K 2453+):****iii 37(spell against the *maškadu*-disease)**

Recent Edition: Collins 1999, 236-238

*iš-tu MUL.MEŠ ša₂-ma-mi ur-da*From the stars of heaven, it (i.e., the *maškadu*-disease) descended**2.2.4.6 (SB) STT 136 (Su 51/102+): iii 34' f // JNES 49, 300 (K 6250): 9' f (spell against various diseases)**

Recent Edition: Farber 1990, 316-318; Collins 1999, 297-300

*iš-tu MUL(.MEŠ) ša₂-ma-mi ur-da
ur-dam-ma iš-tu MUL(.MEŠ) ša₂-ma-mi*From the star(s) of heaven it (i.e., the *maškadu*-disease) descended, it descended from the star(s) of heaven!**2.2.5 “X₁(=Malevolent) Falls from Heaven”—No Specified Instrument****2.2.5.1 (MB/MA) Ugaritica 5, 17 (RS 17.155): r. 12' (spell against collapse)**

Recent Edition: Arnaud 2007, 79; Rowe 2014, 48-58

*ina AN-e ib-ba-ni RI.RI.GA TA AN-e ina
qa-qa-ri in-taq₂-ta*

In heaven collapse was created, it fell from heaven down to earth

3 “X₂ (=Benevolent) Descends from Heaven”

3.1 Overview Attestations: “X₂(=Benevolent) Descends from Heaven”

The benevolent entities called the *mārāt Ani(m)* “daughters of Anu”, feature quite often in Akkadian incantation literature to assist the troubled patient. There are several other occasions where the daughters of Anu appear in incantations, especially in the context of *mannam lušpur*-formula studied by Farber (1990; 1998, 64 f.)¹⁰, where it is however implied, although not expressly stated, that they descend from heaven. The fact that the *mārāt Ani(m)* are known to come down from heaven is directly declared in the historiola known to Assyriologists as *The Cow of Sîn*, (§§ 3.1.1.1-3.1.1.4). Although it is usually clear that the daughters of Anu come to the aid of the patient, we find, in the continuation of § 3.1.2.1, a verbal explanation about their descent, i.e.:

3.1.1 *Maqlû-series* III 34-39 (spell against witchcraft)

Recent Edition: Abusch 2016, 304 f

ēkīam tebâtina ēkīam tallakā
ana ēpiši u ēpišti ša annanna mār
annanna ana saḫāri nillika
ana luqquti ša ḫuṣābišina
ana ḫummumi ša ḫumāmātīšina
ša līlāti ḫuluppaqqa ana šarāpi nillika

“For what have you risen? Where do you go?”

– We have come to seek out the sorcerer and sorceress of So-and-So, the son of So-and-So.

In order to collect their leavings,

In order to gather their refuse,

In order to light the brazier at night we have come! –

Besides the kindly daughters of Anu, we find benevolent *materia magica*, such as tin and *zalāqu*-stone coming down (§ 3.1.1.5). Like the diseases, these *materia magica* are also personified and appear to act autonomously: it is vividly described that these daughters carry dispelling rituals on their heads.

¹⁰ For further discussion of the daughters of Anu in a hyleme-sequence of the Late-Hellenistic incantation “Philinna Papyrus” on *mystodokos* and the dark-eyed maidens, see Faraone 1995.

3.1.2 “X₂(=Benevolent) Descends from Heaven” – No Specified Instrument

3.1.2.1 (MB/MA) AS 16, 287 f (Rm 376): ii 30 (spell aiding childbirth)

Recent Edition: Veldhuis 1991, 10 f; Rowe 2015, 54 f

2-ta ^dLAMMA AN-e u₂-ri-da-ni

Two lamassus (i.e., tutelary deities) of heaven descended

3.1.2.2 (MB/MA) AuOr Suppl. 23, 20 (RS 24.436): 3' (spell aiding childbirth)

Recent Edition: Arnaud 2007, 75-77; Rowe 2014, 77 f; 2015, 54 f

2 la-mas-sa-at [AN-e u₂-ri-da-ni-(ma)]

Two lamassus (i.e., tutelary deities) of [heaven descended]

3.1.2.3 (MB/MA) Iraq 31, pl. V f (Private Collection): r. 59 (spell aiding childbirth)

Recent Edition: Rowe 2015, 54 f; Zomer 2018, 254-256

2 ši-na DUMU.MUNUS ^dA-nim TA AN-e
u₂-ri-da-a-ni

Two are the daughters of Anu,
they descended from heaven

3.1.2.4 (SB) BAM 248 (VAT 8869): iii 25 // AMT 67/1 (K 2413+): iii 19 (spell aiding childbirth)

Recent Edition: Veldhuis 1991, 8 f.61-63; Rowe 2015, 54 f

2 ^dLAMMA.MEŠ AN-e u₂-ri-da-nim₂-ma

Two lamassus (i.e., tutelary deities) of heaven descended

3.1.2.5 (SB) SpTU 4, 140 (W 22577/1): r. 15' // AMD 8/1, pl. 44 f (BM 38635): 9' f (spell against witchcraft)

Recent Edition: Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 159-199

4.1.1 Overview Attestation “X₁ (=Malevolent) Makes Y₁ (=Malevolent) Descend from Heaven”

4.1.1.1 (SB) *PBS* 10/2, 18 (CBS 1203): 39' // *AMD* 8/1, pl. 54-58 (K 3360+): 9' (spell against witchcraft)

Recent Edition: Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 270-292

[*šalmiya ipušū-ma ištu/itti*?] MUL
ša₂-ma-mi u₂-[še₂?-ri?]-du

[They (i.e., sorcerers) have made (bewitched) figurines of me and from/with] a star of heaven they let it come down

The restoration [*šalmiya ipušū-ma* “they have made (bewitched) figurines of me”] follows the enumeration within the incantation itself. Whereas Abusch/Schwemer (2011, 285) interpret thereafter GIN₇/*kīma* to mean “like”, a restoration of TA/*ištu* “from” or KI/*itti* “with” seems more plausible in light of the evidence presented in § 2.2.4.

4.2 “X₂ (=Benevolent) Makes Y₁ (=Malevolent) Descend from Heaven”

The most notorious, malevolent daughter of Anu is the demoness Lamaštu. With her horrific nature,¹³ she assumes an exceptional position regarding the hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven”, since she was purportedly expelled from heaven. The terminology used to describe her banishment is the verb *napāšu* “to smash down” in the second millennium (§§ 4.2.1.1-4.2.1.2), but for the later series the causative (Š) of (w)*arādu* “to make s.o. descend” is used (§ 4.2.1.3).

4.2.1 Overview Attestations of “X₂ (=Benevolent) Makes Y₁ (=Malevolent) Descend from Heaven”

4.2.1.1 (OA) *BIN* 4, 126 (NBC 3672): 10-13 (spell against Lamaštu)

Recent Edition: Farber 2014, 259

¹³ For a discussion on Lamaštu’s nature, see Farber 2007.

A-nu-um a-bu-ša iš-tu₃ ša-ma-e
i-pu-ša-ši₂ qa₂-ar-šu-um

Anum, her father, cast her down from
 heaven to earth

4.2.1.2 (MB/MA) AS 16, 287 f (Rm 376): iv 21-23 (spell against Lamaštu?)

Recent Edition: Lambert 1965, 283-288; Zomer 2018, 328-330

DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ ^dXXX u ^dU.GUR
e-ti₂-ru-tu ^dE₂-a EN TU₆ ^d[ASAL.LU₂.ĤI] EN
ne₂-me-qi ^dGu-la
a-su-gal-la-at DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.[MEŠ ...]
*i-ta-ap-šu*¹⁴ *i-na pa-ni* AN-e ša
^dA-nim

The great gods Sîn and Nergal, the
 saviours, Ea, the lord of the incanta-
 tion, [Asalluĥi] the lord of wisdom,
 Gula, the chief physician, the great
 god[s ...] have cast her out of heaven,
 the heaven of Anu

It remains uncertain whether the incantation cited in § 4.2.1.2 is intended against the demoness Lamaštu. It concerns a great evil feminine power, afflicting various tiers of society, but its name is not preserved. Reasons to believe Lamaštu may be involved here is the rather unique occasion of an evil entity being cast out of heaven – which is otherwise only known from the Old Assyrian Lamaštu incantation § 4.2.1.1 – the reference to an insatiable pig and the phrase *lā banīta* “the not good one”. Other possible candidates are “the evil eye” or “the witch”.

4.2.1.3 (SB) Lamaštu-series I 111 f (spell against Lamaštu)

Recent Edition: Farber 2014, 83

^dA-num AD-ša₂ An-tum AMA-ša₂-ma²
ina ep-še-ti-ša₂ la ba-na-ti iš-tu AN-e
u₂-še-ri-du-niš-šim-ma

Anu, her father (and) Antu, her
 mother who, because of her unseem-
 ly deeds, made her descend from
 heaven

¹⁴ Pace Lambert 1965, I suggest reading *i-ta-ap-šu* (*ittapšū*) instead of *i-ta-ap-rik₂* (*ittaprik*), preferring the common phonetic value /šu/ over /rik₂/, see Zomer 2018, 330.

5 Variant: “X₁(=Malevolent) Descends from the Mountainous Regions”

The image of Lamaštu’s exile from heaven, as described in §§ 4.2.1.1-4.2.1.3, encourages us to consider the possibility of a new point of origin. This has resulted in the case of Lamaštu in a new variant of the studied hyleme-pattern, i.e., “X₁(=malevolent) descends from the mountainous regions”, shifting the hyleme-source “heaven” to the uninhabited “mountainous region”. The arrival of evil entities from such places derives from an older Sumerian tradition, where *kur* may denote mountain, but is simultaneously the ordinary term for the Netherworld.¹⁵ The logogram *KUR* is the equivalent of Akkadian *šadû* “mountains” and *mātu* “land”. The oldest attestation of this variant is found in a Sumerian incantation (§ 5.1.6) against the Samana-disease dating from the Old Akkadian period. The same image is repeated over a thousand years later in an incantation against the same disease (§ 5.1.5). It appears that, in both spells, the disease derives from the mountainous regions and not from the Netherworld *per se*. As for the examples concerning Lamaštu (§§ 5.1.1-5.1.4), the imagery used to dispel her affirms the mountains to be part of the uninhabited wilderness.¹⁶

5.1 Overview Attestations of Variant: “X₁ Descends from the Mountainous Regions”

5.1.1 (MB/MA) MC 17, 443 f (BM 120022): 13 (spell against Lamaštu)

Recent Edition: Farber 2014, 120-125

<i>ul-tu₄ kul-la-at ša-di-i ra-bu-u₂-tim</i>	From all the great mountains, she
<i>u₂-ri-da-am-ma</i>	(i.e., Lamaštu) descended

5.1.2 (SB) *Lamaštu-series* II 35 (spell against Lamaštu)

Recent Edition: Farber 2014, 100

<i>[i]š-tu k[u^l-lat² KU]R-i u₂-ri-da-am-ma</i>	From all the mountains, she (i.e., Lamaštu) descended
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¹⁵ Horowitz 1998, 272 f.

¹⁶ Farber 2014, 3.249.251.

5.1.3 (SB) *Lamaštu-series II 163* (spell against Lamaštu)

Recent Edition: Farber 2014, 121

*iš-tu kul-lat kur-i u₂-ri-dam-ma*From all the mountains, she (i.e.,
Lamaštu) descended**5.1.4 (SB) *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi II 55***

Recent Edition: Oshima 2014, 88 f

la-maš-tu₄ u[r]-da ul-tu qe₂-reb
KUR-īLamaštu descended from the midst of
the mountains**5.1.5 (SB) *STT 178 (Su.51/128+129+233): 15-18 // AMT 61, 7: r. 1'-4'* (spell against Samana)**

Recent Edition: Finkel 1998, 87-92

kur-ta <ĝen>-na-ta kur-<ta>
ĝen-na-[ta]
iš-te ša₂-de-e il-la-ku iš-te ša₂-[de]-¹e¹
ur-da
[n]im-nim kur-ta ĝen-na-ta
*Sa-ma-nu iš-tu ša₂-de-e ur-da*Sum: Coming from the mountain,
coming from the mountain!Akk: Coming down from the moun-
tains, it came down from the moun-
tains!Sum: Samana coming from the moun-
tain!Akk: Samana came down from the
mountains!**5.1.6 (Oakk.) *CM 10, 76 f (6 NT 145): 1-7***

Recent Edition: Finkel 1998, 76 f

kur-ta² ĝen-na
kur-ta <e₄>-da
sa-ma-na
kur-ta ĝen-na
kur-ta e₄-da
[hur-sa]ĝ ki-sikil-ta ĝen
[kur-t]a e₄-da

Coming from the mountain!

<Coming down> from the mountain!
Samana!

Coming from the mountain!

Coming down from the mountain!

Coming from the pure mountain!

Coming down from the mountain!

Pace Finkel (1998, 76 f), read /e₄/ (A) and not /e₅/ (NIN). We have here a phonetic rendering of Sumerian /e₁₁.d/ “to descend/ascend”.

6 Evaluation Hyleme-Pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ Descends from Heaven”

6.1 Hyleme-Subject X₍₁₋₂₎

The interesting innovation within Akkadian incantations starting from the second millennium is the fact that evil entities are occasionally now described as autonomously coming down from heaven, apparently acting on their own initiative, making the grammatical subject identical with the hyleme subject.¹⁷ Frequently, it is stated that hyleme-subject X₁(=malevolent) comes down from heaven independently, i.e., the *apīātu*-disease, fever (*išātu* “fire”), the *maškadu*-disease (brucellosis?¹⁸), *māmītu* (malevolent oath), collapse (*miqittu*) and Lamaštu exclusively in the variant “X₁(=malevolent) descends from the mountainous regions”. On the other hand, there is the imagery of groups of diseases collectively descending from heaven (§§ 2.2.1.3-2.2.1.5; 2.2.1.7; 2.2.1.13; 2.2.3.2.1; 2.2.4.1; 2.2.4.6). Wasserman (2007) observed, for the Old Babylonian examples, that there is a correlation between these enumerations of diseases acting here as hyleme-subject X₁ and their occurrence in therapeutic and lexical lists, indicating that they are by no means random or erratic. From the diseases descending individually, only fever (*išātu*) and a form of collapse, *miqtu* instead of *miqittu*, are attested in the skeleton-list extracted by Wasserman (2007, 45). Whereas the

¹⁷ It should, however, be noted that from the perspective of the ancient Mesopotamians, evil entities could be sent by higher authorities, (i.e., deities), e.g., the famous passage in *Atraḥasīs*, the Babylonian flood story, where Enlil addresses the other deities with a speech outlining his plan to afflict mankind (SB) (K 3399+3934): iv 9-12: [*qī-b*]a-ma šu-ru-pu-u lib-ši, [*li-š*]ak-li-ši ri-gim-ši-na nam-tar, [*ki-m*]a me-ḥe-e li-zi-qa-ši-na-ti-ma, [*mur*]-šu di-’u šu-ru-pu-u a-sa-ku “Command that there will be a chill! Let Namtar diminish their noise! Like a tempest let blow upon them: sickness, di’u-disease, shivering, (and) the asakku-disease!” In the present case study, it is not explicitly stated – and it can therefore not automatically be assumed – that the evil entities are here released by divine authority. Note that, if we were to implicitly assume the discharge of evil entities by a divine being, in hyleme-theory, the grammatical subject in the hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven” would in fact be the hyleme object and the studied hyleme-pattern would actually be “[X₍₁₋₂₎ makes] Y₍₁₋₂₎ descend from heaven”.

¹⁸ For the possible identification of the *maškadu*-disease with brucellosis, see Wasserman 2012.

enumerations of diseases in the present hyleme-pattern are concerned with the question of the aetiology of diseases, Wasserman (2007, 44) identified another sub-group of enumerations within Akkadian incantations without the discussed hyleme-pattern. Here the maladies are depicted to be ever-present and to accompany demonic powers. In this respect, we should note the Middle Babylonian example (§ 2.2.1.6), left undiscussed by Wasserman, where we find a synthesis of both the diseases and demonic powers descending from heaven, as detailed in the table below.

Tab. 1: Diseases and Demonic Powers Descending from Heaven According to § 2.2.1.6

<i>ašû</i>	a disease affecting the head
<i>samana</i>	fungal skin infection (?)
<i>amurriqānu</i>	jaundice
<i>aḥḥāzu</i>	jaundice caused by the a-demon
<i>ummu</i>	fever
<i>lību</i>	fever
<i>almu</i>	the <i>almu</i> -demon
<i>allamu</i>	the <i>allamu</i> -demon
<i>dīu</i>	a disease affecting the head
<i>alû</i>	a demon
<i>kuraštimmu</i>	kind of eczema
<i>ummu</i>	fever
<i>naplaštu</i>	the blinker-demon
<i>utukku</i>	the <i>utukku</i> -demon
<i>šīqu</i>	kind of eczema
<i>šaššaṭu</i>	a disease of the joints
[<i>lamaštu</i>]	[the <i>lamaštu</i> -demoness]
<i>labāšu</i> ¹ (text: <i>aḥḥāzu</i>)	the <i>labāšu</i> -demon
<i>aḥḥāzu</i>	the <i>aḥḥāzu</i> -demon
<i>ḥayyattu</i>	the <i>hayyattu</i> -demon
<i>lilû</i>	the <i>lilû</i> -demon
<i>lilitu</i>	the <i>lilitu</i> -demon
<i>ardat lilî</i>	the <i>ardat-lilî</i> -demon
<i>nê-ra</i> ~ ^r <i>ap</i> ¹ ~ <i>pi</i> ₂	the striking-of-the-nose affliction
<i>ḥimiṭ-ṣēti</i>	sunstroke
<i>gallû</i>	the <i>gallû</i> -demon

As for the hyleme-subject X_2 (=benevolent) in the hyleme-pattern “ $X_{(1-2)}$ descends from heaven”, this role is mainly attributed to the benevolent daughters of Anu, sometimes specified as *lamassāt šamê* “the lamassus (tutelary deities) of heaven”, in the context of birth incantations. Whereas their corrupted counterparts – the malevolent daughters of Anu, (e.g., *māmītu* “malevolent oath”, *Lamaštu*) – are said to descend singularly, the benevolent daughters generally descend as a pair.¹⁹ Another example of X_2 (=benevolent) is found in § 3.1.1.5, where apparent inanimate ritual objects, i.e., tin and *zalāqu*-stone, are now the hyleme-subject.

The hyleme-subject X_1 (=malevolent) in the variant “ $X_{(1-2)}$ makes $Y_{(1-2)}$ descend from heaven” is only found in the case of witchcraft (§ 4.1.1.1), where sorcerers are said to have manipulated bewitched figurines (Y_1) to come down from heaven.

In the same variant, the hyleme-subject X_2 (=benevolent) is apparently limited to the banishment of the demoness *Lamaštu* (= hyleme-object Y_1). In the earliest Old Assyrian example, X_2 = Anu, her father (§ 4.2.1.1); in a later example, dating from the Middle Assyrian period, we find an enumeration of gods, X_2 = *Sîn*, *Nergal*, *Ea*, *Asalluḫi*, *Gula*, ... (§ 4.2.1.2) and the *Lamaštu-series* of the first millennium simply states X_2 = Anu, her father, Antu, her mother (§ 4.2.1.3).

Interestingly, the hyleme-subject X_{1-2} is frequently said to be related to An(u), the Mesopotamian god of heaven, i.e., *mārat Ani(m)* “Daughter of Anu” and is always female; we never find *mār Ani(m)* “son of Anu”. These daughters can be divided in two groups, i.e., the benevolent daughters acting as tutelary deities to troublesome patients in pain and the malevolent daughters attacking the patient. Despite being each other’s exact counterpart, they never appear simultaneously within an incantation and can never switch sides. As for the male offspring of Anu in Mesopotamian incantations, we should note the occurrence of the evil *Utukku*-demons, who are said, in the *Udug.hul-series*, to be “the seed of Anu” (a-an-na a-ri-a-me-eš // *ša riḫût Anim reḫû*).

6.2 Hyleme-Object $Y_{(1-2)}$

Examples of a hyleme-object (Y_{1-2}) can only be found in the variant: “ $X_{(1-2)}$ makes $Y_{(1-2)}$ descend from heaven”. Examples for Y_1 (=malevolent) are attested for (be-

¹⁹ It should, however, be noted that the witches in § 2.2.1.8 are most likely to be identified as malevolent daughters of Anu, since their actions (carrying water from the ocean) are identical to those of the benevolent daughters. Note additionally that witches are referred to as *Daughters of Anu* in the anti-witchcraft series *Maqlû* III 63; VI 87.

witched) figurines (of the victim) (§ 4.1.1.1) and the demoness Lamaštu (§§ 4.2.1.1-4.2.1.3). We find only one example of Y_2 (=benevolent) in § 3.1.1.5, where “dispelling rituals” (*pišrētu*) are carried down from heaven.

6.3 Hyleme-Predicate

The Akkadian verb (w)*arādu* (G) “to descend, to go down” is mainly used for the hyleme-predicate. In the few instances where we have a Sumerian version, we find the corresponding verb /e₁₁.d/ (§§ 2.2.1.1; 2.2.1.12). For the variant “ X_{1-2} makes Y_{1-2} descend from heaven”, we find the causative (w)*arādu* (Š) “to make s.o. descend, to go down” (§§ 4.1.1.1; 4.2.1.3). Other verbs used are *maqātu* (G) “to fall (down)” (§ 2.2.5.1), here a play with the inherent meaning of the hyleme-subject *RI.RI.GA/miqittu* “collapse” and *napāšu* (G) “to smash (down)”, which is exclusively used in the second millennium (§§ 4.2.1.1-4.2.1.2) to express the banishment of the demoness Lamaštu from heaven in the variant “ X_2 (=benevolent) makes Y_1 (=malevolent) descend from heaven”. The vast majority of hyleme-predicates are consistently found in the past tense, i.e., preterite and – to a lesser extent – in the perfect tense; only once do we find the use of the present tense (§ 3.1.2.1). This preference for the past tense can simply be explained by the fact that the studied hyleme-pattern and its variants are found in histori-olae/hyleme-sequences in introductions to incantations alluding to a mythical antecedent.

6.4 Hyleme-Instrument

6.4.1 *ṭurru* “String”– *ṣerretu* “(Leading-)Rope”/*ṣertu* “Udder”

There is no consensus as to whether *ṣerretu* “(leading-)rope” or *ṣertu* “udder” is used in our context and indeed it is difficult to see the difference in the construct state.²⁰ However, the evidence from the Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian periods of the parallel use of *ṭurru* has thus far been neglected. Observing the almost identical use of *ṭurru* in the same context, I would like to argue for *ṣerretu* instead of *ṣertu* in this hyleme-pattern within Akkadian incantations.

²⁰ Udder: Farber 1990, 307 (more poetic ‘Milky Way’); Stol 1993, 13; Wasserman 2007, 44 n. 3. (Leading-)rope: Collins 1999, 335.

The vivid expression “it grasped the (leading-)rope, it descended from heaven” *išbat ūr-ra ištu šamê urda(m)* or “from the rope of heaven, it descended” *ištu šerret šamê urda(m)* brings to mind the famous Jacob’s ladder described in Genesis 28: 10-19, where it is said that, in Jacob’s dream, a ladder is set on the earth reaching towards heaven to enable the angels of God to ascend and descend between both realms. As can be observed from other examples containing the hyleme-pattern under discussion, such as §§ 3.1.1.1-3.1.1.5 and § 3.1.2.1, journeying between heaven and earth within Mesopotamian incantation literature is a device employed by benevolent entities, such as the use of ritual stones by the benevolent daughters of Anu; however, contrary to Jacob’s ladder, the rope in the hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven” appears to permit only a singular direction of travel, i.e., heaven → earth. Numerous texts refer to cosmic bonds which secure the heavens in place (see Horowitz 1998, 265). These ropes existed in the imaginations of everyday Mesopotamians and were key to their conceptualization of the world.

6.4.2 *kakkabu* “(Falling) Star”

The image of a falling star as an instrument for transferring diseases/demons from heaven to earth speaks easily to the imagination. As Wasserman (2007, 46) contends, one might argue that falling stars could start fires upon impact, appealing to the Mesopotamian belief that diseases spread simultaneously with their appearance. Note, however, that fever, which is called literally “fire” (*izl/išātu*), is always reported – in the studied hyleme-patterns – to descend to earth by rope, see §§ 2.2.2.1-2.2.2.2. Interestingly two prepositions are used for “the star(s) of heaven”, *KI/itti* “with” (§§ 2.2.4.2-2.2.4.3) and *TA/ištu* “from” (§§ 2.2.4.1; 2.2.4.4-2.2.4.6).²¹ Although the former technically denotes the star(s) as an instrument and the latter as a point of origin, both seem to appeal to image of falling stars. Falling stars were a common event in ancient times and it can be supposed that the idea that stars could be a vehicle for transporting maladies

²¹ Another possible example may be found in the fragmentary OB incantation YOS 11, 9: 1–3 *sī-ka-tum i-ša-tum mi-iq-tum bé-[nu-um] šu-ru-up-pu-ú-um ù sa-ma-nu-[um] iš²-tu₄ kakka-bim(MUL) {x³} ur-da.*

can be interpreted literally, i.e., natural phenomena were believed to instigate diseases.²²

6.5 Hyleme-Source

The geographical point of origin in the hyleme-pattern under study is, of course, heaven: often this is described in general terms as *ištu šamê* “from heaven”, but on some occasions the exact geographical point of origin in heaven is described with greater specificity.

6.5.1 *ziqqurat šamê* “Temple Tower of Heaven”/*zuq(q)urān šamê* “Height of Heaven”

It should be noted that both attestations §§ 2.2.1.4-2.2.1.5 are *hapax legomena* and hence are poorly understood.²³ However, there is one attestation known from the Gilgameš epic that could shed some new light on this matter:

(SB) Gilgameš XI 158

Recent Edition: George 2003, 712 f

aš₂-kun sur-qin-nu ina UGU ziq-qur-rat I (i.e., Ūta-napišti) strewed incense on
KUR the *ziqqurat* of the mountain

ziqqurat is used here in a transferred meaning, i.e., to be translated as “peak of the mountain”.²⁴ From this viewpoint, *ziqqurat* in § 2.2.1.4 can be interpreted the same way, i.e., “the peak of heaven”. The substantive *zuq(q)urān* to be derived from the same root as *ziqqurat*, i.e., *vzqr* “to build high” (D) “to raise, build high” with the suffix *-ān-* is likely to be translated as “height”.²⁵ In this respect, we should note the OB unilingual Sumerian incantation § 2.2.1.1, where the

²² For consideration of the fact that falling stars were generally considered to be a negative omen in Mesopotamia, see Oppenheim 1956, 283 f. For discussion of namburbi-rituals against the evil of falling stars, see Maul 1994, 453-457.

²³ Cavigneaux 1994, 159, *pace* Farber 1990, 307 n. 48 does not accept the *hapax legomenon* for § 2.2.1.4 and prefers to relate it to *vskr*, translating it to mean “the closed off regions of heaven”.

²⁴ George 2003, 713 n. 37.

²⁵ Cavigneaux 1994, 159.

celestial point of origin is “height of heaven” (saĝ an-ta). It seems plausible that § 2.2.1.1 and § 2.2.1.5 refer to the same geographical origin in heaven. For a discussion on the zenith of heaven and other designations thereof, see Horowitz (1998, 236-238).

6.5.2 *qereb šamê* “the Midst of Heaven”

The notion *qereb šamê* “the midst of heaven” (§ 2.2.1.12) occurs once. It is noteworthy that, in the variant “X₁(=malevolent) descends from the mountainous regions”, its counterpart occurs *qereb šadê* “the midst of the mountains” (§ 5.1.4) and in the Sumerian hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ came out the Abzu” we find – in the example from *Šurpu* cited above – ša₃ abzu -ta / *qereb Apsî* “the midst of the Abzu”. For a discussion on the “midst of heaven” as a geographical location, see Horowitz (1998, 238 f).

6.5.3 *ina pāni šamê* “in Front of Heaven”

The Middle Assyrian incantation, presumably against Lamaštu cited in § 4.2.1.2, uses the expression *ina pāni šamê ša Anim*. For a discussion on *pāni šamê* lit. “the face of heaven” as a geographical location in heaven, see Horowitz (1998, 241). Pace Horowitz’s (1998, 246) translation “on the face of heaven”; for the present attestation, however, a better translation of the prepositional phrase *ina pāni* “in front of” seems more warranted. Furthermore, it is specified that it is in front of heaven that the female evil entity is dispelled, i.e., *šamê ša Anim* “the heavens of Anu”, which is interpreted by Horowitz (1998, 244-246) to be the highest level of heaven, but could – on the other hand – very well be a general epithet for the totality of heaven.

6.6 Hyleme-Goal

The silent goal of the hyleme-pattern “X₍₁₋₂₎ descends from heaven” and its variants is of course earth, i.e., the inhabited world, since it occurs within histori-olae/(mythical) hyleme-sequences within incantations explaining the origin of evil and its occurrence in human society.

Only twice it is explicitly stated, i.e., *ina qaqqari / qaqqaršum* “on the ground (i.e., earth)” (§§ 2.2.5.1; 4.2.1.1). Another implicit way of denoting the hyleme-goal is the use of the ventive –*a(m)*, –*ni(m)*, –*m* in Akkadian affixed to

the hyleme-predicate. The function of the Akkadian ventive is that of an “allative” denoting a motion toward an intended goal. In the discussed hyleme-pattern and its variants, the hyleme-source is always given, i.e., heaven or a specific region thereof. Therefore, the intended goal conveyed with the ventive in the hyleme-predicate, generally expressed with (w)*arādu* (G) “to descend, come down”, must be earth, i.e., the inhabited world, to be inferred by the audience. As for the variant “X_i(=malevolent) descends from the mountainous region”, the hyleme-source is the uninhabited mountainous region, the intended goal of descent by the evil entity – expressed by the ventive in the hyleme-predicate – is now not per definition the earth as opposed to heaven, but rather the inhabited world in contrast to the uninhabited world. The ventive is consistently found in the hyleme-predicate, except for §§ 2.2.3.3; 4.2.1.2.

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