REMEMBRANCE AND THE DEAD
IN SECOND MILLENNIUM BC MESOPOTAMIA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses Continuing Bonds Theory to reinterpret *kispum*, an ancient Mesopotamian family funerary practice, in a new way. Traditional scholarship has portrayed the purpose of the ritual as apotropaic, and that the family dead are feared as hostile ghosts. This study suggests that profound beliefs about life and death in Mesopotamia, and interactions between the family and deceased loved ones can be found in the material and textual evidence. A new perspective focusing on evidence from the second millennium BC in ancient Mesopotamia is used to investigate the *kispum* ritual using ideas from the archaeology of emotion and Death and Dying studies. Current understandings based on textual based studies and the varied traditions of archaeological investigation are introduced in Chapter 2. Then, using notions of continued bonds, new insights are explored to better understand the ongoing relationship between the living and the dead. In Chapters 3 through 6 textual sources and archaeological evidence are assessed against this background, and against each other, with attempts to correlate textual with archaeological details. In the context of ancient Mesopotamia, this thesis employs new approaches to mortuary archaeology to provide new insights suggesting ways that conventional methods may be enhanced. Finally, this study also brings us back to an archaeology of death which is interested in attitudes toward the dead.

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Having identified that burial and *kispum* practices were constructed within familial contexts, we need to further explore textual information relating to conceptions of the family and the self. In this chapter, we will decipher how the Mesopotamian conceived of self, as body, mind, and spirit, part of which was thought to survive after physical death. These components were thought to originate at the creation of humans. Terms for the family and words that tell us more thoroughly how the human self was construed in Mesopotamian thought are key to defining how Mesopotamians understood relations between the living and dead. They are necessary to understand the role of remembrance for the living.

These terms in context also elucidate personal and corporate identity in Mesopotamian society. Kinship ties were important for the family identity, as we will see in the texts, and established the foundation for relationships with deceased family members. The grave and care for the dead in cyclical *kispum* rituals were a manifestation of family unity, and the family was the basis of meaning for the individual. Dead kin lived on in a different form, but and participated in an ongoing ritual relationship of remembrance with the family, which sustained them in the afterlife.

First we will examine examples from several types of documents which clarify the concept of the human individual, its spiritual and corporeal elements. The texts also elucidate notions of family or clan identity, and ritual motivation for caring for the dead. Then this chapter will look at some examples of genealogies and households to help investigate the idea of ancestors, family identity and remembrance in Mesopotamia.

4.1 Concepts and Terms for Body and Spirit

Mesopotamians believed that the goal of living a good and healthy life, *bulṭu* (from *balāṭu* —"to be healthy"), was to attain health, many children and a long life. The preservation of the grave was of great concern to the Mesopotamians. Anyone who failed to honor and maintain graves could be afflicted with a short life, marked by sickness, poverty and destruction of the family line. If there were no

descendants, then graves would not be tended and the spirit of the deceased would be abandoned.

4.1.1 The Body, Life and Spirit

The form in which the deceased entered the world beyond was called the *eṭemmu* (ghost) the essential spirit of a human, which the family believed would live on after death (Bayliss 1973; Jonker 1995: 190; Abusch 1998). Pronouncing the name of the dead in the *kispum* ritual was essentially a creative, life-giving act. The dead were kept alive in memory, in effect by invoking their name and reanimating the soul. To be forgotten in the present meant eternal oblivion.

The destruction of the family seed (*zēru*) is often the object of curse inscriptions. The image of the roots of a tree as the ancestors and the fruit as their progeny above, unites the inhabitants of both the upper and lower worlds.

> Whoever erases this inscription,
> may Šamaš and Enlil tear out his roots and eat his seed.
> They may not give him a son and heir (Jonker 1995: 196, 23)

Progeny were the mechanism through which family identity was continued. A successful life and afterlife was measured by having children (Cooper 2009: 31). This was partly expressed through the belief that the family deceased would be cared for in the afterlife by their descendants. The idea of the preservation of the grave and maintenance of the spirit of the dead is integral to an understanding of why Mesopotamians continued to perform the *kispum* ritual.

4.1.2 Elements of the Human Being

Various Akkadian words refer to the components of the human body, the corpse, the living, and what form the spirit of a living person takes after bodily death. A dead person, *mîtu,* had no breath in the nostrils, no life force, was unable to have children and was thought to be asleep in the grave. Life, *napištu,* consisted of vitality, health, breath and strength in the body (Jonker 1995: 191; *CAD* P, 42). The idea of life as breath breathed into the nostrils and as soul (compare Hb. *nepeš*, Gk. *psyche*) is a well known trope in ancient Near Eastern thought (Barré 1990). A living person had flesh (*šîru),* blood *(damu),* a heart *(libbu),* a body *(zumru, pagru),* a skeleton *(eṣemtu)* and intelligence *(ṭēmu)*. The physical and spiritual components

of humans came into being at their creation. The myth *Atraḫasis*, which also contains a Babylonian flood story, deals with the creation of humans to serve the gods as a work force. This myth explains the nature of humans as mortal beings but with an eternal spiritual component, the ghost or *eṭemmu*.

The Mesopotamian conception of human creation, just like the structure of the cosmos, translates explicitly into what appear to be central ideas of the death and afterlife experience, and figure into funerary ritual as well. From a depiction of humans as being composed of both spirit and flesh at creation, we can understand that part of the living survived as a ghost after death. Humans were created with the mind *(ṭēmu)* and blood *(damu)* of a minor god. Before the creation of mankind, the *Igigi*, a group of minor gods, dug the canals and massive irrigation works. These gods rebelled against the hard manual labor and a god, named We-ila, led a strike against the command of the chief gods. The violent death of We-ila eventually enabled mankind to be created from his body (Dalley 1989; Abusch 1998: 364-365). Mankind, therefore, is made from divine flesh and blood; this is the part of the human believed to survive after death.

Ṭēmu was carried in the divine blood and inherited by mankind. To have *ṭēmu* is to have consciousness. The word *ṭēmu* is also related to "plan", in the sense of an idea conceptualized in the mind and then brought into being upon naming or command. *Ṭēmu* is also used for "decision", "intention", "sense" and "reason" (*CAD* Ṭ, 94-96). Drunkenness, confusion, or insanity was attributed to a lack of *ṭēmu*. That mankind was partly made up of this divine force of intelligence, creative, and rational thought, helps us to understand the nature of the *eṭemmu*.

It is also interesting to note that the word for man, *awîlu*, clearly plays on the sound of the slain god's name, We-ila. Other sound- and wordplays exist between *ṭēmu*/*eṭemmu* (*we + ṭēmu*), and *damu*/*ṭēmu*/*eṭemmu* (Bottéro 1982; Abusch 1998; Alster 2002). To the Mesopotamians, the punning and linguistic play was full of nuance and indeed, here, served to express truths about the nature of the human spirit. The terms and the way they are used express the duality of life and death (Liverani 2004: 7011). The layering of meaning in the terms would have been obvious to a Mesopotamian audience.

While the nature of myth is very different from a modern understanding of ontology, philosophy or theology, in Mesopotamia, as we have seen, it functioned

as a literary form of pondering the ineffable (Bottéro 1982: 28-29; Liverani 2004: 3-17). This homophonic literary device therefore served to intertwine meanings and emphasize the interrelated components that make up human beings, both physically and spiritually. For us, understanding these devices leads to a better view of the Mesopotamian idea of the spirit that remained after death.

To create humans, divine elements were mixed with a physical, earthly element, clay. This was done by a birth goddess named Nintu, a name which describes her role.

"With his flesh and his blood
let Nintu mix clay
that both the god himself and man
may be mixed together in the clay."

(Abusch 1998: 365, lines 210-213)

At the command of the god Enki, the human heart (*libbu*) was assigned a heartbeat likened to a drum (*uppu*). It is at this point that the *eṭemmu* came into being.

"From the god's flesh let there be a ghost,
To the living creature, let it make known its sign,
That there be no forgetting let there be a ghost."

(Abusch 1998: 365, lines 215-216)

Therefore, we see that the god's flesh and blood imparted a measure of divinity to mankind, but was also the source of the human ghost, which continued on after mortal death.

Another piece of literature, *Enūma Elish*, also attributes the creation of mankind to the blood of a murdered god (Abusch 1998: 370, 383; Bottéro 2001: 241-243). Divine blood is likened to the life force of man, from which comes the self. The flesh of the god, however, is the source of the *eṭemmu,* and the form of the body. The clay *(ṭiddu)* provides the bodily form, the physical basis of humanity, while the blood of the god provides life and intelligence (*ṭēmu*). Flesh invokes both the mortal human and immortal ghost, a duality imposed by the nature of the divinity of the god, who became mortal when violently killed (Abusch 1998: 370-

371). Somehow a part of man was believed to be immortal as a result of the divine element, and existed after death as the *eṭemmu.*

In the myth *Adapa*, mortality, not originally included as a prerequisite for human life, came about by the actions of Adapa himself in an appearance before the gods. He refused the garments and food of eternal life offered him by the chief god of the pantheon, Anu. Thus, human population increased to excess - depicted as 'noise' - and a flood was sent to deal with overpopulation (Liverani 2004: 3-23). These garments and the food could represent mortuary provisions for the dead. Since these items were depicted as the means for achieving immortality, the myth may reflect the belief that clothing the body and offering food and water enabled the ongoing existence of the human spirit in the *eṭemmu*. Another way to view this episode, is that the offer of food and clothing were a trick, as they would signify the preparation of the corpse for burial. In Chapter 5 we will see texts that mention funerary use of clothes and food offerings.

4.1.3 The Nature of the *Eṭemmu*

As we have seen, man *(awīlu)* has in him an element of the divine *(īlu)*, the *ṭēmu*, which became a part of man via the *damu* (blood) of the god at creation. The *eṭemmu* is a complex notion of mind, spirit, and life force combined, which survives in an insubstantial state after the physical body dies (Bottéro 1992: 271-273; Jonker 1995: 191; Abusch 1998: 366-372). Man, made of clay and the blood of a god, has a component that we might know as 'mind', 'soul' or 'life force'; it continues on in an altered existence after death. According to the traditional view of a bleak post-mortem existence, this spirit was doomed to survive in a simple subsistence state in much-reduced circumstances (Scurlock 1997).

However, we can see that various attitudes to the physical remains of the dead might suggest something different. Although non-corporeal, the *eṭemmu* is closely linked with the physical presence of the bones *(eṣemtu)*. Not only was the presence of the bones important, but the corpse, *šalamtu*, must be properly cared for at burial. Its continued care is also clearly important, and lies at the heart of what we know of *kispum* rituals of libations and food offerings. It may be that the location of the grave had to be known to family members for continuing care through *kispum* offerings.

The family's vigilant care of the dead may have been thought to impart a sort of energy, in some way, to the *eṭemmu*, which might be seen as a shadow (*ṣillu)* or the image of a person (Jonker 1995: 192; Scurlock 1997: 96; Bottéro 2001: 107). This concept is also known from current Death and Dying Studies. As we have seen (Section 2.3), Continuing Bonds Theory finds that people continue to interact with their loved ones in various ways after death, including dreaming about them, having conversations with them or perceiving their presence (Sanger 2009; Kwilecki 2011).

Some interpretations suggest that the presence of the *eṭemmu* might also occur as a wafting breeze (*zaqīqu*) or a wind gust (*šāru*), which could rise from the underworld from a crack in the earth (Jonker 1995: 192). Another interpretation of the *zaqīqu* is "dream soul". Scurlock attributes this wind or shadowlike spirit as the part of the living being which survives after death, and the *eṭemmu* as a second, body-related spirit (2002: 1; 2010). In her view, both entities depart the body with the funerary rites, which separated these souls from the corpse. This ritual separation was said to "blow away the wind" and set the soul loose to embark upon its journey to the world below. I think it is more likely that there was one soul or spirit, the *eṭemmu*, the essence of the human that survived death. The spirits that could sneak through cracks in the earth were probably demons and malevolent spirits who were different than family *eṭemmī*. They were the *šaggāšu*, "murderer" demon from the steppe, evil *utukku* (UDUG-ḪUL) demons, baby-snatching demons and others (Castellino 1955; Scurlock 1991, 2005, 2006; Geller 2008; Finke 2013). These hostile spirits are distinguished from human spirits.

I interpret the unsettled *eṭemmu* of the exorcistic incantations, as the portrayal of the spirit of a person with no family identity. An unsettled ghost could result from lack of proper burial and is characterized as having no *pāqidu* (family heir or caretaker) to provide them with water, food or a grave (*CAD* P: 115-138). Having a *pāqidu* meant belonging to a social group, a family. Such metaphors embodied (even if as a ghost) a deep truth in Mesopotamian thought, that meaning was constructed communally through family identity. Individuals were known or 'named' in the Near Eastern understanding of 'to come into being' only through association with a group identity.

The idea of no family attachments, of no lineage that connected to the past and was continuing into the future, might have been much more of a fear to the Mesopotamians than the ghosts of the family deceased.

4.2 The Family

To better understand the importance of the ritual in establishing identity within the family, we must examine some of the kinship terminology. As funeral and post-funeral practices are assumed to take place within familial groups, it is important to clarify our understandings of the nature of these groups. Terms for the family in the Old Babylonian period, which we focus on here, are well attested in private documents from the first half of the second millennium. These include accounting texts, legal documents, wills and inheritance deeds, contracts, family and official letters, personal inscriptions and seals, and economic records. Some of these sources come from family archives, as we will discuss further below. Much of the written record derives from upper class property owners and urban families, due to the nature of literacy and scribal resources associated with affluence. As it is essential to avoid essentialist interpretations of religious behaviors, I do not believe the *kispum* was strictly an upper class religious practice (Edwards 2005). The *kispum* ritual could be practiced by anyone and was something different than burial or grave furnishing

4.2.1 Terms for Family and Clan

The basic name for the family was *bît abim* (lit. 'house of the father') in Akkadian and IM-RU-A/IM-RI-A in Sumerian. *Bît abim* could refer to the name of a nuclear family, as well as an extended family.

Kimtum and *kimtia* are also translated as 'family' and 'my family' respectively, as well as used in a more general sense for 'clan'. Kinship was expressed in terms of brother (*aḫum*) and family or clan ties. Some examples elucidate the importance of the family relationship (Van der Toorn 1996b: 22-23).

TCL 17, 21
Kima aḫam u qerbam (l)a išû epšēku
I have been treated like someone who has neither brother nor relative.

The clan, *kimtum*, consisted of flesh and blood relations and could include families more widely distributed, living in many different cities.

TCL 18, 85
Ina ālim šāti kimtī u aḫī attāma
In that city, you are my family and brother.

A letter of introduction for one Sîn-abušu to relations in the city of Sippar asks for good treatment and accommodations for a man who is not a stranger, but rather a fellow clan member:

AbB 12, 144
Awīlum šû ul nakaranniāšim, aḫuni libbu kimt[ini].
That man is no stranger to us, he is our brother, from among our own clan.

The Akkadian word for stranger, *nakrum,* in the text above, is the same term used for a foreigner or enemy, and carries a hostile connotation (*CAD* N/1, 189-191). Used in parallel to and opposite *aḫu* and *kimtum*, the significance of the clan relationship is highlighted. Clan or lineage members literally share flesh and blood, which unites them against outsiders, and indeed against evil. We can use the following examples of *nakrum* to clarify the idea of brotherhood (family), the household, and the strength of kinship ties (*CAD* N/1: 190-191).

Or. NS 36 410
la na-ak-ra-ku la aḫiāku šīrka u damaka anāku
I am not a stranger, not an alien, I am your flesh and blood.

Tell Asmar 1931, 299:6
anāku aḫuka šīrka u damaka anāku
na-ak-ru-um na-kà-ar-ma anāku ana awâtika azzaz
I am your brother, I am your flesh and blood,
only an outsider is hostile, but I obey you.

Fish Letters 1:22
awīlum awīl bītija ul na-ka-ar

The man is a man of my household, not a stranger.

To be part of a family, which in turn was related via blood ties, however distant, to a larger clan, was essential in Mesopotamia. To family members, kinship identity reflected the balance and order of a structured universe. While other identities might exist in relation to the city or larger religious, political or occupational units as well, this familial or kin grouping is clearly the arena within which such mortuary practices were played out. It was possible to be associated with more than one grouping, such as family groupings and clerical or crafts-based ties (see 4.3.7 below).

4.2.2 Family, Society and Identity

Preservation of family and clan identity was paramount. To be an outsider was to be other, foreign, *nakrum*, and a threat to group survival (Poo 2005: 80-81). Within this worldview we may see how preservation of family and clan identity was paramount. The organization of a patriarchal family provided the basic structure of society. Family harmony represented order, the opposite of enemy rule, destruction, foreign invasion. Any disruption of family unity or removal from the clan (*kimtum*) earned the curse of the gods.

As we have seen the onset of an imbalance of social order disrupted the Mesopotamian ideal of the good and healthy life. Conflict, famine, distress, poor conduct, neglect and lack of family brotherhood (*aḫḫūtum*) were considered inimical, dangerous and completely harmful to the family. At times, such divisive forces were blamed on demons or witchcraft, just as foreign forces were demonized on a national scale (Van der Toorn 1996b: 23; Poo 2005: 81). These notions were carried out symbolically on the cosmic scale. Familial and clan unity represented the ordered universe, the good life, as opposed to the disorder of chaos, likened to death. Kinship ties, even if distant, established a group self-identity, of which nuclear and immediate extended family was the core of society.

As we have seen, the idioms of kinship and familial life pervaded the lived world, but what I will argue as a central part of this research is that this identity extended beyond the grave, incorporating the spirits of deceased kin in ongoing family remembrance, and reaching back through generations to maintain and

curate ancestral bonds. In just this way therefore, ritual care of the dead served an essential societal function for the living in the Mesopotamian family, quite contrary to perceptions of the dead as mere shades or hostile spirits.

I would like to develop further the idea that dead kin also occupied a key place in this worldview. In the "steadfast house of the family", the *bīt kimti šuršudu*, the dead lived in an accepted relationship: the dead "below", the living "above". As we have seen above, the product of this family maintenance of order was a good name and esteem for "those who live under the sun" (Jonker 1995: 196, 210). Rather than a mere nod to pacifying malevolent ghosts, incorporation of dead family members was an active factor in the family dynamic, beneficial to the family self-perception, reputation, social identity and continuance of the family line.

There are two further terms that designate broad kinship groups: *nîšūtu*, ('relatives', from *nîšū*, 'people'), and *salātu* ('family' or 'clan'). Both refer to family kin related by marriage or consanguinity. *Nîšūtu* can be translated as "in-laws" (*CAD* N, 297-98). *Salātu* often occurs alongside *kimtu* and *nîšūtu* in collective kinship terms, in many contexts. In a legal context, for example, the juxtaposition of terms defines the scope of family relations, or even the size of kinship groups in gradual order (*CAD* S, 93-94; K, 375-76):

> matima ina aḫḫē mārē
> kim-tum ni-su-tum u sa-la-tum
> ša bīt PN ša iraggumu
>
> if ever anyone raises a claim
> among the brothers, sons,
> family, relations or kin
> of the household of So-and-So…

It is important to confirm the extent to which kinship extends to the dead. In a literary example, Ut-Napishtim, the Noah character in the Flood story in The Gilgamesh Epic, Tablet XI line 84, loads "all of my family (*kimtija*) and my kin (*salātija*)" into the boat (*CAD* K, 376). Not simply terminology for kinship, these words and phrases also demonstrate that terms for living relations extend into the

afterlife. A prayer for family ghosts includes the extended relatives among the group (Lenzi 2011: 136, 143, lines 1-3).

at-tu-nu GIDIM kim-ti-ia ba-nu-ú qab-[ra]
AD.MU AD AD.MU AMA.MU AMA AMA.MU ŠEŠ.MU NIN.MU
kim-ti-ia ni-šu-ti-ia u sa-la-ti-ia

You, the ghosts of my family, progenitors in the grave,
(The ghosts of) my father, my grandfather, my mother, my grandmother,
my brother, my sister, (The ghosts of) my family, my kin and my clan…

GIDIM *kim-ti-ya* here can be read grammatically as *eṭem kimtiya* and translated as "my ancestral family", as GIDIM/*eṭemmu* are interchangeable (Lenzi 2011: 136). Here we may note that the family deceased in this example encompass three generations, which has been discussed as the generational limit in Mesopotamia for individual mention of the deceased in texts (Bayliss 1973: 199, 121). We will discuss this further below in this chapter.

The ghosts are *bānû* (line 1), 'progenitors', from a word that means to build or create, and aptly connotes the origins of the seed of the family line. This word is also used of gods in the act of creation. Here, *kimtum* seems to connote the nuclear family up to perhaps grandparents, while the terms *nîšūtu* and *salatu* (line 3) refer to the extended, broader relatives in the bloodline or clan, and may indicate ancestors. Other interpretations have suggested that *kimtum* is the clan, of which the nuclear family is part (Van der Toorn 1996b: 22).

These terms at least give us some notion of what the Mesopotamian view of family kinship relations entailed, and speak for the existence of dead kin, all of whom could interact with living family members and with whom family clearly engaged in various ways. It seems that *kispum*, then, may have helped establish the extension of the clan, its ongoing existence, into the afterlife. This would provide a sense of security for family members, in the notion of ongoing relational bonds that existed both before and after life.

4.3 Ancestors in Mesopotamia

In these Mesopotamian societies where family and kin remained so central to the structuring of social life, we have also seen that rather than regarding the dead as being discarded shades, the dead might equally be seen as core components of these families. As such they display many of the key attributes of meaningful and valued ancestors.

4.3.1 Family Religion and Memory

Predecessors, the living and family remembrance rituals provided the basic social construct of Old Babylonian society. Family, clan and kin allegiance, loyalty and honor (adherence to values) amounted to the same thing as family religion, worship or devotion (Van der Toorn 1996b: 42). As seen above, the ancestors anchored the family identity in their lineage in a real sense, both in the immediate past (remembered relatives) and distant generations. Halbwachs saw individual memory as part of collective memory, which is a reality and a dynamic part of the social contruct (Halbwachs 1992; Jonker 1995; Kansteiner 2002). In this view, remembering was an act which required renewal. As we will see in later discussion, the repetition of *kispum* rituals might be seen to act in just such a manner.

As remembered history, remembrance of the dead is a type of cultural memory, which can be understood to create social memory (Kansteiner 2002; Assmann 2006). This includes the more distant ancestral past of cultural memory as well as remembered memory, which applies to the living who bear the actual remembrances of interactions and events with the more recently deceased. Official Old Babylonian cultural memory is that preserved in the written word, carried out institutionally by centralized scribal schools. The vehicle for the preservation of family memory was ritual commemoration acts carried out at home.

Private family ritual, particularly among non-privileged classes, constituted the religious acts of the populace in actual practice and was very different from the official state religion and its mandated rituals (Berlinerblau 1996: 17-29). Practiced religion might include a broad range of individual and group events, including festivals, family rituals, magic, prayer, song and celebrations for many parts of private daily life. What the family did in the event of the death of one its

members, not only accomplished the immediate mourning ritual and the rite of passage for the dead, but the actions and rituals performed were, for the common family, the praxis of Religion.

Thus funerary rites functioned as part of personal or family religion, while corporately linking social and spiritual interaction with the immediate clan and the long-term ancestral lineage of deceased family. Memory could act as part of an organic societal process, with different groups contributing to the overall structure of and collective memory of the culture as a whole (Jonker 1995: 18; Kansteiner 2002). So family remembrance ritual was cohesive for both the clan and larger social groups. Continued care for the dead, while known from official, royal *kispum* rites, was also an important part of the private domestic cult. While rituals involving the invocation of intangible beings can be seen as magical or religious in nature, involving the dead in *kispum* as honored ancestors, also contributed to the social, and even economic, good health of the family.

Meijer suggests a view of family lineages extending into a distant, even mystical, or mythical, past, further displaying a type of social power as an established and venerated family group (2003: 56). This again may suggest that making 'grave offerings' served as physical remembrance of treasured ancestors who were never to be forgotten, even if your family lineage was not elite. The care of the ancestors was the setting for family history in genealogical style; genealogies functioned, originated and survived through the family cult.

4.3.2 The Family and the Dead

As we have seen, family solidarity was expressed as values, termed *aḫḫūtum*, (literally 'brotherhood') which constituted a strict code of propriety and acceptable behavior. *Aḫḫūtum* was the moral and social code that functioned to bind and preserve family. Family structures served as the foundation or building blocks of broader society as a whole.

Part of *aḫḫūtum* values included expected social behavior towards the dead. *Kubbutum*, honor, was enacted, and paid to ancestors through remembrance rituals (Bottéro 1992: 281). Literally, *kubbutum* comes from the root "to be heavy" (*kabātu*) and in this factitive (D) form, connotes a gravitas, the weight of dignity imposed upon those who had lived before (*CAD* K, 16-18). Respect, honor and

paying tribute to the dead were their expected due. The importance placed on such behavior further demonstrates how shared memory of family forebearers continued to both exert the influence of the propriety of lineage and legitimize the family name as a social construct on a philosophical level. Here again it is very difficult to adhere to the view of the family deceased as mere troublemaking spirits. Instead, they are the source of family and clan identity, to be remembered and treated after death with honor (Abusch 1998: 380-381).

4.3.3 Family, Inheritance and the Dead

On a practical level, ancestral remembrance included certain duties and inheritance responsibilities, particularly for the main heir (IBILA). At the death of the father, the son took up the family seal as paterfamilias, which continued to honor and respect (*palāhu*) the remembrance of the dead

Legal documents, particularly wills, from Emar, require that the main heir must take care of the family's dead (*mētu*) and the family gods (*ilāni*). The proximity (hendiadys) of the terms has been used to support the collective deification of the dead in the afterlife (Schmidt 1996: 144-163). Although the *ilāni* remain under debate, the texts concerning *kispum* rituals seem to deal with offerings to gods (where present) separately from the ancestral dead. While *ilāni* can be figures of the family gods used in worship and ritual, it is more likely that, in this context, the terms are a legal clause having to do with unusual inheritance conditions, for example, in placing a daughter as principal heir (Draffkorn 1957; Pitard 1996: 125-128).

Huehnergard, Text 1, lines 6-8

^{lf}ú-na-ra DUMU.MUNUS-ia

a-na MUNUS ú NITAḪ aš-[ku]-un-ši

DINGIR.^{MEŠ} –ia ù me-te-ia [lu]-ú tù-na-bi

Unara, my daughter,

I have established as female and male.

May she call upon (invoke) my gods and my dead (1983: 13-15).

Huehnergard, Text 2, lines 9-12

^{lf}al-ḫa-ti DUMU.MUNUS-ia

a-na MUNUS ú NITAḪ aš-ku-un-ši

DINGIR.^{MEŠ} –ia ù me-te-ia

lu-ú tù-na-bi

Al-ḫati, my daughter

I have established as female and male.

May she call upon (invoke) my gods and my dead (1983: 17-19).

In these documents we see that females could be legally made principal heirs, of which a primary responsibility is to invoke (*nabû*) "my gods and my dead". It should be noted that the Emar and Nuzi texts exhibit some idiomatic or regional variations in Akkadian terms (Huehnergard 1983: 28). Another will from Emar stipulates that two sons who divide their father's estate must share responsibility to attend to (*ukannû*) "the gods and the dead (DINGIR.^{MEŠ} *ù mi-ti*) of Abika their father". In a fourth text the son-in-law of the testator is obliged to remain with the house and to honor or care for "my gods and my dead" (Pitard 1996: 125). The family gods were inherited, probably represented as figurines located in the ritual room of the house; possession of them signified authority (Greenberg 1962; Rouillard and Tropper 1987; Spanier 1992; Van der Toorn 1994: 44-45, 57-58; 1996: 71-76).

A few other examples indicate that the family gods (*ilāni*) and the *eṭemmī* were essential to family identity as well as social and economic prosperity. From the Nuzi will of Pui-tae, three daughters are legally adopted as sons to establish them as principal co-heirs (Grosz 1987). Pui-tae, who apparently had no sons, leaves his daughters and his wife, Ašte, his estate, which includes land given to him from the palace. Ašte, as principal heir, retains control of the entire estate while she remains living in his house, until her death. At that point, "whoever among my daughters holds my fields and houses will revere" my *ilāni* and my *eṭemmī* (Lacheman and Owen 1981: 386-387).

Two other Nuzi texts are significant examples because they are disinheritance texts. In one document from a family archive, a man disinherits his

son, stating that he "shall not come to the gods or the ghosts (Pl. *ilāni* and *eṭemmī*), to the fields or the houses" (Deller 1981: 62-3). Additionally, the father "breaks his clod", swearing before Shamash (the sun god and god of justice) an oath that denies the rights of the gods and ancestral spirits to the son. In the second, a grandfather denies his grandson access to his fields, houses, herds, equipment and everything he owns, including the rights to his gods and his ghosts (Pitard 1996: 126).

In summary, the examples from the Nuzi and Emar family archives, rights and access to the ancestral dead and the family gods were given legal priority. Not only part of legal property of the family, access to the *ilāni* and *eṭemmī* were regarded as a privilege, a high honor. Bequeathed to the principal heir along with these rights, was the responsibility of caring for, attending to, honoring and respecting the gods and the ghosts. The care of the *ilāni* and *eṭemmī* seemed to be a serious undertaking, valued for the continuance of the basic social structure in Mesopotamia.

In this regard we see that the practice of commemorative ancestral rites served not only as religion, but was legally binding, socially cohesive and economically beneficial. Therefore, the family dead were integrally maintained in a close relationship with the living. Lineages depended on the remembrance of the dead (Grosz 1987). In fact, deceased family members were integral for the concept of family identity.

4.3.4 Tracing *Kispum* Traditions in Genealogy

Performing *kispum* for the ancestors and family of the king is attested from texts in the Old Babylonian, Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian periods. For our purposes, some familiarity with the royal genealogical tradition is helpful for an understanding of how family *kispum* might have remembered the names of dead ancestors. Genealogies are usually found in king lists, as early as *The Sumerian King List* (Wilcke 1989). These texts are constructs which served different purposes. While not historical in the modern sense, royal genealogies and king lists memorialized the accepted, imagined or constructed ancestral list of royal predecessors. A royal funeral or ancestor remembrance ceremony could have

many different purposes, including legitimization of a dynasty, power manipulation and display, or the succession of a new king.

We have already noted the written appearance of *kispum* as beginning in texts of the second millennium. The Amorite presence at this time across Mesopotamia is well known and continues in ongoing discussions of second millennium territories (Kamp and Yoffee 1980; Heimpel 2003; Yoffee 2005; Porter 2007, 2009, 2012; Ristvet 2008). It has been postulated in some sources that *kispum* was of tribal Amorite origins, partly because of the date of the Amorite dynasties and perhaps partly because their tribal rulers were referred to as *abu*, 'father' and remembered as tribal ancestors (Jonker 1995: 149-151; Whiting 2000; Jacquet 2002: 55-64; Durand 2012). Hammurapi's Amorite origins are well known and may also account for this idea. However, *kispum* has a much broader Mesopotamian context. Two genealogies feature Amorite royal ancestry: *The Assyrian Kinglist* and *The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty*.

The second millennium Babylonian text, *The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty,* states that the tablet (BM 80328) was specifically made for performing the *kispum* (Finkelstein 1966). Commissioned at the end of the dynasty, probably in Sippar, it clearly has several other underlying purposes, including legitimization of the foundation of the dynasty and systematizing knowledge of the past through genealogies, a well-known form of ancient Near Eastern 'historiography' (Malamat 1968; Finkelstein 1966: 97-98, 116-117; Whiting 2000: 1239; Durand 2012).

Another second millennium example of this use of dead predecessors is seen in the royal Mari *kispum*, which invoked the ancient, non-Amorite, Akkadian kings Sargon and Narām-Sin (ca. 2350 BC) as ancestors of the Amorite Mari kings hundreds of years after they ruled (Birot 1980; Jonker 1995: 220-226; Jacquet 2002: 56-61). Royal *kispum* is well established at Mari with extensively detailed studies of food records (Sasson 1982; Durand and Guichard 1997: 41-44, 63-70; Jacquet 2002). The Mari administrative texts mention provisions *ana kispim ša šarrāni*, "for (all) the kings", referring to the long line of predecessors.

The Assyrian Kinglist traces ruling ancestors to seventeen kings who famously "lived in tents" as desert tribal sheikhs (Richardson 1999-2000: 185-190; Chavalas 2006: 368; Melville et al. 2006: 368-372). One of these Assyrian ancestors was the well known Šamši-Adad (1808-1776 BC), an Amorite king from

Ekallatum who ruled from Šubat-Enlil (modern Tell Leilan) and had conquered Aššur over one thousand years earlier (Van de Mieroop 2007: 106-111).

The Hammurapi Genealogy, published by Finkelstein in 1966, is a list of 27 names, with a clause at the end for dead soldiers lost on the battlefields, princes and daughters of the king. Lastly the list adds in 'people' (*awīlūtum*) across the land, not 'ghosts', who have no one to tend them, inviting them to join with the king in the *kispum*. This text differs from the purely historiographical genre we find in the king lists. It is clearly a *kispum* composition meant to be recited for the remembrance of the dead perhaps at one of the monthly or annual *kispum* celebrations, or as part of a coronation (Finkelstein 1966: 117). More than merely legitimizing the ruling dynasty, recitation of the composition *The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty*, connected a long-reaching ancestral legacy far beyond familial relatives, with bonds into many generations of rulers past. This effectively joined the king to an exclusive ruling ancestral group hundreds of years before his actual bloodline took power. In this regard, the *kispum* was a powerful socio-political ritual act.

BM 80328

1 [1]*A-ra-am-ma-dam-ra*
[1]*Tu-ub-ti-ya-mu-ta*
[1]*Ya-am-qú-uz-zu-ḫa-lam-ma*
[1]*Ḫe-a-na*
5 [1]*Nam-zu-ú*
[1]*Di-ta-nu*
[1]*Zu-um-ma-bu*
[1]*Nam-ḫu-ú*
[1]*Am-na-nu*
10 [1]*Ya-aḫ-ru-rum*
[1]*Ip-ti-ya-mu-ta*
[1]*Bu-ḫa-zu-um*
[1]*Su-ma-li-ka*
[1]*Aš-ma-du*
15 [1]*A-bi-ya-mu-ta*

[1]*A-bi-di-ta-an*

[1]*Ma-am*(?)-x-[-x-x(?)]

[1]*Šu*-x-*ni*(?)-x[-x(?)]

[1]*Da-ad*(?)-x[-x-x(?)]

[1]*Su-m*[*u-a-bu-um*]

[1]*Su-mu-la-*[*il*]

[1]*Za-bi-um*

[1]*A-píl-*[d]*Sīn*

[1d]*Sīn-mu-ba-lí-*[*iṭ*]

[1]*Ḫa-am-mu-ra-p*[*í*]

[1]*Sa-am-su-i-lu-n*[*a*]

[1]*A-bi-e-šu-*[*uḫ*]

[1]*Am-mi-di-ta-*[*na*]

BAL ERÍN MAR-[TU]

BAL ERÍN *Ḫe-a-na*

BAL *Gu-ti-um*

BAL *ša i-na tup-pí an-ni-i la ša-aṭ-ru*

Ù AGA-UŠ *ša i-na da-an-na-at be-li-šu im-qú-tu*

DUMU-MEŠ LUGAL

DUMU-MÍ-MEŠ LUGAL

a-wi-lu-tum ka-li-ši-in

iš-tu [d]UTU-É-A *a-du*(!) [d]UTU-ŠU-A

ša pa-qí-dam ù sa-ḫi-ra-am la i-šu-ù

al-ka-nim-ma an-ni-a-am a-ak-la

an-ni-a-am ši-ti-a

a-na Am-mi-ṣa-du-qá DUMU *Am-mi-di-ta-na*

LUGAL KÁ-DINGIR-RA[KI]

ku-ur-ba

Lines 1-28 are a list of the names in the genealogy of the First Dynasty of Babylon and therefore translated as such (note line 25, which names King Ḫammurapi of Babylon, 1792-1750 BC). Line 20 begins the known series of kings from Sumu (1894-1881 BC) through Ammiditana (1683-1647 BC), the father and predecessor of Ammiṣaduqa (1646-1626 BC), for whom this text was composed.

The first nineteen names are written as individual names, but may represent tribes, territorial rulers, kings or tribal patriarchs. However, at the time of the composition of the text, all the names were believed to be ancestral generations or actual ancestors (Finkelstein 1966: 97). These names of ancestral leaders most likely spanned centuries. Some of the names in the first part of the list (lines 4-10) are known West Semitic or Amorite tribes, and some correspond to the names of the "kings who dwelt in tents" listed in the *Assyrian King List* as well (Finkelstein 1966: 98, 114). Amnānu and Yaḫrurum, for example, are the well-known tribes of the Sippar region to which the Ḫammurapi dynasty belonged (Finkelstein 1966:101). The names in lines 11-19 are not known as tribal or geographic names from other sources, but like the other names, were most likely regarded as true ancestors in the tradition of Mesopotamian historiography. Finkelstein suggests that Iptiyamūta (line 11) was the name of a tribal sheikh and signified a change in political autonomy for these tribes at about 2029 BC (Finkelstein 1966: 112).

The translation of lines 29-43 includes the purpose of the composition as regards the *kispum* tradition.

The *pālu* (dynasty/rule) of the MAR.TU (Amorites)
The *pālu* of the Ḫaneans
The *pālu* of Gutium
The *pālu* not recorded on this tablet
And the soldiers who fell on perilous campaigns for their lord
Sons of the king
Daughters of the king
All persons
from the rising of the sun to the setting sun (East to West)
Who have neither *pāqidum* nor *saḫirum*
Come and eat this!
Drink this!
Bless Ammiṣaduqa son of Ammiditana
King of Babylon

The text seems to overlap the first section by grouping the individual tribal names as three *pālu* (BALA), or separate periods of ruling dynasties, in lines 29-31. The Ḫaneans occupied the area near Terqa and the Gutians were from the Zagros

mountains to the east who had increasingly settled in the south in the late third millennium and set themselves up as heirs to the Akkadian dynasty (Van De Mieroop 2007: 71, 110, 115; Durand 2012). These *pālu* also correlate with a genealogical tablet of King Šamši-Adad I (ca. 1808-1776 BC) of Assur in northern Mesopotamia (Finkelstein 1966:107-109). The fourth *pālu* in line 32 seems to be a catch all for any and all ruling ancestor groups inclusively.

The last lines help substantiate the text as a true *kispum* document. With line 33 the text broadens the scope of this memorial to include all soldiers lost in *dannat* (forceful, difficult battle) while serving their king and country. The text goes further again in lines 34-38 to include as well any royal children who may have been forgotten by their individual names, thereby encompassing the whole ruling dynasty (except for queens). The king then includes in a broad sweep any dead persons on Earth who have no caretaker (*pāqidum*), or anyone else to concern themselves with their needs (*saḫirum* seems to be a synonym of *pāqidum*). It is significant that the range of all the dead are not called *eṭemmu,* although they are clearly invoked and invited to eat at the *kispum* meal. Another thing to note is that this *kispum* cannot have been performed at each grave and therefore was effective just by means of performance. By including the unknown dead as *awīlūtum* in need of remembrance, the king's *kispum* prayer embraced the expanse of the whole land and reinforced his royal position as the caretaker of all people, perhaps symbolically uniting all as one national family.

Since the royal ritual in the *Genealogy* encompasses all the ghosts in the land who have no family to perform *kispum* for them, including soldiers who fell in battle and may remain improperly buried, calling them to join in the meal with the king may provide benefices for the king (Bayliss 1973: 122). It may also demonstrate duty, or it may ensure the king of like care when he dies as part of the blessings. In calling the dead to bless him, Ammiṣaduqa also reinforces that the bonds of this broad national group invoked support him as living ruler. The inclusiveness of commoners and soldiers in unknown graves in a royal remembrance ritual could offer a different perspective on *kispum*. The text does not seem to convey the fear of ghosts, instead it invites all the spirits of the dead to join in a royal funerary remembrance meal. Its inclusive invitation is a unifying one with the king leading the *kispum*, and the country of Babylon in the role of family.

The *Genealogy* may be regarded as a general model of how a family *kispum* might have been performed as well.

Another famous royal *kispum* example is that of King Šamši-Adad's arrival in Terqa (Ashara, Syria) on the day of the *kispum* there, and his dedication of a *bīt kispim* (É KI-SÌ-GA) to the god Dagan, known from a letter (*ARM* I 65) and an inscription found at Ashara. Terqa was the capital of a province of Mari, nearby to the north. The Terqa *bīt kispi*m is also described as *É ku-ul-ti-šu*, which Finkelstein proposed to be read as *bīt qūltišu*, "the house of his intonation", referencing intoning of the names of the ancestors to conjure them up (Finkelstein 1966: 116). Others have modified the reading to "house of silence" (George 1993: 110). In any case it was a built ritual space, although undiscovered at Terqa, probably washed away in the river. We may consider that the *bīt kispim* could have had a similar ritual function to netherworld entrances or shrines as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5. The *bīt kispim* may serve a similar function to places translated 'funerary chapel' in some sources, for example in Gudea's temple of Ningirsu (Jacobsen 1987: 424). Any place designed to offer *kispum* must have had at least a locus to where offerings were directed, and ghosts could symbolically cross boundaries. A *bīt kispim* would not necessarily require something as large as an *apī*, conceivably, a netherworld portal could be a symbol on an altar, a pot on the floor or a hole. The Mari kings may have made *kispum* at Terqa because it was an ancestral Amorite seat, or because of its association with Dagan, and hence the *bīt kispim*, with the underworld.

In summary, *The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty* is an unusual royal genealogy containing an invocation text for *kispum*. It includes lines after the predecessor list, which seem to be a recitation or prayer formula for the *kispum.* The text's purpose may well have been as it states, for reading the predecessors' names at the *kispum*. The inclusion of the lines at the end of the list lead us to believe that this is true, that first the royal ancestors' names were called and then an invitation to other widespread ghosts was extended. It also is important because the dead are clearly called to a join in a meal with the living.

4.3.5 Generations of the Family

There is some indication, from elite families, that names of forebearers could be recorded. An important advance has been in studies of extended family relationships in various Mesopotamia cities of different eras (Harris 1975; Prang 1976, 1977; Dosch and Deller 1981; Stone 1987, 1996; Postgate 1988; Stone and Owen 1991; Diakonoff 1996; Van Koppen 2002; Baker 2005; Wunsch 2005; Nielsen 2011; Tanret 2008, 2011; Charpin 2012). These are usually based mainly on contracts, receipts or account texts. A few studies of Mesopotamian households have meticulously collated finds and architecture from older excavation reports with the textual data to produce compelling evidence for several generations of families at Nippur and Ur (Stone 1996; Brusasco 1999-2000, 2007). I will use some of the genealogies from these studies to support evidence for *kispum* names going back more than three generations. The names written in these texts may also reflect those who were specifically remembered by name in long genealogies, perhaps the main heirs, including female priestesses (Jonker 1995: 229-230). It is not inconceivable that much longer lists of family names could be memorialized orally and remembered and recited through song or chant. Oral presentation of family ancestral history would be likely in the context of *kispum*, as names are called to join the meal.

We do not have a general *kispum* formula text that tells us how many generations back the names of family deceased were remembered, which is an important point for the discussion of family *kispum*. However, we do have one generational list which is clearly a *kispum* text. The text (CBS 473) has some similarities to the Hammurapi genealogy, in that it includes a prayer and invocation of ancestor names, but it is a prayer to the moon god. Published in detail by Wilcke with commentary in German, it is worthwhile to include the full text here from a recent English translation by Van der Toorn (Wilcke 1983: 48-66; Kraus 1987; Van der Toorn 2008: 28).

> A Prayer to the Moon God (Sīn) Dated to the 3rd Day of the 4th month of Ammiditana Year 33 (from Nippur)

CBS 473 (BE 6/2, 111)

Sīn, you are the god of heaven and earth.
[In the mo]rning, I am pouring water for you
[for the f]amily (*kimtum*) of Sīn-naṣir, son of Ipqu-Annunitum.
Release the family of Sīn-naṣir, son of Ipqu-Annunitum,
That they may eat his bread and drink his water –

Ishme-Ea son of Shamash-naṣir, his wife and his family;
[Il]tani, naditum of Shamash, his daughter;
[Sīn]-naṣir son of Ishme-Ea;
Kasap-Aya, naditum of Shamash, his daughter;
Sin-iddinam son of Sīn-naṣir;
Iddin-Ea, son of Ishme-Ea;
Amat-Aya, naditum of Shamash, his daughter;
Diutubinduga, his son;
Ebabbar-nu-u'ulshe-hegal, his son
Ehursag-mushallim, his son;
Ipqu-Ea, son of Ishme-Ea;
Amat-Mamu, naditum of Shamash, his daughter;
Nidnusha, his son;
Ibni-Ea, his son;
Iqish-Ea, son of Ishme-[Ea], his wife and [his] family;
Ipqu-Aya, son of Ishme-Ea, Abi-mattum his wife [and family?]
Lamassani, naditum of Shamash, his daughter;
Ishu-ibnishu, his son,
Sin-nadin-shumi, his son;
Sin-kabit-biltum, son of Sin-nadin-shumi;
Ikun-pi-Sin son of Ipqu-Aya, whom … have struck to death;
Sin-eribam, son of Ipqu-Aya, asleep in Mashkan-Adad;
Ipqu-Annunitum, son of Ipqu-Aya, Belessunu, his wife.

Release the family of Sīn-naṣir, son of Ipqu-Annunitum,
That they may eat his [br]ead and drink his water. (trans. Van der Toorn 2008)

Followed by year date (in Sumerian):

Iti šu-numun-a u_4-3-kam

Mu Am-mi-di-ta-na lugal-e
Eger bàd-Iš-ku-un-^{d}Marduk-ke$_4$

The month of Šu-numun, the 3rd day,
The year Ammiditana the king
Restored the wall of Iškun-^{d}Marduk.

Wilcke has reconstructed the family tree of Sīn-naṣir as extending five generations back (Fig. 13). There are two Sīn-naṣir's, the current one living who calls the names and one who was a brother of his grandfather, which can be confusing. The females in the line, except for his grandmother and mother, were priestesses (see Chapter 5) and listed probably because they had not married and moved into their husband's paternal family line. This is an elite family, and privileged to be able to afford a scribe, a tablet and probably a priest to read the tablet if Sīn-naṣir could not read it himself. It is an excellent source for what happened at the *kispum*.

Figure 13. The Genealogy of the Samas-naṣir Family. (*After* Wilcke 1983: 50)

In the early hours of the day of the new moon, in the dark, Sīn-naṣir, as the family *pāqidu*, makes a libation of water to the moon god. He asks Sīn to release his family from the netherworld to break bread and drink water with him. This text is a very simple portrayal of care for the dead through the *kispum* ritual. The ritual meal is not lavish. The moon god is invoked, rather than the netherworld judge Šamaš, and it is very interesting that Sīn must allow the *eṭemmī* of all the ancestors to come answer the call for food and water. Perhaps the family gathered at a house altar in a special chapel room (the *aširtum*) to pronounce the names of the dead (*CAD* A/II: 436-437). The poor could also pour water in their house, even if there was no built altar. Or this ceremony could easily be done at an extramural grave in a cemetery. I think it is quite possible that a long list of names could be memorized, especially in chant or sung format, for families with no tradition of writing.

A second family archive of over 2500 texts and fragments is the Ur-Utu family's texts from Sippar-Amnānum dated to about 1640 BC (Janssen 1996; Van

Lerberghe 2003; Tanret 2008, 2011). Ur-Utu, chief of the dirge singers (GALA-MAḪ), and his family before him, kept boxes of tablets that were completely unnecessary and normally discarded. They were not all current real estate records. Perhaps forced to leave in a hurry due to a major fire, boxes of tablets were dropped in the house and never retrieved (contra Van Lerberghe 2003). Fire fortunately preserves tablets, but the box around them, probably a reed box, was destroyed. The 207 tablets in one box survived stacked in a cube, as though the box had been peeled away from them (Tanret 2008: 134-135). Tanret calls it a box of special significance as family mementoes.

A detailed study of the order of stacking and the dates of the tablets show that the archive had been compiled kept by the family for over a century. Tanret sees only one conclusion from his analysis, which is that the 'useless' tablets had been kept to document the names and family kin relations of the entire family line going back generations. A reconstructed family tree shows six generations back to a family ancestor, Ur-Inanna (Fig. 14) (Tanret 2008: 139). If one counts back from Ur-Utu's father, Inanna-mansum, who saved the family archives, purposely moving the tablets to a new town and new house, five generations preceded him.

Figure 14. Genealogy of the Ur-Utu family. (*After* Tanret 2008: 139)

With the Ur-Utu archive, we again see records of many names of ancestors. Tanret concludes that many of the tablets were in a valued family archive and kept as precious memories of people and their lives long ago. He believes the archive had risen above its original utilitarian level to a new, emotional level (2008: 146).

Another archive, dated later (1600-1400 BC), is worth noting because it describes seven generations of a Kassite family (Dosch and Deller 1981). The point is that second millennium families could have means of knowing who their family predecessors were, and those who could afford it or were literate, had access to lists they could use for the *kispum* rituals.

This last genealogical example to highlight has been reconstructed by Stone for the Ninlil-zimu family of Nippur (Fig. 15) (1987: 44). Her meticulous collation of texts, architecture and finds from previously published early excavations records resulted in reevaluations of area TA and TB (Stone 1987; 1996). It is not

clear whether these areas of the excavations reflected complete residential or civil quarters (Postgate 1990; Potts 1997). The Ninlil-zimu records describe a very wealthy family with huge landholdings. The family also held many temple prebends. A tablet shows that much of the same amount of land is still in their holdings three generations later in Ninlil-zimu's great-great-grandson's time (Stone 1987: 42).

While life span expectancies probably made it unlikely that four generations were alive at the same time, reconstructed genealogies show us that families had access to names of predecessors (Tenney 2011). Much of the population probably relied on an oral tradition, however, some evidence exists of written access to past family generations. The *kispum* text of Sīn-naṣir demonstrates that ancestor lists to be used for the invocation of dead family members could exist outside of royal context, although probably only in elite families.

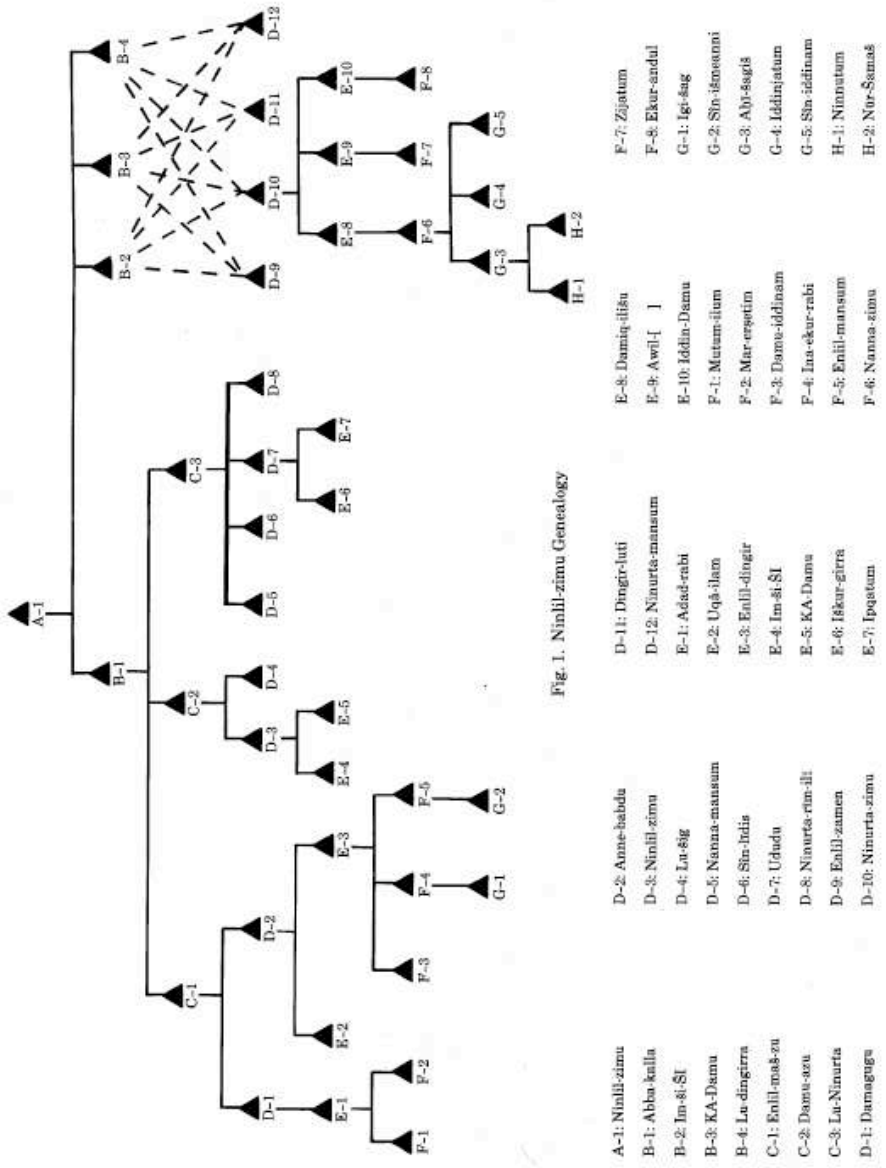

Fig. 1. Ninlil-zimu Genealogy

Figure 15. The Genealogy of the Ninlil-zimu Family. (*After* Stone 1987:44).

4.3.6 Households, Heirs and Inheritance

The principal heir inherited more than property in Mesopotamia. *Kispum* duties were part of the inheritance. The heir was responsible for the important duty of caring for the family ancestors and the continuity of the family line. Burial rites and post-interment rituals served to strengthen the family line, maintaining family bonds over generations, as we have seen. The duty of inheritor may have symbolically meant much more than property accumulation. This person symbolically represented the family's identity while alive. I believe that the concept of 'family' in ancient Mesopotamia superseded individual identity—in

other words, the meaning of the individual was tied to family identity as a conceptual unit, formed of relationships.

Of course, family identity functioned on many levels, including social status. But the primary focus on inheritance has been on property rights and on keeping land and wealth in the family (Klima 1940; Koschaker 1925; Kraus 1981: a-b). Usually, as we have seen in some inheritance texts, the heir is the eldest son. Daughters usually received portions of inheritances through dowries, but could inherit in some circumstances.

From the evidence of the family genealogies that we have seen, it is evident that inheritance must figure into the overall conception of houses, land, property, families and *kispum*. Some texts indicate that heirs actually divided houses up and cohabited different sections of the larger homes or lived near other family members (Yoffee 1988; Hallo 2002: 141-154; Brusasco 1999-2000: 134-135). Some texts show an additional ten percent payment (*ku-bu-ru*) for the eldest when inheritances are divided (Durand 1989; Scurlock 1993; Van de Mieroop 1992: 218). Remodeling and changes to house structures have been interpreted as inheritance division at Larsa and Nippur (Stone 1981; Charpin 1996; Calvet 1996; Feuerherm 2007). In Chapter 6 we will see bodies in some sub-floor tombs at Ur that may indicate many generations of use. What happened when a house was sold is still unknown (Durand 1989). We know tombs were planned in construction and also added later (Guinan 1996; Freedman 1998).

Second millennium houses were of varying plan in different cities and in different areas of cities. In houses with courtyards, it was possible to house extended families, or mixed groups; many houses were divided up and portions or floors were rented out (Józef 2009). Houses in some quarters of cities were grouped by craft or occupation affiliations. Typical house plans usually included a central courtyard, a main living room, sleeping rooms and kitchens. Larger homes also had auxiliary rooms, kitchens, lavatory rooms, chapels, storage and sometimes a second floor (Postgate 1992: 88-108; Battini-Villard 1999; Brusasco 2007: 25). Inheritance would include the house shrine and intramural burial vaults (Postgate 1992: 99). Whether cemetery plots were inherited or purchased is not known.

Primary heirs in vertical inheritance patterns do not just inherit property, their main function is to ensure the continuity of the family line (Brusasco 1999-

2000: 134-136). In Mesopotamia the main heir received a ceremonial table as an important part of his succession to the role of caretaker of the dead (Scurlock 1993). The table (BANŠUR) was probably used for *kispum* ceremonies. As a designated object that passed to the heir, it held symbolic significance. It may have held figures that represented family dead or been used for the meal shared between the family living and the dead. Therefore, it would be a great signifier of family identity and a tool for family memory. A BANŠUR is mentioned in the archives of Imgua and Bitua of Nippur as part of their inheritance (Prang 1976, 1977).

4.3.7 Other Lineage Groups (Occupational and Clergy)

Kispum was also a remembrance ritual in other societal, non-family groups, who celebrated it for dead predecessors as ancestors. Membership in craft-based occupations functioned much like guilds, invoking names of forerunners in ritual. Religious clergy, such as *entu* priestesses (below) and *nadītu* women (Section 5.3) also performed *kispum* for deceased members.

One record from a professional group comes from a series of prescriptions for the procedure of glassmaking. The tablets are comprised of joined fragments from the Library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh and originate from the second millennium. Similar in genre to medical and ritual instructions, the glass texts could be grouped into a category of chemical texts (Oppenheim et al. 1970: 5-7, 23, 27-31). The texts sometimes give a personal name as an authority for the invention of certain glass types (Oppenheim et al. 1970: 49-54). Personal names and mention in Tablet D of the *ummânu*, (master or scholar) tell us firstly that past experts in the glassmaking tradition were remembered and sometimes recorded. Secondly the ritual instructions in the text stipulate *ana ummâni kispa takassip,* "you make *kispum* offerings for the (dead) masters" (Oppenheim et al. 1970: 52-53). The second part of the text gives procedures for ritual before the glassmaking begins. Performing *kispum* linked the present to the past through memory of the deceased glassmakers and also gained their protection for the procedures to follow.

> Tablet D, §L
>
> For one mina and three shekels of *zukû*-glass which has the look of gold, you grind three shekels of [male or female] *anzaḫḫu*-glass, three

> shekels of *kalgūgu*-earth [….], finely (?), you sift (?) (the powder) three times. When you have sifted (it) you stir (it) into water and mix it. You place it in a …container in the open; you let it dry. You expose (furthermore) two *amirtu*-measures of *amnakku*-mineral carefully (?) (*tešší*) to the open air.
>
> Whenever they inform you (that the time is right), you set up the *Kūbu*-images within two double hours. You sacrifice a sheep. You make offerings to the dead masters. You collect the sifted materials into a mold, you put it into the *atūnu*-kiln [...].

It is interesting to note the ritual aspect of a practical chemical procedure. The knowledge of a specialist, like that of an omen priest, scribe or doctor, were preserved through the experts and passed down through generations of apprenticeships. The recipes were specialized information; the profession owed its expertise to transmission of its methods through past masters. The glass texts also share an affinity to magical texts, in the transformation of substances by ritual procedures. In this regard, the performance of *kispum* illustrates the magico-religious nature of belief associated with invoking the dead. The living 'descendants' sought benefices from the spirits of their dead predecessors for success in glassmaking. *Kispum* bound the present glassmakers with the legacy and expertise of those who had gone before. In venerating the glassmaking ancestors of the 'guild', the living remembered, cared for, respected, and interacted with them.

Members of an elite clerical group, the *entu* priestesses, were also known to have performed *kispum* rituals for dead predecessors. The office of *entu* was a powerful religious, economic and often political one, usually held by the daughter of the king. We know the names of women appointed to this position over approximately 500 years, from the third millennium into the second. The well-known Akkadian *entu* priestess, Enheduanna, daughter of Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279 BC) held the office at Ur through her father's reign and into his successor's reigns (Westenholz 1989). Her literary compositions are thought to have contributed to the success of the Akkadian Empire by their unifying religious content (Hallo and Van Dijk 1969: 1-11). Referring to her ritual duties as high priestess, she wrote about cessation of her office due to war. I suggest the Sumerian (DÈ) in line 69 be read in context with the *kispum* ritual (contra Hallo and

Van Dijk 1968, lines 66-69). I think the whole passage refers to this ritual as a key part of *entu*-ship.

NIN-ME-ŠÁR-RA

Lines 66-69

66-67I entered into my holy Giparu. The high priestess am I, Enheduanna am I. 68I lifted up the ritual basket. I intoned the paean. 69I performed *kispum* (KI-Sì-GA); however, now I no longer pour them out.

The bonds with the ancestral priestesses were paramount and maintained by performing the *kispum* for them. The ritual also lent ritual power to the current *entu* as the descendant of a long line of sacred women.

In first millennium Babylon, Ennigaldinanna, daughter of King Nabonidus (559-539 BC) was appointed to the post. This restoration of the *entu* office and Nabonidus' rebuilding of the Giparu at Ur may have signified the king's piety, but also could easily have helped establish the power of his rule in the ancient Sumerian context as well.

Enanedu, daughter of Kudur-Mabuk of Larsa and the sister of the first two kings of that dynasty (1834-1763 BC), repaired and restored the residence of the *entu* priestesses at Ur, recording her accomplishment on a clay foundation cone (BM 130729, 13.4 cm diameter). Kudur-Mabuk took over control of Ur from Isin rule and again, we might see in the appointment of Enanedu, a political cum religious method of establishing and supporting the right to power. However, the text also reveals a reverence for the ancestral line of priestesses at Ur. Enanadu's actions were those of the heir to the position and thus the one charged with ensuring the care of deceased *entus.* Selections (lines 1-15 and 26-48) from the text of Enanedu's inscription are significant for our understanding of the veneration of the ancestral *entu* priestesses (after Gadd 1951; Charpin 1986: 192-227; Frayne 1990: 239-240).

BM 130729

Lines 1-15

1-4 Enanedu, priestess of Nanna, (predestined) from the holy womb (for) the great fate of the office of an *en* (priestess and) the nobility of

heaven, beloved of the heart, upon whom Ningal has placed the radiance of the priesthood. [5-8]Ornament of [the] Ekishnugal (Temple of Nanna), who rivals high heaven, ornament of E-Nun, dazzling brightness rising upon the land, suitable for the tiara of the priesthood, called to the just title for the accomplishment of the rites and lustration ceremonies of divinity. [9-10]Princess full of reverence, who stands for the lustration ceremonies at the lustration basin of the palace. I, Enanedu, [11-15] priestess, who beholds Nanna and Ningal, at Ur, preeminent city of Sumer, place where the *zannaru* instrument (lyre) plays for the lord Ashimbabbar, the one who built the Gipar for the office of *entu* priestess in a pure place.

Lines 26-48

[26-33] At that time the shining Giparu, residence of my office of *entu*, its bricks did not fit their foundation. I, Enanedu, priestess truly called by an exalted name, daughter of Kudur-Mabuk, I laid the bricks tightly and firmly on the ancient foundation of the shining Giparu. I made its wall exact to a finger. I formed that house anew.

[34-43] At that time, the place of the 'Hall That Brings Bitterness', the place of those who had gone to their fate (i.e. died), the ancient *entus*, the wall did not reach around its site. The breach in it was left pierced, as a wilderness; no watch was set; its site was not clean (any more). I, in my great wisdom, sought room for the future, (for those who would go to their) fates (die). I established a broad sacred area surpassing the cemetery of the old *entus;* its ruined site I surrounded with a great wall, a strong watch I set there, and its site I purified. [44-48]In this place where it was fallen in ruins, I rebuilt a great wall, a strong watch I set up there, I purified its site. To proclaim my name chosen for the priesthood I restored this work. I inscribed a foundation document in order to sing the praises of my priesthood. I called this wall, its name, "Whoever Reveres Me Shall Be Praised".

Enanedu's inscription records her restoration of the wall and the cemetery area of the Giparu (Figs. 16, 17, 18), of which part had been destroyed or neglected. The Giparu was a building complex within the sacred quarter near the

ziggurat temple (Ekishnugal) of Ur's tutelary deity, Nanna (the Moon). The text explains that the ancient priestesses and their sacred graves were to be remembered and honored. This was where the *entu* priestess resided, oversaw the many duties of her office, managed goods, estates, staff, and temple rituals (Weadock 1975: 103).

At Ur, the *entu* was considered to be the earthly manifestation of the wife of Nanna, named Ningal, whose chapel and auxiliary rooms occupied one half of the Giparu (Section C). The structure also included domestic and residential areas in the other half of the building (Section A) and a section of rooms (Section B) where the graves of deceased *entu* priestesses were located (Fig. 17).

Enanedu was known long before the original was discovered. The sixth century BC Babylonian king, Nabonidus, had discovered her clay cone when he restored the Giparu (E-Gipar) for the dedication of his own daughter (Ennigaldi-Nanna) as *entu* of Nanna. Nabonidus wrote a rendition of Enanedu's inscription, adding some information about the location of the cemetery rooms.

> "The ancient inscription of Enanedu, *entu* priestess of Ur, daughter of Kudur-Mabuk, (and) sister of Rim-Sin, King of Ur, who had renovated Egipar and restored it, (and who) along the side of Egipar had enclosed with a wall the resting place of the ancient *entu* priestesses I enclosed newly, as of old." (Weadock 1975:109).

This description fits the location of the rooms (Section B) along the northeastern outer wall between the large northwestern residential section (A) and the Ningal temple complex in Section C (Figs. 17, 18) (Woolley and Mallowan 1976). Some

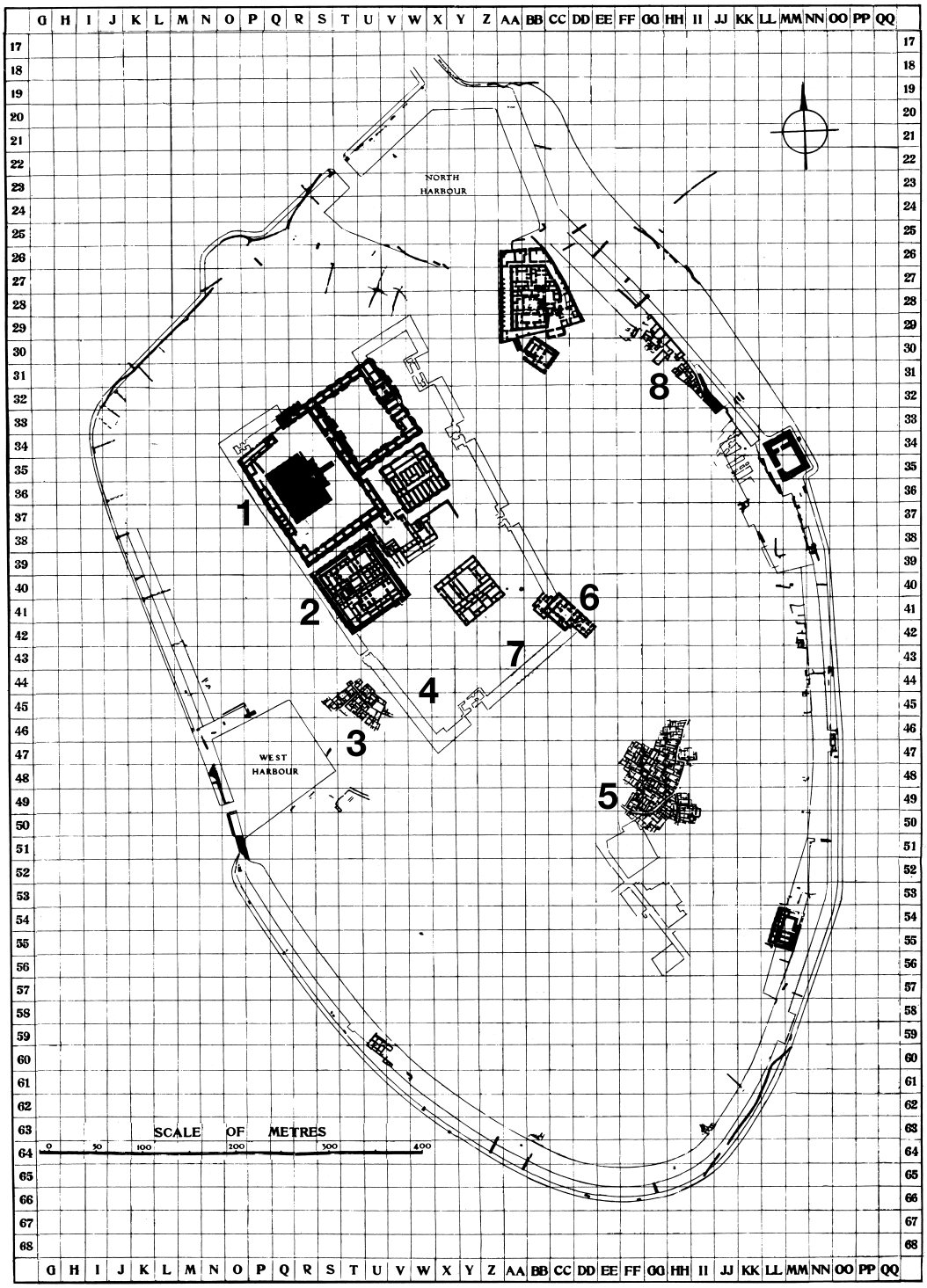

Figure 16. Ur. General Plan of Ur in the Larsa Period. 1) Nanna Temple; 2) Giparu; 3) EM Site; 4) EH Site; 5) AH Site; 6) Mausoleum Site; 7) Royal Cemetery Area; 8) City Wall Houses Site. (*After UE VII,* PL 116). (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

rooms were probably rooms for funerary meals, (Al-Khalesi 1977: 63-66). Weadock reads $UNUG_2$ ŠEŠ-BA-AN-DU in as "the dining room in which the *urinnu* symbols are set up" (1975: 109). The meaning of these symbols is unclear but suggests a cultic significance to the room, rather than a room for daily practical use (Al-Khalesi 1977: 65, n. 62; Frayne 2000: 239).

Enanedu had repaired the walls with heavy plaster layering, added baked brick casing and extended the rooms above the tombs (Woolley and Mallowan

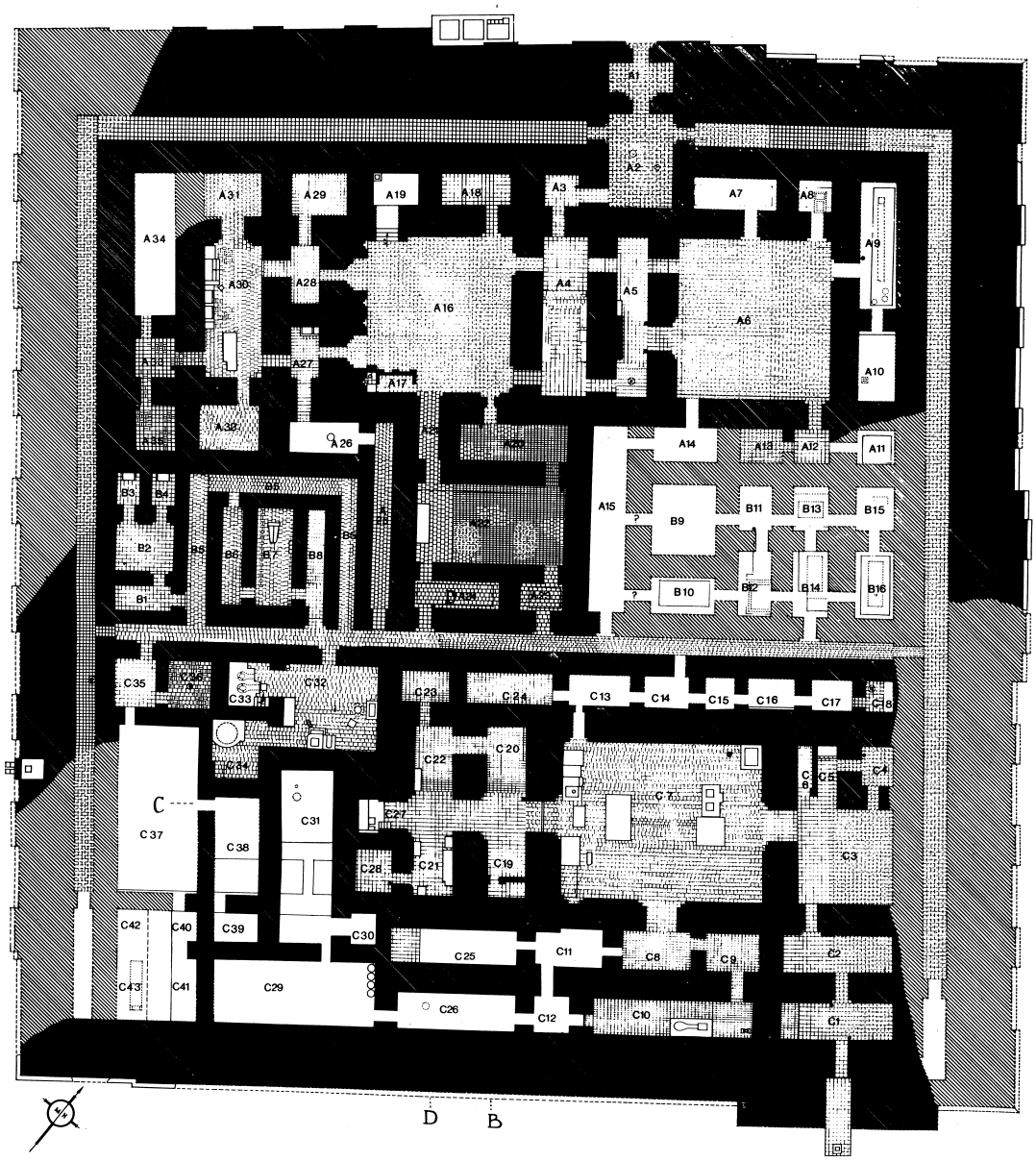

Figure 17. Ur. Plan of the Giparu. (*After* UE *VII*, PL 118). (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 18. Ur. Plan of Section B cemetery rooms for *entu* priestess in the Giparu, view to Northeast. (*After* UE *VII*, PL 118). (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

1976: 42-43). The room numbers of Section B changed between the publication of Weadock 1975 and Woolley's 1976 plan, and were clarified by Charpin (1986: 216-217). Figure 18 shows Section B according to Woolley with his numbering scheme (*UE* VII). Nevertheless, the integrity of that section of the building as the area for the tombs of deceased priestesses seems convincing (Weadock: 1976).

Unfortunately, no graves of the priestesses were preserved from the Isin-Larsa or Old Babylonian levels at Ur, which had been destroyed by fire, perhaps during a revolt known from year eleven of King Samsuiluna of Babylon (1739 BC). However, associated with the Ur III foundations under the rooms in Section B were the remains of large corbel-vaulted brick tombs all of which were plundered (Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 51). Although the Giparu was rebuilt on the earlier foundations, the Larsa period building had disappeared. Woolley notes that the tombs had clearly been intentionally planned as part of the building block. Therefore that area of the building had been the funerary rooms, as Enanedu notes. Plundered, the only objects were a frit image or mask of a stylized human face with remnants of white, yellow and red glaze and holes for earrings (U.6820, Rm. B12/A22) and a small frit bowl (U.6829, Rm. B12/A22) (Weadock 1975: 110; Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 51-52, 225, PL 60, PL 96).

One corbel-vaulted brick tomb was found under Room C43 in the Giparu, but does not have an LG grave number. The tomb takes up nearly the whole room with an elaborate structure (Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 62-63). The tomb was empty with only a few fragments of bone. A brick-lined shaft was at the NW end that had beam-holes in the walls. The floor was bitumen-lined, slightly sloped with a drain. The end of the tomb was open to the shaft. At the back of the chamber was a pillar of solid bricks that reached the roof, with vent-hole on each side of it running through the roof. It is impossible to speculate whom this tomb was built for, but Woolley assigns it to the Larsa period (1976: 62).

By the second millennium, we have texts that mention regular offerings offered to dead *entus* from provisions texts from the E-Nunmah, the storehouse of the Ningal temple at Ur (Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 58). Enannatumma,

daughter of Ishme-Dagan of Isin (1953-1935 BC), and Enmegalanna, daughter of Gungunum of Larsa (ca. 1932-1906 BC) were recipients of these offerings over a period of thirty-six years, long (thirty to fifty years) after their deaths (Figulla 1953a-b; Weadock 1975: 104; Charpin 1986). The accounts include various types of regular, special and festival offerings to a group of minor deities as well as the *entus.* The *entus* names are not marked with the divine determinative, as those of the minor deities are. The former priestesses received offerings for honor and remembrance of their eminent positions from the descendants who occupied the position later. Of interest to this thesis are the mention of KI-A-NAG ("place of libation") offerings for the two *entus*, which were most likely made at or above the grave in the cult rooms, and understood to be *kispum* offerings (Weadock 1975: 104). An example of the E-Nunmah (Figulla 1953a-b reads this as GÁ-NUN-MAḪ) accounts follow:

U V 759: 9-16 and 20-26
5 qa ni-nun
5 qa ga-ḫar
2 sūtu zú-lum
ki-a-nag En-me-gal-an-na
5 qa ni-nun
5 qa ga-ḫar
2 sūtu zú-lum
ki-a-nag En-an-na-du (TÚM)-ma

Gá-nun-maḫ (d)Ni[n]-ga[l-ta]
gud ú-e-ne
šu-ba-an-ti
itu ne-ne-gar
mu-uš-sa-a-bi
uru (KI) Ka-íd-da ba-ḫul

5 *qa* butter
5 *qa* cheese
2 *sutu* dates

for the KI-A-NAG of Enmegalanna.
5 *qa* butter
5 *qa* cheese
2 *sutu* dates
for the KI-A-NAG of Enannatumma

From the E-Nunmah of (d)Ningal
the *gudu* priests
received.
Month of Abu
Year: Sumu-ilum, 10 (Figulla 1953a: 111-112).

Performing *kispum* for *entus* emphasized the ancestral legacy of the position and linked the current incumbent in a long and exalted lineage of royal women who were also divine consorts of the god. The fact that the high priestess was chosen by divine revelation through omens also emphasizes the importance of the position. After the death of the incumbent high priestess, the designated successor went through a series of rituals of ordination over a period of days. From records from the city of Emar, for example, these rites took place over nine days (Fleming 1992: 63). The installation of a new *entu* priestess required purification rituals, food offerings, special clothing, symbols and substances. Processions, performing rituals, making offerings to deities, presenting gifts and feasting were also part of the installation of the new *entu* priestess (Fleming 1992: 169). Other cities also had *entu* priestess such as Ur, Uruk, Sippar, Babylon and perhaps Nippur (Weadock 1975: 125-26). It is the site of Ur, however, that lends us the best evidence for the lives and deaths of the *entu* priestess.

Enanedu's inscription informs us that the cemetery area in the Giparu had existed for a few hundred years, was rebuilt, restored and expanded in keeping with the practice of honoring dead predecessors and preserving the graves of the dead. The offering lists from the Ningal temple storehouse record regularized KI-A-NAG offerings for dead *entu* priestesses. The mention of the Hall That Brings Bitterness ($UNUG_2$ ŠEŠ-BA-AN-DU) as the *entu* cemetery in cultic rooms of Section B was a likely place for a *kispum* meal, above the tombs of the ancient priestesses.

Finally, in another rebuilding by Nabonidus, the position of the cultic rooms for the veneration of the dead *entus* was recorded, verifying a very long tradition of remembrance of predecessors in the office of the *entu*.

4.4 Conclusions and Summary

I have suggested that family identity was carried out, created and maintained through repetition of *kispum* rituals closely tied to households and families. By remembering names of family heirs, or those that represented the family identity during their lives, and cementing the past in the present through ritual, all family individuals past, present and future are bound (Sayer 2010; Katz 2013). When this ritual is also identified with the house, as in the case of the intramural tombs at Ur, for example, the family is further bound. The symbolic placement of the dead in below-floor vaults or graves delineates the dead from the outside world. In fact, intramural burials, for which there is ample widespread evidence in second millennium Mesopotamia, keep the dead present in living family memory (see Section 6.4 below). Burials in houses are distinguished from the outside world by occupying 'live' space. Performing the *kispum* within the house, at an altar or in a house chapel or before the tombs, actualizes the living memory of the dead.

How, then, does family memory exist when the dead are placed in cemeteries or extramural burials? I think we must look at the symbolic angle of *kispum* for (re)producing family identity for this. Identity is solidified and created through ritual, particularly repetitive ritual. The body and bones (*eṣemtu*) were tied to the grave and must remain undisturbed. I think *kispum*, however, was not specifically tied to a locus and could be performed at the grave, a 'shrine', altar, or in the case of the very poor, could just take the form of water poured out on the ground (see also Richardson 1999-2000: 172-173; Brown 2010: 21-22). So the exact locus of the pouring of water or symbolic meal of bread was less important than the actual act. This is how ritual 'works', in the *doing* of it.

What I am trying to investigate is an emotion-laden mortuary rite that, in its repetition, was valuable on many levels for family identity, grief, providing solace in bereavement, social mourning, and memory (Marwit and Klass 1996; Klass 2013). While this is very different from concrete archaeological proof in the material remains, we ought to consider the newer evidence for what people really

do when it comes to the dead, as we have seen in Chapter 2. Continued Bonds Theory can shed light through another window onto Mesopotamian family life and social identity, by looking at the *kispum* in the context of social and emotional relationships played out on many levels (Neimeyer, Klass and Dennis 2014).

I think we must be reminded of the theoretical spiritual element of a religious ritual, especially one that maintains contact with dead family spirits. We have already examined the extensive configuration of the Mesopotamian cosmos in Chapter 3. *Kispum* must be considered in light of the unseen as well as the physical. The invocation of the dead and the meal were done as a symbol-rich activity that accomplished the sustenance and maintenance of spiritual beings in an invisible netherworld. In other words, the dead benefited from the ritual. The living could be assured that they, too, would be cared for in the afterlife. While archaeological evidence for the ritual can be explored in material remains, the real motivation for the survival of *kispum* for centuries has to be associated with its productive personal and social value. I believe that performance of the ritual was what families actually *did*. They performed this ritual repetitively, and in so doing maintained an ongoing family identity through remembrance (Connerton 1989; Sayer 2010). Additionally, *kispum* functioned as a multilevel phenomenon affecting individuals, family and the broader community. As we have seen, ancient religion is really what people did, not necessarily the official state and public religion (Berlinerblau 1996). In second millennium Mesopotamia, *kispum* should be considered as a major component of religious life. As such, it was a focus of family life and played a big role in maintaining family bonds among the living, as it served to continue relationships with dead family.

In this chapter, terms for the physical and spiritual or intangible elements of a human elucidate the nature of the *eṭemmu,* the ghost of the family dead. Locating the origins of mankind in the divine world set the stage for understanding the conceptual composition of human beings. Textual evidence also provided terminology for kin groups, including the nuclear family, clan and matrilineal-based kinship relationships. The nature of kin identity as the basis for Mesopotamian society was examined as a social and religious construct. The nature of remembrance of the dead was discussed in terms of some theories of

memory, in a basic of overview of ancestors, and cohesion of social groups by shared values and ritual action.

Evidence for inheritance of household and family gods in legal texts and references to clay images may indicate the presence of ancestral spirits that serve actively in legal rights and the protection of the family. The family dead, or *eṭemmu*, was called upon to bring blessings, protection and authority to the family line. Paying respect, honor and reverence to these entities was not only a religious responsibility, but could indeed be a legal duty for the principal heir of family estates.

In these ways, practices we may term as religious activities were cemented within family lineages. The emphasis placed upon them within texts suggested that they might be considered essential for survival of the family line and may well have played significant roles in how property and inheritance were validated. From such a perspective the dead were therefore embraced as beneficial and positive aspects of family life. Family memory practiced through remembrance rituals was also a dynamic part of many aspects of Mesopotamian life, with social, religious and economic significance. Lineages depended on the remembrance of the dead for generations. Written genealogies record the possibility of memory aids for invocation of ancestral names, although for most, memorized or formulaic spoken or sung lists may have sufficed. Therefore, it is quite possible that the family dead were integrally maintained in a close relationship with the living. Through the *kispum* ritual deceased family members were kept as an essential part of the family identity. Continued Bonds Theory shows us that this type of memory ritual, conducted within the framework of a belief system, produces positive effects on the living and perhaps, even on the dead.

In Chapter 5, we will begin to explore textual material remains for the nature and practice of the *kispum* ritual as represented in cuneiform materials.

Chapter 5. The Archaeological Evidence for *Kispum* — Material Remains from Texts

In the next two chapters, examples of evidence for what we know about second millennium *kispum* from material remains are examined, including cuneiform tablets and excavations. In this chapter, we look at pragmatic evidence for activities associated with Mesopotamian *kispum* rites in ancient texts. Material for reconstructing the nature of the *kispum* rites can be inferred from different genres of documents. *Kispum* first appears in texts of the second millennium, hence the focus of this study on the family ritual in this period. While we know of some royal funerals and royal *kispum* from texts, and I have included some mention of them, my study emphasizes non-royal family *kispum* and some mention of the funeral rites.

First, it is useful to summarize (5.1) what we know about the *kispum* in general, namely, who performed *kispum*, when the *kispum* took place in the calendar, where it took place, and what happened during the ritual. The motivation for, or why the ritual occurred, is explored throughout this thesis with new insights supporting the assertion that emotional bonds play a major role between the living and the family dead.

5.1 Material Remains: *Kispum* in Cuneiform Tablets

We have seen that *kispum* was a post-funerary ritual meal that called forth the deceased from the netherworld to eat and drink with the living. *Kispum* was usually offered monthly in the family context, and celebrated annually in a public, communal festival of the ancestors. The funeral and the post-funerary, ongoing *kispum* were two different rituals. While we know from texts that *kispum* involved offerings, less visible features, such as spoken or sung formulae, gesture or actions, important parts of ritual, remain obscure. We do know from texts that *kispum* entailed three actions: performing the care of the dead ritual (*kispa kasāpu*), pouring water (*mē naqū*), and invoking the name (*šūma zakāru*) of the dead.

One incantation text is an excellent resource for confirming basic *kispum* content (Tsukimoto 1985:173-176). Although it is later than the Old Babylonian period, from, it incorporates background information, which surely must reflect longstanding standard *kispum* steps.

LKA 83, Lines 1-10

> "[Name], who died a natural death in his bed, the son of [Name], who laid him in the grave (*ina qabri*). You are Man (*amelūta*)! I called your name. I called your name among the ghosts of the dead (*eṭemmē*). I called your name for *kispum.* I sat you before Šamaš. I called your name as a ghost before Šamaš. I placed you in your grave ("house"). I placed food for you in the entrance to your grave. For the ghosts of your family I performed *kispum* (*kispa aksip*). …"

The text also tells us at the end (line 22) that it belonged to Kiṣir-Aššur, an exorcist priest (MAŠ-MAŠ) from Aššur, likely from his ritual toolbox. While we know it was recited as a formula in a magical text, it also shows us that the name of the deceased (filled in) was called, thereby beckoning him forth from the underworld, and that the ghost was seated (before Šamaš), and fed the *kispum* meal.

Many inferences have already been made about belief in the nature of the dead and the afterlife, in Chapter 3 in this study, from literary, religious and mythological texts. Cuneiform tablets should be considered as material remains, artifacts which can be studied for evidence of what, when, where and for whom the *kispum* rituals took place. Various non-religious documents, such as lists, letters, lexical texts and accounting records, also reference *kispum*.

As mentioned before, the person who performed the ritual was responsible for the care of forebearers and called the *pāqidu* (LÚ-SAG-ÈN-TAR). We have seen from legal texts in Chapter 4 that the primary heir was responsible as the main overseer of these ritual obligations. Texts primarily name males as the heir, although examples of females have also been noted, sometimes legally adopted as males to fulfill the role. Bearing or adopting children to care for one's *eṭemmu* was considered a necessity. A woman, Akatija, expressed this need in a letter to her brother Sinnī: "Now I raised one boy, thinking, 'Let him be grown up at the time of my burial' "(AbB 9, 228, Stol 1981: 143; Charpin 2012: 30). The etymology of *pāqidu* connotes putting someone in charge, in the context of entrusting them with something, or handing over to them goods, land, persons or animals for care or safekeeping (*CAD* P: 115-121). In the context of the family, the *pāqidu* would bear ritual and symbolic responsibility for the care and well being of both the living and the dead.

The ritual role of the chief heir would also have been symbolically profound for its cosmological effect in the religious sphere, as well as family leadership. In a society in which magic was intertwined with religion and an active part of daily life, the *pāqidu* was more than the "water pourer" (*nāq mê*). The heir assigned this role held great ritual power to intermediate between the upper and lower worlds, which translated to social power in the family structure and so, the broader community. In this regard, the leadership of the *kispum* ritual was a role which offered stability and meaning to the family as whole. Through the living, who participated in the *kispum*, the dead continued as family members, thus reinforcing the deeper meaning and identity of the family itself.

It is uncertain if private *kispum* was performed for all ages, naming the individuals or only heirs or adults (but see 5.2 below). It is likely, as we have seen in the *Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty*, that an inclusive mention of the family deceased as a group might have been included in the calling of the names. The genealogy lists we have seen in Chapter 4 list males, patrilineal mothers, grandmothers, and unmarried daughters (probably priestesses).

When the ghosts had been invoked, the basic essential substance needed for the *kispum* was water: "Above (*ina elâti*), may his name be good. Below (*ina šaplāti*), may his *eṭemmu* drink pure water" (5.7 below). Water would have been available to all at any level of society. During the ritual, the liquid was either poured directly into the soil, at the gravesite, or perhaps poured down a water conduit into the graves. We shall examine evidence for water pipes in Chapter 6. If the ongoing *kispum* was performed in the house, the liquids may also have been dispensed into vessels or the flooring. Other basics are sometimes offered, such as oil, beer or grain, flour or bread. The more elaborate royal or temple texts indicate a broad selection of foods, according to affluence and perhaps the more public setting, such as roast meats, vegetables, fragrant oils, fruits (dates, apples), fine butter and dairy products.

Some offering lists with many foods were confused as grave goods for inhumation with *kispum* offerings (Tsukimoto 1980). For example, an Old Babylonian text (*CT* 45) lists goods and foods for the KI-SÌ-GA EDIN-NA (*kispum ina ṣērim*). This text was understood to be a list for *kispum* offerings. However, the text is a magical incantation used to dispel an unwanted demon or ghost, by

means of a substitute burial. The term *kispum ina ṣērim* is not fully known, but here probably indicates a burial in the steppe (EDIN-NA, *ṣērim*), away from habitation. Tsukimoto has correctly identified the goods in the list as equipment for the errant spirit to send him on his way back to the netherworld where he belongs (1980: 129-135). The list may also be representative of goods for a very well provisioned grave, and even refer to images of goods represented, but the purpose of the text was a substitute magic burial, perhaps using a figurine. A burial and a *kispum* for the wayward, foreign, or unburied spirit, provided the rites which incorporated it with proper respect into membership in a family group. Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi have identified another text for *kispum ina ṣērim* that may also demonstrate proper funeral rites (2000: 32-35).

Evidence for second millennium cemeteries is scant and not available; they may well have existed, but are undiscovered, unexcavated, or destroyed. Burials under house floors predominated, according to what evidence we have. A good body of graves exists from residential areas at Ur, which will be examined in Chapter 6. Family ritual for the dead and the symbolic significance of actually living with deceased family members is my focus and this evidence will also be explored further in Chapter 6. Further examination of textual evidence continues below.

5.2 *Kispum* For a Son

In a very important example for our understanding of family *kispum,* an Old Babylonian letter, Hammurabi wrote to one Sin-Iddinam that a man named Sin-uselli has reported the following incident to him:

BM 93766

> "…My son Sukkukum disappeared from me eight years ago and I did not know whether he was still alive and I kept making funerary offerings for him as if he were dead (*ki-ma mi-tim ki-is-pa-am ak-ta-as-sí-ip-šum).* Now, they have told me that he is staying (dwelling) in Ik-Bari in the House of Ibni-Ea, the 'rider' and goldsmith, the son of *Ṣ*illi-Šamaš. I went To Ik-Bari, but they hid him from me and denied his presence to me…."

The remainder of the letter tells us that Hammurapi then ordered a soldier and a trustworthy man to accompany Sin-uselli to retrieve his lost (enslaved or kidnapped) son, as well as Ibni-Ea who had kept the boy for eight years, and to bring them both to Babylon (Van Soldt 1994: 23). Hopefully, Hammurapi resolved the matter.

This letter seems to turn any idea of *kispum* as a ritual only for deceased parents, elders, or ancestors on its head. Here we have clear evidence that other (here a child) family members received the care for the dead ritual, in this case performed even without a body or burial. This father performed *kispum*, for his son for eight years, which supports well the claim that the family dead were all provisioned continuously. It also proves that, while desirable, a skeleton in a grave was not necessary to perform spiritual care for the dead. The grammatical form of the verb used (*aktassip*) indicates that the ritual occurred more than once over the past years. The father's words indicate his ongoing performance of the ritual. By means of repeating the *kispum* performance, this father, who had acknowledged his son's death, was still interacting with and maintaining a relationship with his child. His emotion, grief for a lost son, and his shock at hearing the boy was alive comes through in this letter, despite its formal plea. This is not a case concerned with inheritance benefits, and so supports the notion of continued bonds with deceased family members.

We are not told Sukkukum's age, but he was declared 'dead' as a child and mourned for eight years. Whether very young children or infants were included in memorial rites by name or collectively with the dead, or at what age children were considered a family member and included in *kispum* invocations is not known. Some records for deaths of children or infants occur, for example, at Mari (Charpin 2012: 21-24). Many words existed for children in various stages from neonates until adulthood, and numerous infant graves exist, particularly under house floors, as we will see in Chapter 6. That children were mourned is evident from a passage from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* where Gilgamesh asks if his little stillborn children, who never came to consciousness (TUR.TUR) were in the world below (Harris 2000: 7-16). Enkidu reports that he saw them playing in the netherworld at a gold and silver table covered with honey and ghee. This could indicate that small children received *kispum* offerings and the opportunity for a pleasant afterlife.

Sukkukkum's father is evidence of grief and a relationship with a deceased family member, represented by eight years of *kispum*.

5.3 The *Pāqidu* and the Monthly *Kispum*

Six more texts offer further types of information that we can retrieve from cuneiform tablets. These selections inform us further about the monthly performance of the ritual throughout the year, including provisions, the leadership of the ritual, and the association of the waning moon with the monthly rites. The evidence for ongoing rituals scheduled at the end of the month also supports the thesis of continued bonds between the dead and living.

The first selection is from a letter from the Old Babylonian city of Sippar, in which a *nadītum* priestess admonishes her brother for not providing her with foodstuffs to make the monthly offering (here KI-SÈ-GA) for the É *a-bi-ka*, "your family" (Kraus 1964: 78; Tsukimoto 1985: 47; Van der Toorn 1996a: 50). In this letter, it is interesting that, while the brother is responsible to provide his share of the offering, it seems that the woman is the person who performs the ritual. While we cannot be certain for the reason for this, it may be that the family grave is in her city. It could also be interesting if she was designated as the *pāqidu* since she clearly has a living male sibling. In any case, it is important to note that a female is in charge of the *kispum* in this example. *Nadītu* women are an especially important and well-known class of people from Old Babylonian archives, particularly from Sippar and Nippur (Stone 1982; Harris 1975: 302-350; 1989). These women experienced a degree of economic independence as high status clerics and were able, although cloistered in Sippar in a *gagum* community, to operate outside the bounds of conventional patriarchal authority (Diakonoff 1986). Although most were celibate, unmarried and dedicated to the temple by their fathers at a young age, they received their dowry and the use and usufruct of their portion of the family inheritance while they lived. Many were wealthy, often invested in real property and the texts attest many business transactions (Harris 1975: 22-37, 310-312; 1989: 150-156; Joszef 2009). *Nadītu* participated in a *kispum* honoring their dead priestesses. They also sometimes adopted young women to care for them in their old age, which would likely include performing *kispum* for them after death.

In a part of the letter below not quoted here, the priestess mentions as well that she has paid certain land leases, house rents, and given money as temple offerings. It is not stated in this letter if the woman is managing *kispum* resources because of her independent status, because she is administrating family matters in general, or perhaps that her status as the elder sibling or heir designee entitles her to do so. Stone posits these women played key roles in the maintenance of property and power in their lineages (1982). It is, however, evident in this letter that the sister is responsible for ongoing, monthly ritual remembrances in the service of her natal family.

AbB I, (Kraus 1964: 106: 4-19), CT 43, 106, BM 17495

> …As you, my brother, know, this year you have sent me neither garlic, nor onions, nor *sirbittum* fish. If I do not write you, you do not call my name (i.e. remember me). I am now sending Muballiṭ-Marduk (a messenger) before you (with this). Assemble together and send me one shekel silver worth of garlic, one shekel silver worth of onion, and one shekel silver worth of *sirbittum* fish. (Or else) what shall I give (during) the whole year for the *kispum* offering for the day of the new moon for the house of your family?

Apparently, the quantity and perhaps the type of provisions were agreed upon and expected from family members – here, from a brother – promptly on a monthly basis. It is also important that in this letter provisions for a whole year of regular rituals were expected - *kala šatti* - "all of the year" (the whole year long).

This text also offers proof of the time of the month that *kispum* is performed. The *ūm bibbulim*, "day of darkness" or "day of the disappearance", appears in cuneiform texts from the middle of the third millennium to the first millennium (Cohen 1993; Livingstone 2007a: 43). The term "new moon" here can be somewhat misleading in English. Here the meaning is "no moon". The period of the disappearance of the moon accords with the Babylonian calendar to the 29th or 30th day of the lunar month. Another Akkadian term is used for this time is *rēš warhim*, the beginning of the month (Whiting 1987: 62-63). Ritually and symbolically, the cusp of no moon/visible moon is significant as a liminal time when the boundaries of the upper and lower worlds are the same.

The second text, an Old Babylonian bilingual (Sumerian/*Akkadian)* lexical list, tells us that the darkness at the end of the month could also be associated with threat (Tsukimoto 1985: 47-48).

MSL V 23, 192-198

u_4 30-kám	*še-la- šá-a*	the 30th day
u_4 ná.àm	*bu-ub-bu-lu*	the day of the new moon
ḫul.gál	*šu-lu$_4$/uḫulgallu*	dangerous day
ḫul.gál	*u$_4$-mu lem-nu*	the evil day
u_4 ki.sì.ga	*u$_4$-mu ki-is-pi*	the day of the *kispum*
u_4 su.nag$_5$	*u$_4$-mu ri-im-ki*	the day of the "bath"
u_4 sikil.e.dé	*u$_4$-mu te-lil-tum*	the day of "purification"

In this text the *kispum* is designated to occur at the time of the darkest night of the month, and clearly the idea of darkness corresponds to the liminal and threatening nature of those days (Langdon 1935: 144-148). In Mesopotamian tradition, the 25th through 27th days of the month involve the last stages of the light from the waning moon and symbolize the encroachment of death into the land of the living (Fleming 2000: 186). These days, up to the reappearance of the moon, are associated with the netherworld, with mourning, and with the family *kispum*. Langdon suggests that the 29th is the day of pouring out water for the souls of the dead (1935: 148). The text above shows us that the final part of the ritual period was the ritual cleansing. The annual devotion to the dead in the month of Apum was observed publicly and on a more widespread basis as a religious holiday, whereas the monthly *kispum* would have been observed within each family or clan separately throughout the year.

The third text is from an Old Babylonian letter from one Šamaš-ḫāzir, known as an administrator of Hammurabi in the South, to one Belšunu, an overseer who works for him in the date groves (Leemans 1982: 247). In this message a regular provision of firewood for *kispum* is mentioned (Stol 1981: 14-16, 67; Tsukimoto 1985: 40).

YBC 7062, AbB IX, 20

> …I write to you again and again and you do not pay attention to my words. They are wasting (lit. scattering) wood and dung and you must be

> alert…. You do not give even one single piece of wood except for the one stick (or reed cf. *CAD* K: 426) that you give each time for the *kispum* (KI-SÌ-GA). Decide about the matter of the wine and if the gardener has barley, receive it from him. If not, have him brought in and confined to the house.

The barley and wine may have been needed for the *kispum* as well, although this is not exactly stated in this case. This letter is significant because it indicates that fire is part of the ritual event, performed in the dark of the night. The request for firewood could support the idea that a fire was lit as part of a torchlight procession, certainly known from Greek funerals in antiquity (Scurlock 2002; Corley 2010: 27). The light provided a passageway for the spirits of the dead to return briefly to the land of the living. Torches and fires set by each household would guide the spirits back to what Cohen refers to as the ancestral home, to enjoy a ceremonial meal (*ezem* or *ezen*) (1993: 456-459). In the letter above, torches are not exactly specified, but perhaps a fire to light them is understood to the recipient of the letter. Torches are known from other ritual contexts as well, for example, in a ritual for curing a sick man (BM 34035), an incense censer and torch are placed in the house of the man as part of the ritual action. The fires lit in these objects have symbolic religious connotations. The text explains that the deity Nusku, a fire god, is immanent in the torch as it stands in the house, and another god in the censer (Livingstone 2007a: 173). The fires could also have been for cooking foods meant to attract the dead family members to join in a communal meal. In most of the scholarship, a meal is considered to be an important part of the funerary proceedings, whether at graveside or elsewhere. Another possibility is lighting a household fireplace hearth for the *kispum*, which we will see in the chapel rooms at Ur in Chapter 6.

The fourth text is a distribution text from Old Babylonian Nippur which mentions a *kispum* (KI-SÌ-GA) scheduled for a deceased GU'ENNA (Akk. *guennakku*), a person in a position of central political authority (Peterson 2009: 239-246). The *guennakku* was the title of the governor at Nippur from the Old Babylonian period through the first millennium (*CAD* G: 134). Many records exist concerning matters such as the building of his house, wages for his labourers, his business and trade

dealings, allotments of grain and ghee for cultic offerings, and for members of his household (Robertson 1984).

UM 29-16-95, 1-2

10 gín ^{dug}útul ^{d} Šeš.Ki

10 gín ki.sì.ga gu_2-en-na

10 shekels (of ghee) for the *utul* vessel of Nanna

10 shekels (of ghee) for the *kispum* of the *guenna* official

There are additional entries for several other SIZKUR (offering) rites in fields and a special type of offering, a NÌNDA-I-DÉ-A, a cake made up of several ingredients, including ghee, grain and dates. The last amount listed is 12 shekels of ghee in an *utul* vessel for the "banquet". These may be for the *kispum* meal, although that is not stated. Then the last entry totals the amount of ghee (Ì-NUN/*ḫimētum*) distribution as 2 liters ($SILA_3$), 12 shekels of ghee.

The $^{DUG}UTUL_2$ is another interesting feature of this text. The sign DUG is a determinative sign for a pot or bowl, and the cuneiform signs together (here in Sumerian) are to be read *diqāru* in Akkadian. There were many different uses and materials attested for this type of bowl, kettle or cauldron found everywhere. It was usually a deep vessel with a round bottom for food, soups, for cooking (Salonen 1966: 70-79; Bottéro 1995: 198-99). It is attested as an UTUL-ì when it is used for ghee. Whether the ghee was poured, used in the meal or rubbed on something, is not known. The pot was apparently of some value, because Battum, the mother in law of Bilalama, a ruler of Nippur, wrote demanding that her son-in-law return her *diqāru* to her after the ruler Abda-El's death (correspondence concerns his funeral). Whether she had used it to give a measure of ghee for Abda-El's funeral is not stated, but possible in the context (Whiting 1987: 51-56). There do not appear to be terms in the texts for vessels specific for the *kispum*, that is, for that funerary ritual purpose alone, although luxury versions of these of course exist. In the texts the foodstuffs seem to be provided in normal measures and containers.

Two other texts from the *guennakku's* archives at Nippur concern *kispum* provisions to be allotted to a woman named Damiqtum, who is mentioned in many of the texts, who seems to function as an administrator of some status associated

with his family or household, perhaps a sister and probably a *nadītum*. One text concerns the purchase of fish to be sent to her for the *kispum*. Another includes a measure of grain (probably barley) for the netherworld libation in a grain accounting that she was responsible for performing (Robertson 1984: 159, 170-171).

UM 29-15-885

1 nigida še-bi da-mi-iq-tum
1 nigida še-bi ama$_5$-ni- še$_3$
kaš-de$_2$-a er-ṣe$_2$-tum

1 NIGIDA of grain for Damiqtum
1 NIGIDA of grain for her living quarters
for the KAŠ-DÉ-A of the netherworld

The *erṣetum* (earth, netherworld) libation may be for her family *kispum* to be performed in the home; another possibility is that Damiqtum was responsible for the ritual for dead *nadītum* women. The KAŠ-DÉ-A, "the pouring of beer" may be a beer libation, or may refer to an entire ceremony which includes a banquet (Michalowski 1994: 29-31). The context here also implies a libation of beer for the dead. There were many types of beer with specific names and processing recipes, so the generic KAŠ in KAŠ-DÉ-A may imply the libation portion of the *kispum*, or as Michalowski concludes from economic texts, it was term for a type of meal with an alcoholic grain beverage (Powell 1994; Michalowski 1994: 30).

These delivery texts also tell us that certain foods were regularly ordered for scheduled rites as a matter of course and as a part of everyday life. Therefore the dead were consistently provided for as a matter of course; having the proper ingredients at hand in time for the ritual was a matter of some importance.

One more pertinent text, an Old Babylonian letter, refers to a son acting as *pāqidu*, while his father is still alive.

VS 16, 5, AbB 6, 5, lines 1-6

A-na I-lí-[im-gur-ra-an-ni]
a-bi-ia
^{dug}bu-ṣe-em-tam

a-na ki-is-pí
ša a-bi-ka
šu-bi-lam

To Ili-imgurranni,
My father,
A *buṣimtum*
For the *kispum,*
For your father,
Send to me.

The son of Ili-imgurranni is responsible for the performance of the family *kispum*, as he says it is for his grandfather (his father's father). *Buṣimtum* has previously been translated as '(at least a) bone', but now is read as a type of container (*CAD* K: 426) or a box (Tsukimoto 1985: 51-52; Veenhof 2008: 98). It is worth mentioning that *abika* in line 5 could be read as a plural and refer to collective fathers as the ancestors of the family (although one might expect another -*i*- in the cuneiform). The text does not give us further information about the father; to assume that he was unable or uninterested in performing the *kispum*, does not seem to be implied. Instead, the request for a *buṣimtum* seems to convey the sense that a regular provision was expected from the father. What is important to note is that a son leads the offering while his father still lives. The son is acknowledging the family ancestors.

We can summarize some interesting conclusions about the role of the *pāqidu* from these texts. In two of the examples above where *nadîtu* women are responsible for the family *kispum*, we see that women could act in the ritual role even though males were still living in their families whom we might normally expect to lead the *kispum*. The examples do involve women of status who still claim the patrilineal lineage of their family, as presumably they are unmarried. In another example with living relatives, Ili-imgurranni's son is in charge of the care of the family's dead, while his father still lives. These three examples, as well the letter of Sin-uselli (5.2 above), allow us to view the traditional representations of the role of the family in *kispum* in the scholarly literature differently. In these texts

we find evidence for the involvement of more family members. Instead of restriction of the role to a male, main heir, we see evidence in these texts for females with living brothers in a leadership role for ongoing *kispum* rites. We also see two males outside the normal line of succession performing *kispum.* One (Ili-imgurrani) has a living father and performs the ritual either for his paternal grandfather or the collective ancestors of his father's family. The other, Sin-uselli, performs *kispum* for a dead son, who cannot be an ancestor, which supports the use of the ritual as part of grieving, and an ongoing relationship with the dead.

Three conclusions can be drawn from this evidence which support the hypothesis of a continuing bonds function for the *kispum* rites: 1) *Kispum* was not solely an economically motivated ritual in the context of the family, because main inheritors, particularly males, were not in the role of *pāqidu* in three of these text examples. 2) *Kispum* was an expected, scheduled, ongoing part of family life performed at the end of the month coinciding with the disappearance of the moon. 3) Emotional concern is demonstrated, particularly in Sin-uselli's letter, which points to the function of *kispum* as a means of engaging in continuing bonds with the family dead.

5.4 The *Kispum* Meal

The act of a communal meal or ritual feasting in the funerary context is generally accepted as part of the *kispum* as well (Langdon 1912: 203; Forest 1987; Bray 2003; Pollock 2003; Cohen 2005). Feasting or eating a meal as part of an important event in the cycles of life has been widely discussed over many disciplines and cultures (Rappaport 1968; Nebelsick 2000; Dietler and Hayden 2001, Bray 2003; Aranda Jiménez et al. 2011). The communal meal is variable, socially productive, organic, personal, serves many functions and can promote many types of ties, whether group, political, ideological, economic or religious. At the minimum, feasting is the conveyance for many developments in human relationships (Hayden 2001). In sacred or religious contexts, the communal meal can be ritually transformative (Wright 2004: 52-53). In Mesopotamia banquets occurred as part of many rituals for the gods during the normal calendar. In myths, the gods banqueted and drank, with varying results (Michalowski 1994). The community of the gods feasted together as a divine family (Bottéro 1994). In public

rituals, of the temple or palace, the gods were invited to join the feast. The public royal or religious feast was also a complex sociopolitical event involving practical benefits such as power over resources, or labor, surplus control and creation of alliances within the city (Schmandt-Besserat 2001: 399-201; Hayden 2001: 29-30).

Commensality in the mortuary context is an important means for transmitting collective memory (Aranda Jiménez et al. 2011: 1-3). On a family level particularly in a funerary meal within the social unit (family, lineage, clan), cohesive social bonds are fostered, in turn strengthening community bonds (Hayden 2001: 37-40). I argue that in the *kispum* meal these bonds were continually recreated between both the living and the dead. For Mesopotamians, the existence of supernatural entities was accepted as a matter of course. In the same way that a deity could be invited to a ritual meal, it may be suggested that deceased family spirits could attend the family *kispum* during the special periods when the netherworld was ritually opened to release (*wuššuru*) the family ghosts.

The underpinnings of religious belief expressed in Mesopotamian myth, include the afterlife and so are embedded in the *kispum*. In ritual time (during the performance of the ritual), which is different from calendrical time, past generations of a family existed, in essence, simultaneously, and the living could ritually participate in a communal meal with their dead (Assmann 2006: 37-40; Katz 2013: 117-125).

5.5 Dating The *Kispum*: The Month of Apum and the Festival of the Dead

As noted earlier, the *kispum* occurred regularly, monthly, at the end of the month or perhaps twice per month (at Mari). In this section we examine evidence from texts which give us more information about both the regular *kispum*, performed every month, and an annual, bigger ritual which was generally associated with the month of Apum. The festival or sacred days for the annual commemoration of the dead are associated in most of the scholarship with citywide *kispum* rites. In much of the current literature, this month is written "Abum", but the derivation is from the Sumerian A.PA$_4$, the word for libation pipe and so should be read as Apum (Postgate, pers. comm.). The month name references the offerings on the ground (or at the grave).

In the Old Babylonian period the month of Apum was either the fourth or fifth month of the year, depending on the regional calendar of each city. The Old Babylonian calendar began in the spring; Apum normally corresponded to July-August in our calendar. An important aspect of funerary offerings and remembrance ritual is the evidence from calendrical data. It is known that the preceding month of *Dumuzi* (*Tammuz*), usually the fourth month where it occurred, was associated with mourning the dying and rising Sumerian god in an agricultural festival when the fields are harvested and laid bare until spring. Apum, which follows it, was particularly associated with the remembrance of human dead. In this month, *kispum* for dead kings was also widely performed as early as the third millennium. Apum became the annual festival for all of the family dead, as well, and lasted during the final days of the month until the new moon appeared.

We occasionally catch glimpses of the practical requirements and preparations for these public rituals. For example, an Old Babylonian era administrative text, probably for the palace, calls for cows to be sent to Babylon so that there will be plenty of milk during the official annual *kispum*. As it would probably take place over two to three days, larger quantities were needed (*CAD* K: 425-26).

TCL I, 7:6

Šizbum u ḫimētum ana ki.sì.ga
Ša ^{itu}ne.ne.gar
iḫḫaššeḫ
Milk and ghee for the *kispum*
of the month of Apum
will be needed.

TCL I, 7:16

Adi ki.sì.ga ušallimu
Šizbam likil
Until the *kispum* is finished
Let milk be available.

The milk and ghee are for libation offerings. Other Old Babylonian period texts call for a yearling calf for the *kispum* and a female sheep. A text from Sippar calls for the beef cattle to be well fed from mid-month to prepare for the ritual at the end of the month. These references are food provisions for the annual citywide *kispum* rites, rather than the monthly private family ritual.

The Sumerian name of the month of Apum, written here NE-NE-GAR, is also interesting. Some interpretations of this name suggest that it can be read NE-IZI-GAR. In Sumerian IZI-GAR means torch, so it something to consider (Langdon 1935: 123-25; CAD Z 1961: 133-34). A mid-third millennium text refers to Apum as the EZEN ^{ITI} NE-NE-GAR, the month of the feast of the torches (Langdon 1935: 13; Van der Toorn 1996a a: 51). Langdon understands this month to include what he terms a *parentalia* after the Roman ancestor festival, with families hosting the ghosts of the family dead at a feast. A later text *(KAV* 218, Astrolabe B) suggests that this month is when lamps or braziers are lit to guide the dead back from the underworld (Weidner 1915: 85-101; Schroeder 1920; Cohen 1993: 100-104; 319-320).

KAV 218

> "The month Abu, … (sic) of Ninurta, braziers are kindled, a torch is raised to the Anunna-gods, Girra comes down from the sky and rivals the sun, the month of Gilgamesh, for nine days men contest in wrestling and athletics in their city quarters."

Girra was the Fire god, the Sun god judged the netherworld, and Gilgamesh also became its overlord at some point in time in the literature. The Anunna-gods were also relegated to the netherworld. Apparently in Apum they were given offerings and their way was lit to share the land of the living for the festival. That other types of demons and malevolent beings might escape when the portal between worlds is opened was a likely risk. In later periods, magical *Maqlû* texts confirm that this time was associated with expelling demons and witches through magic incantations (Abusch 1990; 2002).

Calendar studies are quite intricate; we provide a general overview here to support textual evidence for understanding *kispum* rituals. Extensive and ongoing work on hemerological and menological researches of the ancient Near East have yielded a wide body of results on the nature of the calendar over time, its cultural

and regional associations, and its lunar and cultic significance (Langdon 1935; Landsberger 1949; Greengus 1987, 2001; Cohen 1993; Fleming 2000; Livingstone 2012). The hemerologies, which deal with each day of the month, also concern propitious and unpropitious days, sometimes dealing with magical content. Both the hemerologies and the menologies provide a plethora of cultural information about a broad range of activities in Mesopotamia over hundreds of years and a wide geographical breadth (Livingstone 2007b, 2012). It is important to note that religious festivals in fixed calendars connote, as a matter of course, city- or statewide control and sanction of related ritual performances as part of official belief systems. The official annual *kispum* of the palace was performed for dead kings and their ancestors, usually in Apum. Private family commemorative celebrations were probably simpler.

The early hemerologies and menologies that developed in Babylonia continued in use into the seventh century BC. After the Judean exile in Babylon, the Judeans and other Aramaic-speaking peoples (Nabateans, Palmyrans) adopted the Standard Mesopotamian month names (in Akkadian), some of which survive in the Jewish calendar (Cohen 1993: 297-300).

Standard Mesopotamian	Judean
Nisannu	*nysn*
Ayaru	*ʻyr*
Simanu	*syvn*
Dum'uzu/Tammuzu	*tmuz*
Apu	*ʻb*
Ululu/Elulu	*ʻlul*
Tašritu	*tšry*
Arahsamna/Markašan	*mrhšn*
Kis(si)limu	*kslu*
Ṭebetu	*ṭbt*
Šabaṭu	*šbṭ*
Addaru	*ʻdr*

The early calendar, dated to the mid-third millennium BC from the sacred religious city of Nippur, was most likely adopted by the Semites near the end of the

third and beginning of the second millennium. This Sumerian calendar was imposed throughout southern Mesopotamia at this time, probably by King Ishbi-Erra of Isin (2017-1985 BC), as a unifying device for political, symbolic, economic and religious reasons (Cohen 1993: 225, 297 ff.). Many city calendars continued to be based upon it. Calendars were regionally variable and in some cities, particularly on trade routes or bordering cultural areas, two calendars were used (e.g. Sippar). These texts make use of both Sumerian (logographic) and Akkadian (syllabic) month names, but their origins are most likely based in the third-millennium mythological associations of the Sumerians (Livingstone 2012). By the time the First Dynasty of Babylon came into power, the southern Mesopotamian Sumerian calendar was already in use, and seems to have been used concurrently with the Amorite (Semitic) calendar through at least the eighteenth century in the north and south. However, the Old Babylonian month names also reflect early Sumerian religious or mythological origins. This might indicate that *kispum* rites in the month of Apum existed as early as the third millennium (Langdon 1935: 47-48; Van der Toorn 1996b: 49-51).

The month of Apum/NE-NE-GAR appears in many of the calendars, probably more consistently than any other month. This supports the case for a widespread and enduring practice of *kispum* as an annual festival for the dead in Apum that involved families and an annual Apum festival for the dead that was celebrated citywide.

The Mesopotamian year was based on the lunar cycle. However, seasonal cycles, such as flooding, seeding, harvest and barren fields, also affected the agricultural and ritual year. Adhering to a strictly lunar calendar would involve 'floating' months, which did not align with the agricultural festivals of the solar year. Therefore, the lunar year (354 days) necessitated some oscillation or variation of month names due to correlation with the solar, agricultural or seasonal, year. This also required the addition of intercalary month names, which was accomplished in various ways at different times and cities (Fleming 2000: 211-218). The ritual, administrative and seasonal calendars were linked. In addition, some month names occur in certain regions (Greengus 1987).

The month names in various calendar lists reflect a broad range of linked regional calendars that stretch from Mari and Terqa in southeast Syria to Elam in

southeast Iran through the Khabur region of northern Syria and into the Diyala River area in Iraq. Greengus has compiled data for the Old Babylonian month names from the Diyala region (Tell Asmar, Ishchali, Tell Harmal, the Hamrin Basin), the Sippar (Iraq) archives (particularly real estate one-year leases), and northern Mesopotamia (mostly derived from Mari letters between King Šamši-Adad and his sons) (1987, 2001). A general overview of the month names in these regions is provided here (Table 2) derived from Greengus' interpretations (1987: 212; 2001: 267).

Month	Sumerian	Sippar	Diyala	No. Mesopot./Mari
I	Barag.zag.gar	*Sibutum*	Še.gur$_{10}$.ku$_5$	Še.gur$_{10}$.ku$_5$
II	Gu$_4$.si.sa$_2$	*Gusisi*	*Elunum*	*Magranum*
III	Sig$_4$.ga	*Qati-ir**s**itim*	*Magrattum*	^{d}Dumu.zi
IV	Šu.numun.na	*Elunum*	***Apum***	***Apum***
V	**Ne.ne.gar**	***Apum***	*Zibnum*	*Tirum*
VI	Kin.^{d}Inanna	*Tirum*	*Niqmum*	*Niqmum*
VII	Du$_6$.ku$_3$	*Eluli*	*Kinunun*	*Kinunun*
VIII	Apin.du$_8$.a	*Kinuni*	*Tamḫirum*	*Tamḫirum*
IX	Gan.gan.na	*Tamḫirum*	*Nabrium*	*Nabru*
X	Ab.ba.e$_3$	*Nabru*	*Mammitum*	*Mammitum*
XI	Ziz$_2$.am$_3$	*Isin-Adad*	*Kiskissum*	*Mana*
XII	Še.gur$_{10}$.ku$_5$	*Ayarum*	*Kinkum*	*Ayarum*

Table 2. Mesopotamia. Overview of Regional Month Names

Apum has been well established as the month for an annual celebration of the ritual for the dead and appears in most of the calendars, although some instances of variation occur. The earliest references occur in royal third millennium Sumerian texts from Ur. These describe provisions for the funerary offerings for the deceased king, Ur-Nammu, during the Apum festival. The texts include offerings of oxen, beer, grains, fragrances and sheep (Cohen 1993: 259-260). Fleming notes that Apum appeared in the regional Semitic calendars, noted in the chart above, early in the second millennium as standard Mesopotamian practice (2000: 187). For example, in a letter from a king of the First Dynasty of

Babylon, an unusual offering of two types of turtles (*raqqu, šeleppu)* is requested for the *kispum* (KI-SÌ-GA) in the month (*itu*) of Apum (NE-NE-GAR). This demonstrates that early in the Hammurabi dynasty, this ritual month was already well established (Tsukimoto 1985: 42). Part of an Old Babylonian omen text attests that the *isin abīm*, the feast of the ancestors, was when the *abūm ilūni,* rose (from the netherworld to receive *kispum* offerings) (Tsukimoto 2010: 105-106).

5.6 Apum and The Diviner's Archive

Further information on the date of the festival is provided by material from a diviner's archive from Emar. Its tablets clearly associate the 25th through the 29th of Apum with special rituals linking the receding light of the moon, the underworld, the dead, and food offerings (Fleming 2000: 186). Although the texts also reflect local Syrian and Hurrian influences, the last days of the month of Apum seem based firmly on general Mesopotamian tradition. The Emar archives provide us with a further body of documents from which to extrapolate cultural commonalities across quite large areas of the Near East for family structure, kinship ties, the widely performed *kispum* and offerings associated with the underworld (Fleming 2000: 224-31).

The rituals in the Emar diviner's archive required many offerings for the netherworld at an *apū* shrine, of which several are listed for different buildings. Abundant offerings mentioned in the diviner's archive were directed to gods (Fleming 2000: 280-293). That similar venues for offerings at the gate of the netherworld were known by other names at other Mesopotamian cities has been introduced above in Chapter 3. In other sources, Assyrian ritual texts describe the *apū* as a hole where honey, oil, beer and wine were poured as a conduit to the dead. In an Old Babylonian text from the city of Sippar, three litres of porridge are placed at the entrance to the *apū* (Cohen 1993: 259-261).

The archive texts concern the barring of the doors at the gate of the grave on the 26th day of the month and reopening them after the interval of the waning moon, with the new moon (*hidašu*) rites, in time for the *kispum* (Fleming 2000: 173-189). The unbarring of the gates occurred in the darkness when the moon was invisible, the day of *kispum*.

The ritual closing and opening of the gates occurred with the last light of the moon in Apum, perhaps signifying ritual renewal of the boundary of the netherworld and/or purification of the city. The texts below tell us that many offerings were given during this interval. After the reopening of the gates, the family dead could again be invoked to interact in the *kispum.*

EMAR 452, 1 – 5

1. During the month of Apum on the day of declaration; two gallons and 2 quarts of second-quality flour, 1 storage jug (*pihu*), 10 doves.
2. One juglet of oil, and one quart of raisins – they distribute among the gods.
3. On the third day: one quart of second-quality flour, barley, [……] one flagon, and one jar provided by the Temple of the Gods *(*É *i-li)*;
4. One female kid provided by the *nuppuhannu* men; (cult officials?)…[ ] cedar oil, barley, ghee
5. One hundred (shekels) of aromatics, one standard vessel, one brick of figs, ten pomegranates, [….] raisins provided by the palace _ they offer to Aštart of the *apū*.

Emar 452 gives us an idea of the abundant offerings provided for the annual public festival. On the 25th day of the month, two more *apū* receive various offerings and a ritual with birds at the cemetery gate is performed:

EMAR 452, 31 – 35

31. On the 25th day: one-half gallon of (barley) mash, one quart of second-quality flour, one storage jug provided by the Temple of the Gods; one standard vessel, one brick of figs, ten pomegranates,
32. one sheep provided by the *nuppuhannu* men, and one dove – they offer to the *apū* of the É-TUKLI (The Temple of Assistance). On the very same day:
33. two *ṣabbuttu* loaves, second-quality flour, one dove, and fruit – they give to the *abu* of Ninkur's Temple.
34. On the very same day: (with) one gallon of barley flour, two quarts of second-quality flour, one flagon, two sheep

35. provided by the king, one standard vessel, and twenty-five *ḫurri* (water?) birds – they perform the greater sacrificial homage at the cemetery gate.

On the 26th day of Apum, 17 sheep, oil and barley flour are offered to all the gods until the time for barring the gate doors (lines 36-42). Then the doors are barred and many more offerings are given to the *apū* of the palace, including flours, wine, an ox, sheep, gazelle, bird, honey, ghee, oil and fruit. Other loaves and fruit are offered for the *apū* of Dagan's temple. The Temples of Ishara and Alal receive a smaller amount of offerings.

On the 27th day, the text lists ten more lines (43-52) of lavish meats, fruits, birds, fish, flours, wine, beers, honey and ghee. These are provided by the É *i-li* (Temple of the Gods) for the "lesser sacrificial homage " before the *apū* of Dagan's temple. Three other temple *apū* are well provisioned on this day.

The last three lines in this text seem to indicate the days of the moon's darkness, followed by the opening lines of Emar 463, which begin with the reappearance of the moon's light and more offerings.

EMAR 452

53. At the head of the month, on the day of (the moon's) disappearance (until) […] it shines (again): they purify the city.
54. They offer to the Lord of Akka: one-half quart of barley flour, one jar provided by the Temple of the Gods, and […sheep] provided by the *nuppuhannu* men.
55. They bring out Latarak for three days (the statue of a god).

EMAR 463

1. On the day of opening the doors, they distribute among the gods one sheep, one gallon of […].
2. One quart of barley flour, one standard vessel of wine, one […]-vessel,
3. Provided by the king are provided by Dagan. One dove […]

The 25th to the 27th days of Apum comprise a unit in the text linked by repeated cult offerings at the *api.* The offerings were presented to the divine realm,

not humans, and they were placed at ritual portals to the netherworld. The *kispum* offering for the day of the new moon is then offered.

5.7 Funerary Inscriptions

We have some evidence from funerary inscriptions relating to ritual care of the dead by the living. At least eight examples of an Old Babylonian funerary inscription have been found and published from clay cone inscriptions (Stephens 1937: 83; Szlechter 1965; Bottéro 1982: 387-389; Hecker 1988: 479; Foster 2003: 79-87; Markina 2006; Foster 2007; Khait 2009). They are commonly designated standard Old Babylonian grave inscriptions, although their provenience is unknown and none can be associated with particular graves (Hecker 1988: 279). Moreover, at least two may be late Babylonian school copies in an archaic script (Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts) (Markina 2006; Foster 2007). Dated according to the conventions of script style and philology, the objects are inscribed clay cones/tapered cylinders, from approximately 9-12 cm long, and from 2.5 - 6 cm in diameter. An interesting feature is a hole of about 2.2 cm diameter by 6 cm deep in the broad end, with a hole in the broadest part, as seen in the example (Figs. 19, 20) from the Fitzwilliam Museum (Szlechter 1965). As cones do exist without this perforation, it does not seem to be needed for the manufacture or firing of the clay.

Figure 19. Clay cone with funerary inscription (ANE.39.1907). (Courtesy of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge).

Figure 20. Indentation in funerary cone inscription. (ANE.39.1907). (Courtesy of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge).

The purpose of the indent is puzzling, although it has been suggested that the hole is a place for pouring an oil offering (Szlechter 1965: 440). Other uses are possible; it might have been used to place the cone on a stick, which could serve as a grave marker, or may have been used to support the clay when it was being inscribed, although other solid inscribed cones do not have this feature. How widely used such inscriptions were remains unclear, and it seems likely that such an inscription was probably affordable only by some, those who had access to the services of a scribe. It was not necessary to be able to read the inscription. Because they were not found in situ, their use is also uncertain, possibly being produced to be used as grave markers or perhaps to be deposited with the body.

The inscription or presence of the cone itself, if visible, is intended to encourage the safeguarding of the tomb as well as to remind the viewer that they are obligated to care for the dead within the grave. This funerary inscription is not a curse, but a plea to care for the dead in the tomb by respecting the grave.

FM 39-1907, YOS 9, 83 15-19

Forever, until the end of days, until eternity,
For the days which remain,
Whoever sees this grave
And does not destroy it, but leaves it in place,
That person who, after seeing this inscription
And does not neglect it,

Saying, "This tomb, I will leave in its place"
For the good deed which he has done, may he be recompensed.
Above (*ina elâti*), may his name be good.
Below (*ina šaplāti*), may his *eṭemmu*
drink pure water.

As an added incentive, the reader of the inscription is promised like treatment for his own *eṭemmu*. If deposited within the grave, the function of such an inscription could be apotropaic. As such it might be compared to the type of curse in the Assyrian Queen Yaba's tomb at Nimrud which threatens a thirsty wandering existence for the *eṭemmu* of one who disturbed her grave (Oates and Oates 2001: 82). In the same vein, another Old or Middle Babylonian inscription from Kish (no provenience) warns that anyone who opens "this grave" (*kimaḫḫa annia*) without repairing it will have their seed cut off and the Annunaki "below" (*ina šaplati*) will destroy their progeny (Bottéro 1982: 386-387).

We should also consider that written words could convey ritual and magic power, as discussed above in Chapter 3. A written inscription, spell, prayer or ritual fragment, even if one could not read it, was considered magical in many cultures, and can remain so today (Merrifield 1987; Graf 1991; Frankfurter 1994). In Late Antiquity words or spells buried in graves were to be carried to the underworld by the spirit of the dead (Gager 1992: 18-19, 214-215). Some Mesopotamian graves have been found with odd sorts of tablets (e.g. receipts, accounts) inside the grave near or on the body, which seem to have no relation to the deceased. A few examples are a clay vase with fifteen administrative tablets found with the Old Babylonian grave of an infant, and two Neo-Babylonian graves, one with a lexical tablet on the chest of an adult male which was a list of names of birds, and another grave with a list of remedies for skin maladies (Bottéro 1982: 390-393). Inscribed material or cylinder seals within a grave were perhaps seen as objects with magical power to assist the transition to the afterlife.

What such funerary inscriptions also emphasized is that an undisturbed grave was essential to the *eṭemmu*, and provided a location for the ghost to be tended by the family. The inscription was another method of keeping the deceased

safe. Without the *kispum* libations, and food offerings, the ghost was destined to wander aimlessly, poorly fed and thirsty. Whether the *kispum* had to be poured and offered at the actual grave during Apum is not specified, but the emphasis on protecting the tomb suggests that it was desirable. As we have seen the spirit who had no one to speak its name in remembrance or to bury it properly was without family, was truly a 'nobody', non-existent. These restless spirits were the ones that caused trouble, that were blamed for disease or made noises and disruptions in people's houses. People hoped for an inviolate grave, where they 'slept' forever. The family and descendants were responsible to see that their deceased were remembered and tended forever via the continuing ritual.

We have seen from various texts in this section that scheduled *kispum* feast days in the monthly and yearly calendar indicate a long and established tradition of ritual remembrance of the dead in Mesopotamia. During the prescribed days just before the new moon, the *abūm*, family ancestors, were thought to ascend to the world above to take part in a family feast. The *kispum* provided sustenance to the dead and benefited the living with the security that they too would be cared for in death in the same manner. The *abūm* were remembered and tended, by family descendants. Participation in the ritual also cemented family bonds in a continuing family lineage. Participation in visible ritual has been proven to demonstrate and strengthen group membership, cooperation and wider societal inclusion (Sosis 2004; Liénard and Boyer 2006).

We have also seen that family obligations to carry out the *kispum* were taken seriously and were an accepted part of cultural norms. In this way, family ties were continued in relationships with deceased family members. Disturbed burials could result in dire consequences, particularly a discontinuance of progeny. The untended dead were thought to be something 'other'; unless offered *kispum* to be incorporated into some family, they were not associated with any sort of kinship structure or lineage.

5.8 The Funerary Rites

There is little material evidence for the funeral itself, but we do know from texts that a *taklimtu*, a funerary 'display', probably occurred after a death, at least in elite and merchant contexts. Opinions vary on whether the corpse was on view,

similar to a wake, or whether only the grave goods were displayed (Dhorme 1941; Potts 1997: 221-222; McGinnis 1987; Scurlock 1991: 3). In an Assyrian royal funeral text from the first millennium, *taklimtu* involves displaying quantities of grave goods to Šamaš (probably as master of the underworld) and then placing them in the tomb (Ebeling 1931: 56-58; McGinnis 1987). The goods are lavish, and include sacrificial equids as well as offerings for the Annunaki and 'gods', probably royal ancestors, which dwell in the *erṣetim* (KI-*tim*). Grave goods had several purposes, including personal symbolic or ornamental items, provisions for the journey to the underworld, magical protective objects and gifts for the gods (Tsukimoto 1985; Sürenhagen 2002). For most of the poorer population it may be that little or nothing was placed in a grave. Graves at Ur from second millennium houses demonstrate that the majority of the time, at least one clay vessel was included in the grave (Chapter 6).

The preparation of the body probably included washing, anointing the body with oil and scent, if it could be afforded, dressing in garments, and perhaps wrapping in matting or a special shroud (*CAD* Q: 203). Blankets were listed in one Old Babylonian dowry as goods for the future grave (Potts 1997: 221). A lengthy Pre-Sargonic Sumerian list of funerary furnishings from Adab includes many textiles for the grave (Foxvog 1980). Oils for rituals were known as a part of magico-medical treatments; apotropaic treatment of the oil with incantations was part of the medicine. The oil was massaged on the patient so that the evil afflicting the patient would be dispersed from the body from the head downward through the toes (Böck 2003). The application of oil to the corpse probably had similar apotropaic qualities. In myth, a human man meets with the gods, who ostensibly offer him immortality, via eating bread, drinking water, donning a garment and anointing himself with oil (Walls 2001: 138-141). Man is then warned not to do these things by Ea/Enki. One myth adds a warning against sitting in the 'chair', which, as we will see below (5.11 – 5.12), is also a funerary article (Walls 2001: 140).

Because this sequence of actions is repeated in myths, and administrative texts and letters refer also to provisions and garments for the grave, I suggest the bread, the water, the garment and oil, are allusions to the funerary rites, apparent to the Mesopotamian audience. Additionally, they allude to travellers, as food,

clothing, oil and water would be commonly offered to the living (Postgate, pers. comm.). Grave goods provisioned the traveller's journey to the netherworld.

We can also infer something about the funeral from imitative magic in incantations to heal the sick and anti-witchcraft magic (LKA 79, LKA 80) (Tsukimoto 1985: 125-135; Scurlock 2001). A human figurine or poppet was made from clay, as in many magical rites, and used to transfer the spirit causing the illness from the person into the figure. One of the things used to entice the spirit is the promise of a *taklimtu*. The substitute figure is also to be anointed with good oil, dressed, offered *kispum* by the family, then buried, bewailed and mourned. This substitution ritual gives a good idea of what was involved with a death and what served as a funeral. It is also interesting that performing the *taklimtu* is differentiated from the *kispum*. The evil spirit is offered the treatment of a proper burial and then promised *kispum* from the family.

The following example is from an anti-witchcraft healing ritual in which clay figurines of male and female sorcerers are made and then treated with the respect due to the family dead. In the text we see glimpses of *kispum* activities, and perhaps some aspects of the normal preparations for burial as well.

> "…. You dress them in makeshift garments. You anoint them with fine oil. Before Šamaš you sweep the ground. You sprinkle pure water. You put down a pure chair for Šamaš. You stretch out a *mišḫu*-cloth on it. You set up a reed altar before Šamaš. In three groups you put out food portions before Šamaš, Ea and Asalluḫi. You scatter dates and *sasqū*-flour. You set up three *adagurru* vessels. You set up three censers (burning) aromatics. You scatter all manner of grain. You put down a chair to the left of the offering arrangement for his family ghosts (GIDIM-MEŠ). You put down a chair for his family ghosts to the left of the other ghosts to the left. You make *kispum* offerings (*kispa takassip*)to his family ghosts. You give them gifts. You honor (*tukabbassunuti*) them. You show them respect. Secondly, you lay out hot broth for his family ghosts…. You pour out water for them. You make a pure sacrifice before Šamaš. You bring the shoulder, caul fat and roasted meat near to the offering table. You pour out a libation of first quality beer,… for his family ghosts. …. You recite the incantation "Anything

Evil" three times..." (Text BBR 52 in Tsukimoto 1985:167-170; Scurlock 2001: 195-196).

While this text is not a *kispum* text per se, it does give the procedure for a magic ritual to send the spirit on its way to the netherworld. We can infer that at least some of the steps are similar to family funeral and post-funerary activities. Especially important for our discussion is the placement of chairs as a seat for the ghost. This is the same chair (GIŠ-GU-ZA) provided for the *kispum* for dead kings at Mari. Chairs in family ritual will be discussed further in Sections 5.9, 5.11 and 5.12 below.

Archaeological remains of the funeral ritual itself or of *kispum,* would be difficult or impossible to discern (Berggren and Stutz 2010: 183-186). Of course, ritual actions themselves and water, oil, and many of the foods mentioned in the text above would have perished (although see 6.12 below). Any feasting or funeral meal or offerings graveside would probably be limited, in the common population, at best to remains of animal bone or a bowl or cup. For better provided tombs, archaeological signatures of drinking sets, refuse pits, hearths or refuse fires may be present. Some small, narrow necked juglets or vessels may have held small quantities of oils or perfumes (Mazzoni 1994; Salje 1996; Baker 2012). For most burials, unless a large collective tomb, a one-time event would leave little trace. At tombs where repeated offerings or large communal meals had taken place, evidence of post-funerary activity may remain (Hayden 2001:40-42). Otherwise the completed burial is the only trace. In the next section of this chapter, further textual evidence provides more insights into the family activities surrounding the transition of the corpse to *eṭemmu*.

5.9 Mortuary Ceremonies for Ištar-lamassi

Ten recently published Old Assyrian letters from the trading colony (*kārum*) Kanesh were excavated in the private house of Elamma, son of one Iddin-Suen, in 1991 (Özgüç 2003; Veenhof 2003; 2008). A large amount of tablets from merchant households at this site reflect business and family matters, including correspondence between Kanesh (modern Kültepe, Turkey) and other cities in Mesopotamia. Although living and working far to the northwest of Aššur, the

population of traders retained their Mesopotamian values and culture (Postgate 1992: 211-215; Van De Mieroop 2004; 2007: 94-99).

These ten letters give extraordinary insight into funerary events before the burial, for which we otherwise have little evidence outside of literary sources depicting lavish royal burials (Katz 2003). The story they tell is also important for understanding new evidence for way the family dead are honored and how the grief of the family is displayed. They deal with circumstances surrounding the death and the will and testament of a woman named Ištar-lamassi, who had given the tablets for safekeeping to her friend or relative, Lamassatum, wife of Elamma. When Ištar-lamassi died, her second husband, Lulu, paid her funeral expenses and accordingly deducted them from her son's inheritance (which had originated with the first husband's estate). The sons died soon after their mother, and their burials also had to be paid for out of that inheritance money. These texts, published by Veenhof in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society*, are full of family history and the complications surrounding the division of the inheritance (2008: 97-113). Pertinent to our discussion is the accounting of the cost and content of mortuary ceremonies at the time of death, because it reveals specifics and practicalities of the funerary rites that we have not otherwise discovered in private contexts.

Before Ištar-lamassi died, Lamassatum (Letter B, Kt 91/k423) went to her house with three independent traders, who witnessed the division of all of her available cash assets among her (adult) children from her first marriage (Veenhof 2008: 107-109). Before the mother died, one of the sons, Ilia, was thrown in jail and Ištar-lamassi's second husband, Lulu, paid the bail. Later, Lulu received reimbursement of 27 shekels of silver (Ilia's total inheritance totaled 57 shekels) for the bail and for the "bewailing" (*bikītum*) of Ištar-lamassi and her sons, who died soon after she did. Creditors received payments from the overall inheritance for 15 5/12 shekels worth of goods for the mortuary ceremonies, listed below (Veenhof 2008: 112, Letter J, Kt 91/k 369).

2 shekels (silver) for bewailing (on the first day)

2 2/3 shekels for wheat

2 jars of beer for the day of bewailing.

On the second day:

3 ¼ shekels for 2 sheep

3/8 shekel for firewood

¼ shekel for *subarum* (a food)

¼ shekel for reed

1/12 shekel for onions

1/12 shekel for reed for the jars (straws?)

2 1/6 shekel for an *erim* (pregnant?) sheep.

7 jars of beer

2 shekels wheat

2 jars beer

1 shekel silver for a sheep

This account of the expenditures suggests two days for the ceremonies, with funeral meals, lots of beer and four sheep consumed. Another letter (G, K 91/k 446) lists eight participants who collectively represented (*ipuhrišunu)* the sons of Kunilum, Ištar-lamassi's first husband, at the event. Some of these people were those who witnessed the testament of Ištar-lamassi at Elamma's house; the others could be relatives, friends and business associates (Veenhof 2008: 115). Other Kanesh texts document food, burial and tomb expenses of 34 shekels of silver and another for 7 talents of copper (4-5 minas of silver) (Hecker 2004 in Veenhof 2008: 114). While we do not know what was in many tombs, as most of these graves were looted, the texts demonstrate that the expenses of the accompanying rites were clearly considerable.

There is much we do not know about the actual construction or digging of graves or the preparation of the tomb. That there existed professional mortuary workers seems clear. In the law code *The Reform Edict of Uru*KA*gina* (ca. 2350 BC) different jobs for mortuary workers are listed with their fees (Lambert 1956). The text lists reforms for extortion among public officials, including exaggerated burial fees. Priests in Lagash who officiated at the placement of the body in the grave received seven urns of wine or beer, 420 loaves of bread, a large quantity (2 GUR) of grain, a woolen garment, a goat, a bed and a chair. When a body was brought to the 'reeds of Enki' for burial, another type of mortuary priest (ÙḪ-^{D}NITA-INANNA/*uruḫḫu*) (Potts 1997: 221; *CAD* U: 270) was paid similarly. It is not clear

what the 'reeds' location was, perhaps the marshes or a symbolic reference to the Apsu (Chapter 3). Reductions were made in the reforms to three urns of drink, 80 loaves of bread, a bed and a goat. A toll was lifted which previously had been paid to ensure safe passage of the ghost through the 'great gate' to the world beyond. Mortuary revisions in the *Edict* included increased payments of bread and beer to wailing women and lamentation singers (Lambert 1956).

5.10 Wailing and Funerary Rites

Part of the funerary fees for Ištar-lamassi and her sons included *bikītum*. *Bikītum*, 'mourning/weeping', is normally known from literary texts and public ceremonial context, similar to a wake or sitting shiva. The references in these letters are very important and worth looking at further. Because the term is used in an accounting of costs, private wailing might have been part of the funeral.

Whether performed by professional wailers or wailing women, or how many, is not stated; however, they were paid (Veenhof 2008: 107-115). Wailing (distinct from lamentation as a literary genre) as a means of mourning is well attested in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean (Pham 1999; Olyan 2004; Suter 2008; Corley 2010).

Rites of weeping recently have been shown to embody several socially significant effects, not least for transitional stages in rites of passage, both for mourners and deceased (Johnson 1988; Ebersole 2000; Olyan 2004: 8-12; Amelang 2005). The emotional responses to death and the wailing rites are of course culturally variable, often still performed today; comparative studies raise some interesting issues concerning the significance of such practices. The cited studies show that as part of the display of emotion in the funerary rites, wailers also serve to elicit, or even allow, emotion from participants. The role of women in funerary rites is a particular interest of postmodern interpretations, such as creating and dissolving identities, social hierarchy, and female contribution to the stability of community (Olyan 2004; Corley 2010; Gamliel 2007). Participants in modern wailing communities, such as Yemeni Jews or Bedouin Muslims, construct what appears to be an unstructured, extemporaneous dirge, but which can include a pattern of parts (Abu-Lughod 1993: 191-93; Gamliel 2007: 33-39). These can include discourses with both the deceased and the mourners, presentations of the

life of the deceased and express the extreme pain of the mourners. The mental image of, or remembrance of, the dead is brought back with extreme longing and melancholy, as the wailer takes on the role of the dead, then the mourners, then the consolers. The family can join in, take parts or weep and the wailing can vary in intensity from screaming to high-pitched moaning. Participants express that the severe emotionality of the wailing ritual honors the dead (Gamliel 2007).

These studies relate significantly to our exploration of continuing bonds with the dead in Mesopotamia. The family dead is treated with the dignity (*kubbutu*) stipulated by moral custom and family honor (*abbūtu*) (Chapter 4) through the funerary rites. Middle Eastern ethnographic parallels show that funeral attendees consider wailing a sign of respect for the dead.

While we have letters accounting only for the cost of Ištar-lamassi's *bikītum*, we can understand from other studies that the wailing was a socially complex part of the mortuary ceremonies. Grief is expressed in ancient Near Eastern literature, in poetic and anguished wordings, for example in the Pushkin Elegies or Gilgamesh, but otherwise is nearly invisible in the archaeological record (Kramer 1960b; Lambert 1980: 54-57). This mention in a private text may be evidence of a way in which grief could be expressed in the family. I agree with Veenhof that it could also refer to an overall name for the main funerary rite (Veenhof 2008).

Upon Ištar-lamassi's death, at least one day of "bewailing" was noted, along with plenty of feasting over two days. From evidence in incantations of 'reverse' funerals, the *taklimtu* was provided for the dead as the main part of the mortuary ceremony, and indicated care from the family and honor for the deceased. From the Kanesh letters we conclude that ritual weeping was another important part of funerals and contributed to the interactions of the family with the dead. One more important feature of the funeral proceedings can be discerned from Ištar-lamassi's funeral, regarding a chair and the transition of the deceased to the afterlife.

5.11 The Chair and the *Eṭemmu*

In two of the letters (F and G) a chair for Ištar-lamassi is mentioned juxtaposed with the bewailing. The chair might have been commissioned for the event, and paid for from the sons' inheritance shares, along with payment for the wailers. Letter F includes the cost of the chair (Veenhof 2008: 113).

F = Kt 91/k 441, 8-16

> After the sons of Kunilum had died,
> One arrived for bewailing them
> And for removing the chair
> Of their mother and of my brothers,
> And 19 ½ shekels of silver
> Were paid both for bewailing them
> And for the chair of their mother.

Veenhof points out that the people mentioned in Letter G above (5.9) were probably among those attending the 'removal of the chair' and that the chairs were taken out of the house (2008: 115-116). This may have signaled the end of the funeral and time for the burial. This letter is also evidence for the chair for the ghosts that will be called to take part in future *kispum* rituals. By contrast, in the UDUG-ḪUL incantations, demons and the unsettled (evil) dead may not sit in the chair or lie in the bed of a sick person (Geller 1985: 49-53). As we have seen, family *eṭemmī* were differentiated from strange or foreign ghosts.

In the ritual of the 'soul emplacement' the chairs are set up to the left of an arrangement of offerings (Scurlock 2006: 141):

> "For his family *eṭemmī*, you put down a seat to the left of the offering arrangement. For his family *eṭemmī* you put down a seat to the left of the (strange) *eṭemmī* to the left (of the offering arrangement). You make funerary offerings to the family *eṭemmī*."

As Enkidu lay dying in the Gilgamesh Epic, Šamaš, the netherworld judge, encouraged him that Gilgamesh would care for him, put him on a funeral bed and seat him "on a peaceful seat, a seat to the left" (Tablet VII 130-132; Scurlock 2002: 2-3). The chair is integral to the funerary rites and later, part of the *kispum*, as a concrete form for souls to inhabit. The chair, as we have seen in Ištar-lamassi's funerary rites, was a locus for the soul, and a vehicle for its appropriate transition to the netherworld. The soul may have been released from the body in the grave, with the appropriate ritual that turned the grave into a gate to the underworld

(Katz 2010, Winter 1999). The funerary ritual (wailing, foods placed in the grave) accomplished the liberation of the *eṭemmu* from the corpse. The chair may have also been used to symbolically remove the body from the house or into the tomb below the floor, perhaps with a spoken formulaic incantation (Davies 1999: 55-56; Katz 2007: 167, 173). In an Isin-Larsa period cultic lament, a young male god begs his sister to release his spirit and tells her how to perform the funerary ritual (composite translation from Katz 2003: 203-204 and Thureau-Dangin 1922 in Scurlock 2002):

> "Bring me the bed (where) they recite the formula: 'its wind/spirit has been released.' Set up a seat and seat the statue (*si(m)laḫ*) on it. Put a cloth on the seat and cover the statue. Place the bread offering (NINDA KI-SÌ-GA) and wipe it. Pour out water into the libation pipe (A-PA$_4$) and pour it into the dust of the Kur. Pour out the hot broth (ÚTUL-KÚM) (which) gives it its healthy glow (ME-LÁM) to pour out for it."

Another Old Babylonian period cult text, 'The Messenger and the Maiden', also describes funeral rites. The 'messenger' is likely an image of a dead youth, as it is described as being unable to see or speak. Bread is wiped on the figure and water is poured onto the ground, saying "he drank it". The maiden speaks words that we should regard as those of a generic funeral ritual:

> "With my new garment I dressed the chair. The wind/spirit (IM) has entered, the wind has departed. My messenger in the Kur; in the midst of the Kur he was whirling, he is lying (now in rest)". (Translation from Katz 2003: 202-204; see also Kramer and Alster in Scurlock 2002: 3, n. 13).

These two texts support the idea that a figurine or statue, possibly linked to the chair, could also be a locus for the soul during the rituals. It is possible that images were employed to house the transitory spirit of the family deceased, just as a magic figurine for an unsettled *eṭemmu* was made to receive *kispum*. It is not known if a full-size chair that belonged to the dead in life was used in the ritual (texts show people owned a bed and chair), or if it could have been a model (see Section 5.12 below).

Chairs and statues are mentioned in another *kispum* context as well. We have already mentioned *kispum* for kings *(ana šarrāni*) performed at Mari in Section 4.3.4 (Birot 1980). In that text, which will be quoted below, sacrifices are made in the É GIŠ-GU-ZA, literally "house of chairs". The term is generally translated in the academic literature as "Hall of Thrones", or in the sense of "throne room" (e.g. Al-Khalesi 1977; Birot 1980; Tsukimoto 1985: 73-78). The word for chair and for throne is the same. These chairs are the same seats that are described in texts for the spirit of the family ghost, and emphasize the focus on the ancestral group of kings (Postgate, pers. comm.). So this room where the *kispum* was offered to kings at Mari was separate from the main throne room.

Rather than legitimizing the Amorite royal dynasty (contra Tsukimoto), the royal ritual, then, identified Mari kings as the "family" of the famous ancient empire of the Akkadian kings. The kingly family group was not always a bloodline; it was an identity as a special ancestral group for eternity. Presumably, the spirits of these deceased kings would be called forth to share *kispum.*

Mari 12803

Col. 1 Lines 1-30

> On the first day of Addaru, the *kispum* shall be performed in the middle of the city and its environs. The meal shall go out from the palace. A sheep will be sacrificed for the *lamassu*-statues of (Kings) Sargon and Narām-Sīn in the É GIŠ-GU-ZA. A sheep shall be offered as *kispum.* Before the King comes, an offering will be offered in the house of chairs (*bīt kussī)*. Meat shall be cooked and the best meat will be presented before Šamaš. The *kispum* shall not be performed before the offerings are presented to Šamaš. After *kispum* is offered to Šamaš, *kispum* will be presented to Sargon and Narām-Sīn. For the *yaradu* Hanaens and Numhaens it will be presented. The sacrifice of the King and the *muškenum* will be offered in the houses of the gods (temples). The next morning, the king will perform *kispum* in the morning.

Column II is broken at the top, but line 13 begins, "*ūm biblum*", the day of the disappearance of the moon, and continues with additional offerings to gods and the activities of the royal festival of *kispum*.

In an interesting analogy from West Africa, ancestor spirits of the Ewe of Ghana return to inhabit chairs, called ancestor stools. Lineages are able to communicate with the spirit through the stools. Ancestor stools are patriarchal, associated with the chief, the ancestral home, valor or wealth. Ewe ancestors are present in everyday life and the stool is a material symbol of their presence among the living. The stools are treated like the corpse; they are decorated with expensive cloth, placed upon a funeral bed and fanned under a canopy by the women. Wailing occurs and the stools are bound up in cloth bundles. The stools are the focus of the ancestor rituals and are cleansed, fed and libated (Fiawoo 1976: 264-281).

Personal objects, such as the chair, can be powerful symbols. They can also magically carry the spirit or substance of a spirit, which could also be dangerous. Mesopotamians believed that evil or disease could be spread by contact magic with a person's cup, chair, bed or garments (Farber 2004: 124; Geller 2007: 389-399). Similarly an evil spirit which caused disease could be removed by marrying a small figurine to the ghost and then expelling it with incantations from the house (Farber 2004: 128-129). The concept of contagion was not merely magical in Old Babylonian thought; King Zimri-Lim of Mari wrote to his wife (ARM 10, 130) to keep a sick woman away from others so they did not fall ill (Farber 2004: 124). So could the unburied and uncared-for deceased afflict the living.

The corpse was probably also considered unsettled until the funerary rites were completed and the *eṭemmu* provisioned and safely set off on its underworld journey. The rites that transferred the spirit of the dead into the chair or image, allowed the *eṭemmu* to move on through the liminal stage between life and death. The 'real-life' accounting texts for the Kanesh family's funerary furnishings demonstrated the importance of the performance of the rites, including the food provisions, the wailing and the transferral of the soul of the deceased to the chair. The food offerings for the grave were probably dedicated and offered during these initial rites. The *eṭemmu* was immediately provided for. This may have been done at the grave or the intramural tomb at the conclusion of the rites when the body was interred.

5.12 Chair Models

I would like to suggest that terracotta models of chairs found at Old Babylonian period sites might be related to ritual use involving the souls of the dead. When the soul is released from the body during the funerary rite, it may have been transferred to a chair. It is unknown if the chair was taken away to the burial site, or even, as Veenhof suggested, that the body might be carried out of the house on it. An unsettled, non-family ghost could be magically transferred into a clay figure for burial. This type of magic is very well known with figures of spirits and witches in later Babylonian magic. Any representation or symbol could function magically as a full-sized object. The miniature figure of a chair might have been used as the seat that the *eṭemmu* occupied during the *kispum* or as the chair in a *taklimtu* display. As we have seen, the soul is called back when the name is pronounced and the spirit of the deceased occupies or becomes immanent in the figure of a chair. It makes sense from magic tradition and the *kispum* texts that we have studied in this chapter, that the deceased's spirit needs a physical object to occupy in ritual symbolism, as there is no longer a body (Scurlock 2002).

A miniature clay chair model would be more available to the less wealthy as well. Wood was scarce in Mesopotamia, and clay plentiful. Woolley verified that miniature clay furniture models could be considered votives and verified their cult usage by the presence of one (U. 16345, no. 220) in a street temple at Ur (UE VII: 172). The chair models are finely made and very well decorated, as seen from a few examples from Ur and Mashkan-Shapir (find spots are unfortunately unclear) (Figs. 21, 22). Some have textile or reed decoration, are between about 8 and 10 cm in height, and would stand taller if complete with legs. The seats are usually decorated with matting or woven straw motifs. The decoration on the chair backs is probably symbolic. Some have representations of geese, ducks, goats, vegetation, birds, boats or crescent moons on them (e.g. U1247, no. 210, Ht. 0.10 m).

The Ur chair models were found in the Diqdiqqah suburb of Ur, which may have been a manufacturing area for terracottas, many of which are cultic objects (*UE VII*: 171-172, 181). Mass produced models as cult objects would support the idea that these were needed in large number to supply the population, and Diqdiqqah could have produced the models for trade.

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Figure 21. Ur, Diqdiqqah. Above: (*UE VII*, PL 88, 210). Chair back with geese above goats; decorated background. Below: (*UE VII*, PL 89, 223). Chair with crescents on poles. (Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum).

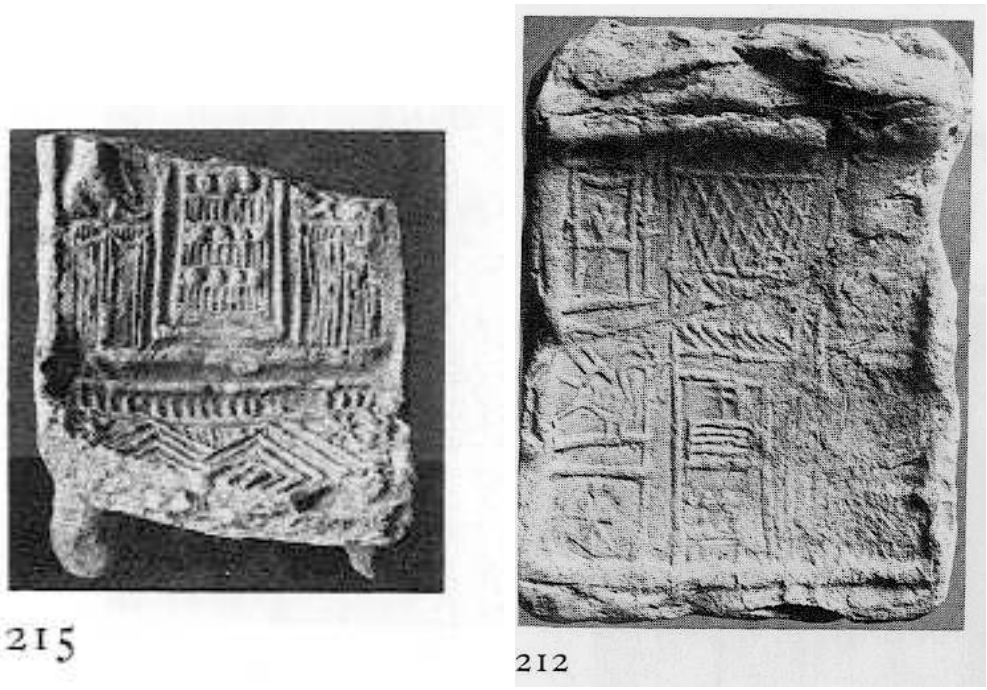

Figure 22. Above: Ur, Diqdiqqah. Chair models (*UE VII*, PL 88, 215, 212). Left: 215, woven reed seat, back with figures on pedestal altars. Right: 212, seat with impressions and name. (Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum).
Below: Mashkan-Shapir. Model chair back with decoration. (AbD 87-216). (Stone and Zimansky 2004, Fig. 54, p. 93).

One model (U.13500, Ht. 0.068 m) is a seat with a partial back showing the feet and lower dresses of two human figures, apparently standing on the type of tall altars we find in houses in Mesopotamia (Fig. 22, 215, above left). Some of the chair legs or feet remain. The seat shows a woven design, maybe of reeds or textiles. This example might indicate that that the chair model was used on the house altar, a case of the ritual object depicting the actual ritual. We will briefly discuss the phenomenon of depicting the use of an object on itself further in Chapter 6. One chair model from Mashkan-Shapir (AbD 87-216), H = 0.044 m, W = 0.046 m, D = 0.01 m) was found in survey (Stone and Zimansky 2004, Fig. 54, p. 93). It seems to have temple façade motifs on it, also represented on some pedestal house altars (Fig. 22, lower). This motif represented spiritual or sacred connotations, as we will explore further in Chapter 6.

Many chair, and also chariot models, have crescent moon motifs on them (*UE VII*: 181, no. 211-224). Moons are shown with the arc of the crescent at the base and the ends pointing up. While this is normally a standard symbol of Nanna, if the chair models were used in *kispum*, the crescent might be also considered in the context of the disappearing/reappearing moon. The chariot models with crescents show a bull-man on them also, symbolic of Nergal, who was the mate of Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld. Chariots are also symbols of Nergal and are also known from other funerary contexts (Biga 2012: 5). Another model chair back shows two crescents on pole standards which stand before a palm tree (Fig. 21, U. 14340; Ht. 0.09 m).

One model is a chair seat with impressions probably made by rolling a cylinder seal on it (Fig. 22, U.1524, no. 212, Ht. 0.06 m,). The upper broken edge is the remaining part of the chair back. The seat design includes an inscription, *Ama*-AN DUB-SAR: "Ama-ilu, scribe." Was this model the property of Ama-ilu, or made to represent his *eṭemmu*?

It is possible that these models were used to represent the deceased, as the actual "seat of the soul", and perhaps kept for use on or near the house altar in niches (see Section 6.4). In that case, the symbolism on them could refer to a personal family god or a way the family remembered the deceased. Used in this way, the chairs are similar to ancestor rituals known from China and Japan (Scurlock 2002). The question remains, then, of why were they not found in every

house or every grave? Perhaps people who could not afford an expensive molded model could make them of unbaked clay or reeds, or call the dead spirit to drink water and eat bread simply with the spoken word.

5.13 Summary

In Chapter 5, we have looked with more depth into *kispum* details. We have examined textual material remains in the form of cuneiform tablets for a new interpretation of *kispum* in second millennium Mesopotamia. We have seen letters that revealed family grief and a father's continued remembrance of his son. The responsibility of regular and ongoing *kispum* for the family dead was shown in letters asking for provisions for the monthly and annual rites. The scheduled calendar tradition of an annual public feast for the dead supported the corporate societal practice of post-funerary ritual, as shown in calendrical texts and the diviner's archive. Funerary inscriptions helped offer protection for the dead. We have discussed aspects of belief, collective memory, and identity in relation to ritual. And finally I have shown that the components of the mortuary ceremony included preparation of the body, feasting, offerings, wailing, mourners, and burial. *Kispum* for the dead was a post-funerary ritual and included summoning the *eṭemmu* from the netherworld to a chair or image of a chair. In the next Chapter, we will look at more material remains pertaining to *kispum*.

CH 6 SKIPPED HERE; SEE BELOW FOR CH7

Chapter 7. Summary and Conclusions

Spirits of the dead in ancient Mesopotamian context have been portrayed as malicious ghosts throughout the anthropological and archaeological literature, hostile to the living, even to their own families, if not kept well watered and fed. Until now, the *kispum* ritual has been understood by scholars to be a rite performed by descendants to propitiate these hostile spirits of deceased family members. In this thesis I have reinterpreted an ancient Mesopotamian family mortuary practice in a new and different way. I have suggested that evidence of profound beliefs about life and death in Mesopotamia, and interactions between the family and deceased loved ones, can be found in the material and textual remains. In this thesis I have re-examined various types of evidence and made an important statement about the family and the dead in ancient Mesopotamia, which I hope will encourage further research.

I have shown how the attitude of the hostile family ghost in the scholarly literature came about. I have approached the textual and material evidence from an original perspective showing that dead kin were active and kept present in the family. From the point of view of Continuing Bonds Theory, I have shown that the k*ispum* ritual functioned to keep the deceased family member close, as part of living memory and a continued familial bond.

In this study I have also demonstrated that the performance of the *kispum* on the cusp of the disappearance and reappearance of the moon each month was what was important for the dead – rather than the shape of the grave, the coffin, or the position of the body – just water or a simple meal taken with the family on those days when the land below was accessed by the world above. The ghost of the dead family member was called by name, invited to join with the living family members, and given pure, fresh water to drink. By partaking of food with his family the deceased symbolically lived on (albeit on another plane of existence). I have also shown (in Chapter 5) that, in Mesopotamian belief, the worlds of the living and the dead were mystically linked for the brief hours when the *kispum* was performed.

Commensality is often a ritualized mark of a family or of groups who indicate that they are linked in some way, such as in the monthly ritual for the care

of the dead. The *kispum* texts have shown us that the ancient Mesopotamian family performed this traditional ritual faithfully, as promised to their loved ones, and according to long tradition.

From the point of view of the archaeology of emotion, I have not found prophylactic amulets guarding the living from their own family members in the archaeological record, but instead have found evidence of care and providing food for the dead—fruit pits, animal bones, grains from bread and perhaps a cup or two for beer or water. If the meal was graveside, then small traces of these could be evident in pits, jars or evidence of burning outside the tomb. The body may have a cup near the mouth to drink from and a jar or pot within reach with beer, barley, bread or fruit. Some graves were found with some of these features. Others have few or no grave goods, or at least were buried with nothing that remains visible in the archaeological record. We have seen some evidence in the texts that some tombs may have been provided with a channel for water to the grave (and perhaps, at least symbolically, into the deceased's cup).

The point is that *kispum* was more than an annual, communal, festival celebration. It was repeated monthly in private family ritual. But, from the point of view of the living, the food and water were not to keep the deceased loved one away and passive. Performing the *kispum* instead allowed the living to continue interacting with their beloved son or father or grandmother. The ritual may have served more than one function, but the long lasting continuity of the tradition over at least two millennia tells us that it was not fear of ghosts that drove this religious rite—it was more productive and positive in that it was bound up with the identity of the family and beneficial results for the living.

For the average worker, or a citizen of Mesopotamia, pursuit of wealth and personal success as measured in material goods may have been unattainable, not the focal point or meaning of existence. Non-royal classes labored to produce daily necessities and purchase what they could not make or grow themselves. Many survived on beer and barley rations issued as pay for their work. Parents, children, relatives, the family gods, and dead kin, made up the elements of the family. Kinship, adopted kinship, and family lineages as far back as the composite group could remember: these were the bonds that mattered. *Kispum* was the mechanism by which the dead continued to live on permanently in collective memory.

The living were not abandoned by the long line of ascendants who had passed before. The interconnectedness of the family was renewed and supported with each *kispum*. The ancestral names were invoked, called, remembered, and the deceased asked to be present at the *kispum* meal. Genealogies or lists of names to pronounce at the *kispum* could go back for six or seven generations. This method of commemoration could also have been transmitted orally. *Kispum* was thus an effective means of reaffirming family bonds and a continued heritage of roots deep into distant memory. Written or oral histories in the form of genealogies may have represented family bonds. A name could represent a generation, or even other kinship affiliations. To some extent, this type of recording reflects ancient tribal kinship roots and was probably incorporated early into the belief system of ancient Mesopotamia. Genealogies can also represent fictive kin groups. People were identified with many different roles in ancient Mesopotamian societies. *Kispum* was performed for occupational or skill-based groups, as we have seen, such as glassmakers or religious clergy.

Within the memory of living family members, the recent dead could be remembered with their own personalities. The living family most likely felt some solace at the attempt to succor the dead with drink and food, felt success at being able to provide for them in accordance with the *kispum* that had been performed in the family for years and years. We have seen that this relationship fits with current theories of continued bonds (Klass 2013). Because of this, the living may have looked forward with the security that they would one day be cared for in this way as well. The heirs also knew that, if the family had property, that they were to divide it, and there were familial and probably personal consequences felt if they had not performed the promised *kispum*. On a societal level, a shared ritual tradition also contributed to a cohesive bond in shared religious beliefs. On the family level, providing for the dead was interacting with them, continuing a relationship. On a generational level, *kispum* incorporated the dead and the living into a shared past, present and future.

The *kispum* and its participants certainly invoked the dead by the power of the ritual in a religious and magical sense. The Mesopotamians certainly envisaged a well-developed cosmology, a complex and active world beyond the physical, as I have shown in detail in Chapter 3. The supernatural was filled with gods, spirits,

demons and ghosts. They had their place, but sometimes showed up among the living. Dealing with the deceased and other ineffable beings certainly required a bit of magical belief, and some texts elucidate procedures for magical control of these beings. Small evidences as well for some of these practices could be stones or pebbles, beads of certain colors or materials, clay figures, or other more nondescript artifacts, small things that often defy our explanation. Circles or heaps of flour, for instance, would not be evident in the material record in the ground, but texts explain that not only were they used, they were equated with various deities, thereby made present in the ritual. Each item, including stones, plants, meal, grains, foods, utensils, metals and wool, used in ritual often was correlated to a divine being, as explained in a Babylonian ritual compendium (Livingstone 2007a: 170-187). When visible in the archaeological record, objects such as these may be indicative of an apotropaic or magic ritual action. We have seen some artifacts, such as chair models, stools, and beds that may function similarly, to enable the symbolic transition of the soul to the afterlife, or to recall them into the family's presence.

Calling up dead spirits, (necromancy), usually reserved for certain magico-religious specialists, and sometimes prohibited by law, was associated with witchcraft and sorcery, especially in the later period texts. We have discussed some exorcistic incantations that used magic to transfer an untended ghost to a successful afterlife. The means to settle a strange ghost was to include it in a family *kispum* and provide it with a symbolic funeral and burial. From these types of incantations, translated early in the history of cuneiform decipherment, the notion developed that all human spirits were malevolent. This misunderstood description of the Mesopotamian point of view was a generalization and simplification of the belief system of a complex and sophisticated society. Instead, I have shown that the symbolism of laying to rest the unsettled, non-related ghost of a human who has not received proper burial and *kispum*, can be seen as a materialization of the importance of family identity and family memory.

I have shown that the family valued its dead. There is a differentiation in the ancient texts between demons, evil spirits and the family ghost. The incantation literature against ghost-induced disease is more plentiful in later, first millennium BC sources. In the second millennium BC I have not found much in the texts to

support the idea that the family was concerned in keeping the dead provisioned in order to prevent hostilities. We have seen that archaeological evidence in burials, such as provisions, and things to use in an afterlife, mirrored daily life to some extent. Therefore the dead were expected to make use of these goods in a future existence.

Indeed, invoking the dead in the context of the *kispum* seems to be represented quite differently in the textual material. In it, the deceased were called by name (*zikir šumim)* in a manner that honored them appropriately, brought their spirits into the presence of the family, and allowed the family to provide for them, make them comfortable and interact with them.

We have also seen in Chapter 5 from the menologies and ritual calendars, that *kispum* was a major annual religious festival, the festival of remembrance and provisioning of the dead. The relationship between the dead and the living was broadly and publicly acknowledged. Therefore, while other cultures have been shown to propitiate the dead so that they will not harm the living, I have argued that within the family, *kispum* was something else altogether.

It is clear that the monthly or annual *kispum* rites functioned for the benefit of the living community. When the deceased was also the head of the family, inheritances must be divided and new responsibilities taken on. Sometimes the results of death are tangible in the material remains or the texts. For example, some houses were expanded, altered or separated, as we have discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. Less tangible would be the impact of death from the point of view of human emotion. With Continuing Bonds Theory, I have shown that one purpose of the ritual for the care of the dead was as a beneficiary act for the emotional well being of the living. Very recent research has now shown that continuing relationships with dead family members also involve the belief that the relationship benefits the deceased (Klass, pers. comm.). Remaining family members grieved their lost loved one, experienced the transitional rites, and also benefited from helping the deceased achieve a successful rite of passage into whatever came next in the life cycle. Significantly, family members and perhaps the extended family as well, participated in this cohesive ritual at a time where powerful emotions were taking place. For anyone, the experience of a death is disruptive; it can be painful, unbearably sorrowful, usually evoking strong and long

lasting emotions. That the *kispum* occurred during established periods of mourning, likely engendering intense emotion, has to be considered. When archaeologists interpret a grave, a skeleton, a few pots or beads in an inhumation, the emotional burden of that death must be considered. And each death in the family was either a diminishing or a strengthening of the family, and in the wider sense of the relatives, for several generations.

I have posited that new theories of grief resolution in Death and Dying Studies show that many Mesopotamian families actually continued before-death relationships with the deceased. Various factors in these studies, such as religious belief in an afterlife, closeness of the bond, age of the deceased and survivor, have been shown to affect the quality, duration and intensity of the after-death relationship (Chapter 2). The *kispum*, then, served in the ancient context for dealing with the many human reactions to family death.

As we have seen in various forms of evidence, Mesopotamian identity had a strong communal family-based form. I have shown in this study how the Mesopotamian identity was bound, not individually, but communally within the reality of the family. Human life, in their worldview, was interwoven with the lives of spirits, beings and gods in a multi-tiered cosmos, as we have seen in Chapter 3. The Mesopotamian family understood its place in the universe by measure of their mooring post, the family lineage.

We have examined in Chapter 4 evidence that proves that some individuals and their children were remembered by name for several generations. Some of these lineages are from merchant and priestly families attested in documents found in their houses. Without documents, oral recitations at *kispum* ceremonies could easily preserve the names of long lines of forebearers. Some specific groups, such as clergy or craft groups, continued remembrance of their dead through *kispum* rites, which strengthened and bound group membership. We have seen a case study of an ancient merchant family (Chapter 5) whose accounting texts gave new information about ancient funerals and demonstrated the close bonds of the trading community in Kanish.

In cases of intramural burial, the living were also physically bound to their deceased who occupied a world below. Situating the dead beneath house floors and continuing to use the rooms above the graves does not seem to support the

idea of hostile and feared family ghosts Symbolically, the idea of the family can be represented as the House. The living and the dead were firmly situated in their places in the cosmos, but ritually could continue their relationship. Intramural graves and ritual spaces in the houses at Ur (Chapter 6) clearly demonstrate the symbolism of keeping the dead in close proximity to the family in domestic spaces.

With newer excavations in northern Mesopotamia over the last two decades, a renewed discussion of mobile and urban interactions of tribal groups has begun, including mortuary behavior. Mesopotamians may have begun their tradition of family mortuary rites in tribal, rural, or village groups, or as clans which reverenced their ancestral leaders and family ancestors, long before urbanization and the appearance of written *kispum* texts. Placement of the dead in the earth began the transition from the upper to the lower world and the afterlife. With mobile groups where the dead were placed in a fixed spot, the remembrance ritual itself could suffice to tend the spirit anywhere. Similarly, urban or extra-urban cemetery burial should not prohibit the effectiveness of a *kispum* performed by sedentary families. Hopefully, more second millennium cemetery burial evidence can be found to further this study of family *kispum*.

Further studies may continue to modify the view that ancestors in Mesopotamia were created solely for political and economic reasons. We cannot conclude that written genealogies or lists of forebearers indicate the only predecessors that were regarded as ancestors or remembered in *kispum*. However, I can propose that further investigations take another point of view. For much of the population, the idea of predecessors demonstrated a worldview that conceived of linkages 'across the ages', and served as the foundation of Mesopotamian identity. Lineage, bound up in cosmological imagery, could have rooted families to ongoing and ancient forebearers, either real, fictive or a combination of both. While this deeper meaning was embedded in religious belief, it played out in mortuary ritual. The practice of *kispum* was what mattered; the *doing* of it materialized family bonds and seated family identity deep into the past.

Approaching Mesopotamian archaeology with newer interdisciplinary theories shows that issues of emotion and belief can be incorporated into these analyses. I have shown in this study that emotional bonds and a continuity of family identity resided in the repetition of ritual actions, not the burial style or

grave goods. Thus, *kispum* formalized continued emotional interaction as an accepted practice. The bonds with the deceased that continued after life were not apotropaic, nor merely acts of honoring dead ancestors, but instead were cohesive and dynamic for group identity. I think the ritual consolidated self-perception, or who people thought they were, and how they made meaning for themselves in the world of gods, spirits and men. This view of *kispum* also takes into account human emotion. Mesopotamians remained closely intertwined with those who had come before.

Other avenues for further research using Continuing Bonds Theory could be pursued along several lines. More correlations in regional material, specific to the first half of the second millennium should be done to investigate the presence of post-interment rites, whether at intramural or cemetery gravesites. Ancient Near Eastern archaeology can continue to incorporate theory from anthropology and ritual studies to form conclusions about evidence from excavations. Archaeologists working in northern Mesopotamia have made great strides in approaching interpretations of their excavations with newer applications of such theories. Additional studies could correlate material from the older excavation data, such as Brusasco and Stone have demonstrated, to investigate new ideas of family relationships, and non-elite populations. And hopefully, excavations will once again produce new evidence from the conflict zones of the modern Middle East, and new archaeological methods will discern new evidence for *kispum* rituals.

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