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A study of terminology of the Netherworld in Sumero-Akkadian Literature (1)

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Key Words: Cosmogony/Cosmology, Netherworld, Earth

1. Principles of Word AnalysisSummary

The classical work on the terms associated with the Netherworld, the 1934 study by K. Tallqvist¹, remains the most comprehensive study on this subject. However, this work has become outdated in view of additional texts now available to us, and due to the fact that Tallqvist does not give serious attention to linguistic considerations, such as semantic and syntactic studies. We will return to this subject later.

The organization of the material and terms, whether alphabetical, lexicographical or historical, can be a problem in word study. Tallqvist started with *qabru* "grave" as the natural site of the dwelling of the dead. He followed it with *kigallu* and *arallû*, general terms for the Netherworld. He then finished with the more unfamiliar words. There is no single preferred method for presenting the lexical entries, since each possibility has advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, we feel that it is best to begin with the terms which are more familiar and well-attested to in the various literatures in both dimensions, time and space. Taking this as a general rule we still cannot avoid making some arbitrary choices.

The largest problem encountered in a word study is how to define

and analyze each term, because certain meanings of each sign² are determined differently by a system of the language. In order to formulate the problem, the application of modern linguistic method is beneficial. Linguistically, the principles used for this study of the terminology of the Netherworld are summarized as followed.

1.1. Arbitrariness of sign

The basic definition of a sign, more precisely of morpheme, is represented by the relationship between the smallest unit signifying meaning; the moneme, and the smallest differentiating phone, the phoneme. The relationship may be formulated thus:

$$\text{morpheme (sign)} = \frac{\text{moneme}}{\text{phonemes}^3}$$

Sign does not have an intentional relationship between signifier and signified, that is, sign is arbitrary to moneme and phoneme. The sound of a word (its phonemes) corresponds to a certain meaning (moneme), even though it is arbitrary, for example, /ki/ conveys the meaning of "earth, underground, land, soil, place, the Netherworld."

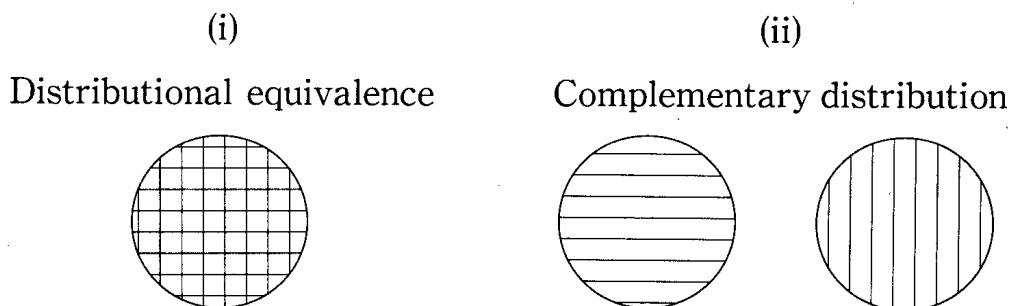
1.2. Context of situation

As stated, meaning is not an idea given beforehand, but a value produced by the balance of the whole system of language. The balance of the whole system or context is determined by a certain situation (code); in our case, the "code" includes (1) cosmogony/cosmology; (2) theological implication; (3) socio-psychological aspect; (4) geographical representation; (5) literary environment⁴. For example, in the phrase NIBUR.DUR.AN.KI the receiver decodes the message of the sender by

utilizing the code they have in common: “Nippur, the bond of heaven and earth.” In this case both the sender and the receiver figure out that KI denotes the “cosmic earth” including the “Netherworld” in the individual meanings, the “earth,” the “ground,” and the “Netherworld,” through the code of the cosmology and the literary environment; that is, the Sumero-Akkadian cosmology, the pair AN and KI represents “heaven and earth” and in its literature NIBUR.DUR.AN.KI becomes an inseparable literary unit.

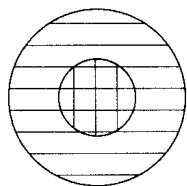
1.3. Distribution of meaning

Every linguistic unit (below the level of the sentence) is more or less restricted in the number of contexts in which it can occur, *i.e.*, it has a characteristic semantic distribution. If two units occur in the same range of contexts, they are called distributional equivalent; if they have no contexts in common they are in complementary distribution. Two other possible relationships between two units are that the distribution of one unit includes the distribution of another, or that the distribution of two units overlaps. All four categories can be illustrated as follows⁵:



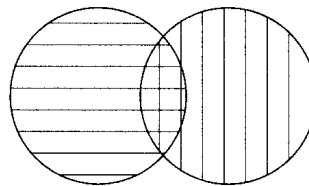
(iii)

Distributional inclusion



(iv)

Overlapping distribution



These distributions of meaning are determined by the condition of context or the capacity of distribution of the units themselves. Let's take KI as an example to demonstrate the notion of distribution in relation to the balance of the system of the language. First, we check the capacity of distribution of each word⁶. KI carries many meanings, such as "earth," "Netherworld," "land," "ground," "district," or "place." In "Nippur, the bond of heaven and earth," the word "earth" is the cosmic earth, and KI obviously includes the notion of the Netherworld in this context. Therefore, we can say that in terms of the distribution of meaning the idea "earth" is related by distributional inclusion to the idea "Netherworld" in the phrase "Nippur, the bond of heaven and earth." In the sentence, *Ištar ana KI-tim urid ul ilâ* "Ishtar went down into the Netherworld (but) did not come up" (*Ishtar's Descent* 85), the notion of "Netherworld" for KI (= *eršetim*) is extended, rather than the meaning "(cosmic) earth." In other words, KI is given a legitimate position as distributional equivalent to the notion "Netherworld." On the other hand, KI in the phrase *KI-tim bīt Anum ša qereb Uruk*, "the district 'Temple of Anu' which is in Uruk," has either a quite remote association or no direct relationship with the notion of "Netherworld." We thus recognize here either an overlapping distribution or a complementary distribution.

The ordinary translations of KUR are “mountain,” “foreign country or country” and “Netherworld.” Here we go beyond the meanings of each word and investigate the relationship among KUR, KI, and ABZU. In the English language we do not see any relationship between KUR “mountain” or KI “earth, and the Netherworld.” They seem to be in relationship of complementary distribution. However, when we take such factors as their cosmology, geography and socio-psychology into consideration, KUR shares distributional inclusion or equivalence with KI.

an ki-ta ba-da-bad-du-a-ba

ki an-ta ba-da-sur-ra-a-ba

mu-nam-lú-u_x(GIŠ.GAL)-lu ba-an-gar-ra-a-ba

lu₄ an-né an ba-an-túm-a-ba

^den-líl-le ki ba-an-túm-a-ba

^derš-ki-gal-la-ra kur-ra sag-rig₇-bi-šè im-ma-ab-rig₇-a-ba

“When heaven (AN) had separated from earth (KI),

When earth had been separated from heaven,

When the name of man had been fixed,

When An had carried off heaven,

When Enlil had carried off earth,

When to Ereshkigal they had given the Netherworld (KUR) as a gift.”

Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld 8-13.⁷

There is no question that KUR signifies the “Netherworld” through its code of cosmogony, relating to the trichotomy of the cosmos (AN, KI, KUR), as described in these sentences.

The “land of no return,” the literal translation of KUR.NU.GI₄.A:

māt lā târi, gains distributional equivalence with the notion of the Netherworld, even though KUR is translated “land” by Akkadian *mātu*, because KUR is restricted by the following modifier NU.GI₄.A “of no return.” As a matter of fact, KUR.NU.GI₄.A always appears together with the literary theme representing the Netherworld.

ABZU belongs to a mythological concept, perhaps “mythologem,” denoting “deep water, cosmic water” underneath the earth. The word itself is in distributional equivalence, or perhaps more in distributional inclusion, with the notion of the Netherworld.

1.4. Basic format of a word study

In this paper, the principles of word analysis has been examined by through linguistic considerations to clarify principles. By establishing the distribution of meaning of each word exemplified as we deal with the notion “Netherworld,” we have sought to eliminate vagueness of meaning as much as possible. Therefore, the two levels should be clearly separated in our word study.

a. Individual meaning of word

Here, we treat the distribution of meanings implicit in individual word level of meanings. At this level, each meaning is primarily situated in a complementary distribution, such as KUR “mountain” and the “Netherworld.” However, the sign KI, meaning the “earth,” “ground,” and the “Netherworld” shows the distributional inclusion or equivalence by its nature. In the sign ABZU “sweet water of the earth,” “deep water,” and the “Netherworld” obviously both meanings “deep water” and “Netherworld” are put in the distributional inclusion.

b. “Netherworld” in a sentence level

We treat the distribution of meanings in their sentence level. This

involves the investigation of the distribution of meaning in the contexts where the phrase occurs, for example:

ga-ša-an uru₁₆-gal-DU.DU-mèn a é-an-na a gi₆-par₄-kù

ù-tuk-é-mu é an-ta ki-a gub-ba-mu

ma-[x]-mu še-eb an-ú-ta ki gi₄-ra-mu

“I am the lady who roams the Netherworld.

Oh Eanna! Oh holy Gipar!

My house which stands from the very heavens upon the earth!

My brickwork which sinks below the earth at the horizon!”

Ershemma 32:9-11⁸

Here the Netherworld, the earth and below the earth are translations of URU₁₆(EN).GAL and KI respectively. In this *Ershemma* hymn, Inanna laments the destruction of the Eanna (Inanna’s temple in Uruk) and the Gipar (a part of Eanna’s temple where the *en*-priest and *entu*-priestess dwell). The destruction is a result of Inanna’s disappearance from the earth due to her capture by her sister Ereshkigal in the Netherworld. The theme that the god or goddess’s disappearance from the earth to the Netherworld causes disaster on the earth is a familiar motif in ancient Mesopotamian literature, appearing in texts such as *Inanna’s (Ishtar’s) Descent*, the *Lamentations over the Destruction of Ur*, and the *Epic of Erra*. It is clear that URU₁₆.GAL in the phrase “Inanna who roams URU₁₆.GAL” is to be translated into English as the “Netherworld.” Here URU₁₆.GAL is equated with the representation of the Netherworld /urugal/ in the literary context rather than with the grave /urugal/ which is a very frequent translation for URU₁₆.GAL⁹.

“My house which stands from the heaven upon the earth,” the

translation of é an-ta ki-a gub-ba-mu, contains the cosmological dichotomy, heaven and earth, which is the most common separation of the cosmos in Mesopotamia. KI comes to convey the meaning “earth” in contrast to AN “heaven.” The earth in this dichotomy is inclusive of the Netherworld, rather than being only the domain of the living.

As above, KI in the phrase še-eb an-úr-ta a ki gi₄-ra-mu is given meaning in contrast to AN.UR “horizon,” even though GI₄.RA is not certain. Let’s take another example:

gîr kur-ra-ke₄ nu-mu-un-gar-re-e-ne e-sîr kur-ra-ke₄
 nu-mu-um-da-dib-ne-e-ne: šēp ana KI-tim [īšakkanu] sūlē
 KI-ti ul i[ttiḫū]

“They (the demons) cannot set foot in the Netherworld, can not walk the streets of the Netherworld.”

Here the Sumerian KUR is translated by Akkadian *eršetu* (or KI^{tim}). KUR and *eršetu* are selected in comparison both with other words for the Netherworld, such as KI, É.KUR.ÚŠ, A.RA.LI, KUR.NU.GI₄.A etc. in Sumerian, and šadû, irkallu, kigallu etc. in Akkadian.

When KI occurs in contrast with AN in context (mostly a cosmological context), it definitely includes the Netherworld. KI “earth” is in a relationship of distributional inclusion with KI “Netherworld.” The series of AN, KI, KUR cited above, depicting cosmogony, clarifies two distinctive distributions. One is that KI designates the earth as a surface rather than the entire earth including the Netherworld. The other clarification is that KUR no longer means “mountain,” but the “Netherworld.” In this case KUR “mountain” is in a relationship of distributional equivalence with KUR “Netherworld.”

KUR. NU.GI₄.A, “land of no return” is a term referring to the

Netherworld, as a phrase, and the unit lies within the context of the reality experienced in ordinary life as well as the context of a literary theme. Therefore, KUR is equated definitely with the Netherworld. In this case KUR is not mountain“ or “land,” or the “surface of the earth.” Here KUR.NU.GI₄.A shows the relationship of distributional equivalence with the Netherworld.

Furthermore, we must address the problems brought about by translating either from Akkadian to Sumerian or vice versa. This matter will require a further study.

2. Sumerian

The quantity of Sumerian vocabulary referring to the Netherworld is very scanty in comparison to the quantity in Akkadian. This derives from the fact that the Sumerian vocabulary conveys a much wider semantic distribution than does Akkadian, which is the more analytical language. The differences between Hebrew and Greek can provide an analogy to explain the semantic difference between Sumerian and Akkadian. The fact that many words show a very wide semantic range raises some difficulties in defining them in our own languages.

2.1. KUR¹⁰

In Sumerian literature, KI and KUR are considered to be the most common candidates to represent the Netherworld. However, we start with KUR for three reasons: 1. KUR designates the underworld in the sense of the so-called Netherworld whereas KI often describes the totality of the earth, including the Netherworld¹¹; 2. Akkadian lexical

references favor as the prime term KUR and its combined forms¹² to designate the “Netherworld,” even though the Akkadian translation of Sumerian KUR often represents *eršetum* (KI-*tum*)¹³; 3. the principal compositions dealing with the other world (such as *Inanna’s Descent* and *Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld*) often use KUR to represent the abode of the dead.

a. Word level¹⁴

- 1) mountain
- 2) (foreign) land
- 3) Netherworld

The pictographic ideogram of KUR illustrates, without doubt, mountain or mountain range. From the geographical point of view of Sumer it can also mean a foreign country situated toward the eastern mountain range, notably Elam in modern Iran¹⁵, an historical enemy of the Sumero-Akkadian geographical area up to the present day.

The notion of “foreign land” comprises “inimical land,” for historical reasons, and furthermore implies the “Netherworld.” How can the sign KUR, meaning mountain,” share its semantic range with the sign KUR, signifying the “Netherworld”? There seems to be no semantic relationship between mountain and the Netherworld. The response to such an enigmatic question can be explained by a linguistic approach. Linguistically such semantic association of KUR between mountain and the Netherworld is categorized in three different areas.

First, KUR as a sign meaning, “mountain” and the “Netherworld” is not associated semantically in our sense (paradigmatically). In other words, KUR, “mountain”, lies in complementary distribution with the “Netherworld,” that is KUR = mountain and KUR = the Nether-

world.

Secondly, KUR as “mountain” shares similar elements which build up a picture of KUR the “Netherworld.” An edge of the cosmos that the Sun rises from, the mountain range¹⁶ is an exit from the Netherworld where the sun stays in his chamber during the night. This fact functions as a code of cosmology¹⁷ which raises a semantic commonality between sign, “mountain” and symbol¹⁸, the “Netherworld.” The mountain range is situated in the geographically far foreign and inimical country the same as is the image of the Netherworld. This socio-psychological code (far distant and enemy to Sumerians) is the other factor developing the link between the sign KUR “mountain” to the symbol KUR the “Netherworld.”¹⁹ In this stage KUR “mountain” has an overlapping distribution to the “Netherworld” through the above codes.

Finally, KUR the “Netherworld” as the symbol becomes independent from the sign, “mountain.” At this point KUR lies in distributional equivalence with the Netherworld. In other words KUR does not imply “mountain” at all, for example KUR.NU.GI₄.A, “land of no return,” in which KUR retains no sense of mountain but refers exclusively to the Netherworld.

Another issue we must address is how the semantic distinction is implemented paradigmatically between KUR and HUR.SAG. By and large, the distinction between KUR and HUR.SAG is not problematic in most Sumerian passages and compositions²⁰: KUR represents “the land of the mountains,” while HUR.SAG is the “mountain range,”²¹ emphasis falls upon “land” or “mountain.”²² The lexical references point out the above distinction between KUR and HUR.SAG, that is, in general Sumerian KUR can be translated as Akkadian *mātu*,²³ “land” and *šadû*, “mountain,” whereas HUR.SAG is translated only as *šadû*. As far as

semantic distribution is concerned, they share the idea “mountain” in the overlapping distribution. This fact produces semantic confusion in Akkadian literature²⁴.

Another issue raised by the term KUR is the so-called concept of Sumerian *Weltberg*, a cosmic mountain. This concept of mountain is a quite common theological perception in the North West Semitic literatures, such as Ugaritic. Does it exist in Sumero-Akkadian literature? KUR.GAL, “great mountain,” a typical epithet of Enlil, is a possible candidate, but it is more likely that HUR.SAG is the term relevant to this issue, which is addressed later.

b. Sentence level²⁵

- (1) en-e kur-lú-ti-la-šè geštú-ga-ni na-an-gub
 en-^dgilgameš-e kur-lú-ti-la-šè geštú-ga-ni na-an-gub
 “The lord to the land of the living set his mind,
 The lord Gilgamesh to the land of the living set his mind”

Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living 1-2.²⁶

- (2) lugal-mu tukum-bi kur-ra i-in-tu-dè-en
^dutu hé-me-da-an-zu
^dutu šul-^dutu hé-me-da-an-zu
 kur-ra dí-ma-bi ^dutu-kam
 kur-^{giš}erin-kud dí-ma-bi šul-^dutu-kam
 utu hé-ma-da-an-zu
 “My lord, if you would to in the land, let Utu know,
 Let Utu, the hero Utu, know,
 The land, it is Utu’s work,
 The...cedar land, it is Utu’s work, let Utu know”

Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living 9-12.

Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living is a composition belonging to the Sumerian literary “cycle” of Gilgamesh. According to Kramer’s translation, KUR here is regarded as “land of Dilmun.”²⁷ In this epic the mythographer makes clear distinctions among AN, KI, KUR, and KUR.SAG. Reference (1) above reminds us of the beginning of *Inanna’s Descent*²⁸ which is set within a cosmological context. We would say that here (1) kur-lú-ti-la suggests also the cosmological sense of KUR modified by lú-ti-la “of the living.” If so, KUR shares the semantic range of the Netherworld, an overlapping distribution, through the code of the cosmology as well as the common literary theme by which the epic narrates man’s anxiety about death and his search for immortality.

Reference (3) associates Utu with KUR, a link which derives primarily from the cosmological context in terms of the Netherworld. We may say that this is not a case in which the Sun is directly associated cosmologically with KUR. We cannot, however, miss the strong tie between KUR and Sun-god that facilitates the overlapping distribution between KUR and the Netherworld through the code of the cosmology and literary theme which predominates throughout in the tale.

- (3) lú-uzu-da an-šè nu-mu-un-da-lá
lú-dagal-la kur-ra la-ba-an-šú-šú
“Man, the tallest, cannot stretch to heaven,
Man, the widest, cannot cover the Netherworld”

Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living 28-28.

The cosmological contrast between AN and KUR is rather unusual, in that most often the pair of cosmological separation is described by

that of AN and KI²⁹. So, Kramer translates KUR into “the earth” without any comment in his work on this text and translation³⁰. The semantic range of Sumerian KUR, however, does not imply “earth” even though KUR would belong to a part of the earth. Reference (3) tries to express the edge of both heaven and the Netherworld. But the author clearly acknowledges the trichotomy of the cosmos in another passage of the same text: reference (4) AN, KI and KUR.

- (4) ^dgilgameš zi-an-na mu-un-pād zi-ki-a mu-un-pād
zi-kur-ra mu-un-pād

“Gilgamesh swore by the life of heaven, life of earth, life
of the Netherworld”

Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living 150.

- (5) u₄ an-né an ba-an-túm-a-ba
^den-líl-le ki ba-an-túm-a-ba
^dereš-ki-gal-la-ra kur-ra sag-rig₇-bi-šè im-ma-ab-rig₇-a-ba

“When An had taken away heaven,
When Enlil had taken away earth,
And when to Ereshkigal they had given the Netherworld
as a gift”

Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld 11-13.

- (6) nin-mu an mu-un-sub ki mu-un-sub kur-ra ba-e-a-e₁₁
^dinanna an mu-un-sub ki mu-un-sub kur-ra ba-e-a-e₁₁

“My lady abandoned heaven, abandoned earth, into the
Netherworld she went down,
Inanna abandoned heaven, abandoned earth, into the
Netherworld she went down”

Inanna's Descent 4-5.

These references (4), (6), without a doubt, illustrate the trichotomy of the cosmos: AN, KI, KUR: heaven, earth and the Netherworld respectively. The cosmological dichotomy, An “heaven” and KI, “earth” will be a subject of discussion under our entry KI. What is clear here is that KUR equates to the Netherworld in these texts; that is, in terms of our principle, the semantic environment of KUR here holds a distributional equivalence with the Netherworld and a complementary distribution with AN and KI through the code of the cosmology/cosmogony they conceptualize.

- (7) EN-bānda ^dereš-ki-gal-la-ke₄ nin₉-a-ni
šū mu-un-na-ni-me-en
kū-zu-mu egi ga-ša-an-gir-gi₄-lu kur-ta nam-ta-è
“The...Ereshkigal, caused her sister to go about (freely).
My experienced one, the princess Ningirgilu, came out
from the Netherworld”
Ershemma 79:37-38.

This *Ershemma* could be based on a theme derived from Inanna’s Descent. Here Ningirgilu, identified with Inanna, is held captive in the Netherworld. In agreement with the code of theology, Ereshkigal presides over the underworld as the queen of the Netherworld; the other code of literary environment is Inanna’s detention in the land of Ereshkigal, thus indicating the semantic range of KUR as a distributional equivalence to the Netherworld.

- (8) [mu-l]u-zu alim-e kur-ĀŠ ba-u₅
[guruš?-z]u alim-e kur-ĀŠ ba-u₅
“The bison has transported your [man] to the mountains,

The bison has transported yo[ur young man] to the
mountains”

Ershemma 60:25-27.

This reference belongs to an *Ershemma* to Dumuzi in which Inanna searches for her dead husband. According to Jacobsen’s interpretation, the bison roaming around the foot of mountains is the symbol of the powers of death³². In this case we had better translate KUR as “mountains” corresponding to the “bison” even though the “mountains” represents the “Netherworld.” The semantic relationship between the mountain and the other world lies in the distributional equivalence through the code of the literary environment.

KUR occurs also in the epithets of gods in the Netherworld, such as Nergal: ^den-líl-ku-ra “Enlil of the Netherworld,” and Ninazu: nun-kur-ra-ke₄-ne “Princes of the Netherworld.”³³ In these cases KUR explicitly denotes the Netherworld through the code of the theology.

A common expression for the cosmos is associated with the underworld: kur-utu-the “land of sunrise, east.”³⁴ This expression is equivalent with: ki-^dutu--a the “place where the sun rises.”³⁵ Semantically the latter will be an extension of the former or a generalization. Whereas the former describes the boundary of the cosmos, KUR represents the edge of the Netherworld, through the code of geography as well as cosmology.

KUR occurs in phrases, such as kur-ûn(BÂD)-na, kur-nu-gi₄-a, kur-gal.

2.1.1. kur-ûn(BÂD)-na

- (9) ur-sag mē igi-gál-tag₄-a kur-ûn-na ì-a-è
^dnin-gi-zi-da mē igi-gál-tag₄-a kur-ûn-na ì-a-è

lugal ki-gu-la á-ág-gá túm ki-túm-bi túm-mu-dè

šul-dingir-tuku ki á-ág-gá-ni igi-bi ma-ra-si-gál

“Hero, who after he opened his eyes on the battle goes
forth to the high mountain,

Ningizida, who after he opened eyes on the battle, goes
forth to the high mountain.

King, who issues the instruction in the great place (= the
Netherworld), you bring the grave,

Young man, who has a god, in front of the place of his
advice he is there for you”

*TCL XV 25 30-33.*³⁶

(10) in-di in-di gaba-kur-kur-[šè]

[u₄]-zal-e u₄-zal-e kur-ùn-na-š[è]

*illik išēt ana irat eršeti*³⁷

uštabarre ana eršeti mītūti

“He went, went to the edge of the Netherworld,

The day passed, the day passed in the land of the dead”

*IV R² 30 2 22-25.*³⁸

According to *MSL* II 87; *MSL* III 213f., kur-ùn(BÂD)-na = hur-sag-ùn-na/da = [šadû elû as well as *eršetu mītūti*. In terms of the semantic range, kur-ùn (BÂD)-na almost corresponds to reference (8) but through a code of theology corresponds to (9) and through a code of cosmology, to (10).

2.1.2. kur-nu-gi₄-a

(11) tukum-bi za-e ^dinanna ki-^d utu-è-a-š

a-na-àm ba-du-un kur-nu-gi₄-sè

har-ra-an lù-du-bi nu-gi₄-gi₄-dè šà-zu a-gim tùm-mu-un

“If you are Inanna (going) toward the place where the sun
rises,

Why do you come to the land of no return?

To the road where travellers return not what desire has
led you?

Inanna's Descent 81-83.

- (12) [u₄]-bi-a ga-ša-an-e nu-un-ti kur-[nu-gi₄-a-šè]
ki-bi-[gar-na mu-un-sum]
dam-ušum-gal--an-na-ka mu-un-ti ki-bi-gar-na mu-un-
[sum]

“On that [day] the queen did not save his life, she [gave
him over] to the land of no return [as her substi]-
tute

The spouse of Ushumgalanna did not save his life, she
[gave him over] as her substitute”

Death of Dumuzi 51-52.

In terms of the reality of the after life, no one returns from the Netherworld. This reality of human beings reflects upon literary work in Sumero-Akkadian literature as a common theme: Inanna in the other realm (11) and Dumuzi as Inanna's substitute in the Netherworld (12) as well. In the above references kur-nu-gi₄-a is equivalent to the Netherworld without any question.

2.1.3. kur-gal

- (13) ke-en-gi kur-gal ma-da an-ki

“Sumer, the great land, the country of heaven and earth”

UMBS X² 1 III 11.

The phrase kur-gal “great mountain” is well attested, and it occurs typically as an epithet of Enlil. It suggests the concept of *Weltberg*³⁹. It also appears as a common expression of the cosmic representations as in the above reference.

The other usage of KUR is KUR modified by a particular adjective which implies the sense of the Netherworld. These must be separated from the compound word that represents the concept of Netherworld as a unit, for example kur-sig and kur-gul-gul.

2.1.4. kur-sig

- (14) ki-ul kur-sig galam-e gar-ra
itima ki-huš šà-túm-ma ri-a
su-zi a-rá-mah lú nu-pà-dè
“Faraway/eternal place, ‘deep mountain,’ founded in art-
ful fashion,

Dark cell, furious place, lying on a field,
Awe, lofty way no one can find”

TCS III TH No.15 187-89.

- (15) ab-zu⁴⁰ bára-kù-ga gal-bi túm-ma-zu
kur-sig itima-kú ki-ní-te-en-te-en-zu
é-kur é-za-gìn ki-dúr-mah ní-gûr-ru-zu
“Abzu has made yourself greatly for the holy dias,
The deep mountain, holy cella, is the place where you
refresh yourself,
Ekur, the brightening house, is your great dwelling, which
is clad in fearsomeness”

SGL I 14-15,75-77.

In these references kur-sig occurs in relation with ITIMA, “dark

room.”⁴¹ As shown by the references, kur-sig does not primarily have the sense of the Netherworld, whereas in the hymn (14) dedicated to Ningishzida, son of Ninazu (who is the Ereshkigal’s husband in one tradition, ITIMA represents an underground sanctuary.⁴² So kur-sig here has an overlapping distribution in the semantic range through the code of theology.

2.1.5. kur-gul-gul

- (16) kû-zu-mu egí ga-ša-an-gir-gi₄-lu
kur-gul-gul mu-gi₁₇-ib ga-ša-an-na
egí-zi-mu ga-ša-an-mûš-a-ra

“My expert, the princess Ningirgilu,
The devastatrix of the mountain, the hierodule, Inanna,
My faithful princess, the lady of the Emush”

Ershemma 79: 2-4.

- (17) mu-gig-an-na gašan-an-na-ke₄
kur-gul-gul gašan-hur-sag-kalama-ke₄

“The hierodule of heaven, Inanna,
The devastatrix of the mountain, the lady of Hursag-
kalamma”

Ershemma 59 A 3-4.

Both references (16) and (17) derive from the *Ershemma* of Inanna whose detention in the Netherworld by Ereshkigal or lament for purification are presupposed in the text. In these texts kul-gul-gul the “mountain-destroyer” functions as an epithet of Inanna and may imply the underworld in a semantic range through the literary environment; a tradition in Inanna’s *Descent*.

2.1.6. kur-idim

- (18) udug hul a-lā hul gidim hul gal₅-lā hul kur-ta im-ta-è
du₆-kū kur-idim-ta šà-im-ta-è

“The evil Udug, evil Ala, evil ghost, and evil Galla-demons
came out of the Netherworld,

From the holy mound - the distant mountain - they emerged (from its) midst”

Udug hul 768f.⁴³

kur-idim is *šad nagbu* “mountain of the primordial source.”⁴⁴ In this sense kur-idim is a synonym for the Apsu. Since du₆-kū is also a synonym for the Apsu⁴⁵, kur-idim is parallel to du₆-kū from where the demons come out.

2.2. KI⁴⁶

In Sumerian one of the most frequent representations of KI along with KUR is the substance below the surface of the earth. It is almost equivalent to Akkadian *eršetū*, which is proved by the lexical references. The four articulations of the paradigm of the word KI can be seen.

a. Word level

- 1) earth
- 2) the Netherworld
- 3) ground/land⁴⁷
- 4) place

As shown in previous examples, the sign KI displays distributional

inclusion or equivalence to the Netherworld by its nature. What is clear here is that the meaning “earth” includes the “Netherworld,” “land” and “place” or it equates with them. In other words, the semantic range of the “Netherworld,” “land” and “place” are specifications of the “earth.” The formula could be “earth > the Netherworld > ground > place.”⁴⁸

b. Sentence level

1) Earth

- (19) an ki-ta ba-da-bad-rá-a-ba
ki an-ta ba-da-su-ra-a-ba

“When heaven had been moved away from the earth
When the earth had been separated from heaven.”

Gilgamesh, Enkidu and Netherworld 8-9

- (20) ga-ša-an-uru₁₆(EN)-gal-DU.DU-mèn a é-an-na a gi₄-par₄-kù
ù-tuk-é-mu é an-ta ki-a gub-ba-mu
ma-[x]-mu še-eb an-úr-ta ki gi₄-ra-mu

“I am the lady who roams the Netherworld. Oh Eanna!
Oh holy gipar.

...my house! My house which stands from the sky (down)
into the earth!”⁴⁹

...my brickwork which sinks below the earth at the horizon!”

Ershemma 32: 9-11.

- (21) zi-an-na zi-ki-a ì-pà-dè-zé-en za-zu-da hé-en-da-lal
an ^den-líl zi-an-na zi-ki-a ì-pà-dè-zé-en za-da-ne-ne im-da-lal
níg-gilim-ma-li-ta-e₁₁-dè im-ma-ra-e₁₁-dè

“You here have sworn by the life’s breath of heaven the

life's breath of earth, that he verily is allied with
you yourself;
Your here, An Enlil, have sworn by the life's breath of
heaven, the life's breath of earth, that he is allied
with all of you,
He will disembark the small animals that come up from
the earth!"

Sumerian flood story (vi) 251-253.

In these references (19-21) KI means the cosmic earth, rather than specifying the Netherworld or the ground. The first three references occur in the context of cosmology or cosmogony; in other words, the meaning of KI is defined by its relationship with AN, that is the other upper half of the cosmos: heaven. When ever KI appears in this context, it means the entire bottom half of the cosmos, that is, the earth, including the Netherworld.

This understanding of the universe is to be extended to literary phrases, such as nibru dur-an-ki, "Nippur, the bond of heaven and earth." In creation texts the AN-KI frame, the dichotomy of the cosmos, is quite a common observation regarding the universe. Of course this view of the universe as being dichotomous is a common viewpoint of the cosmos, not only in the ancient Near East, but also worldwide. The other common view of the structure of the universe is one of trichotomy.

- (22) u₄ an-né an ba-an-túm-a-ba
 ^den-líl-le ki ba-an-túm-a-ba
 ^dereš-ki-gal-la-ra kur-ra sag-rig₇-bi-šè
 im-na-ab-rig₇-a-ba

“When An had taken away heaven,
When Enlil had taken away earth,
And when to Ereshkigal they had given the Netherworld
as a gift”

Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld 11-13.

- (23) nin-mu an mu-un-šub ki mu-un-šub kur-ra ba-e-a-e₁₁
^d inanna an mu-un-šub ki mu-un-šub kur-ra ba-e-a-e₁₁
“My lady abandoned heaven, abandoned earth, into the
Netherworld she went down,
Inanna abandoned heaven, abandoned earth, into the
Netherworld she went down”

Inanna's Descent 4-5.

Both cosmological texts (22-23) indicate three different segments constructing the cosmos: AN, KI, and KUR, which we conventionally translate “heaven,” “earth,” and the “Netherworld” respectively. Apparently the semantic distribution of KI in these texts is different from that of the dichotomous segment of AN and KI (18-21) even though we still use the same word “earth” in the both cases. The texts (22-23) are more limited in their semantic range than the previous references. Therefore, KI and KUR are set in a complementary distribution in this usage. KI and KUR take their domains independently in the code of cosmogony or cosmology.

What we must notice here is the fact that the views of the dichotomous and trichotomous separation of the cosmos are not contradictory. In a few major texts dealing with the Netherworld, two sets of description of the cosmogony, the dichotomous and trichotomous cosmos, are harmonized as a literary unit making an introductory section of the major literature on the Netherworld⁵¹.

2) The Netherworld

(24) enegi^{ki} a-pa₄-gal a-pa₄-ki-a ^dereš-ki-gal-la-ka

“Enegi, clay-pipe, great clay-pipe of the Netherworld,
which belongs to Ereshkigal”

TCS III No.14. 179.

There is not doubt that KI here denotes the underworld in terms of two definite codes, geography and mythological tradition. Enegi is often regarded as a city where Ereshkigal, queen of the Netherworld, dwells. The semantic distribution of KI with the Netherworld here is in a distributional equivalence.

In many cases KI represents the other half of the lower part of the cosmos as a result of explanatory modifications being added to KI, such as ki-nam-tar, ki-gal, ki-ul, ki-ùr.

2.2.1. ki-nan-tar

(25) nam-ùš nì-dùg-dingir-ra-kam ki-nam-tar-ra...

“Death is the favor of the gods, the place where the fate is
decreed...”

Two Elegies on a Pushkin Museum Tablet 68.

(26) ^dutu-en(?) -gal-a-ra-li-ke₄

ki-ku₁₀-ku₁₀ u₄-sè ù-mu-ni-in-ku₄ di-ku₅-zu ì-ku₅-dè

^dnanna-a u₄-ná-a man-zu hé-tar-re

“Utu, the great lord(?) of Arali,

After he has turned the dark place to light, will judge your
judgement,

May Nanna decree your destiny on the 'day of sleep'”

Two Elegies on a Pushkin Museum Tablet 88-90.

The expression, “the place where fate is decreed,” is based on the quite common concept of death in Sumerian, that is, the god imposes a fate upon one who descends to the underworld⁵². Apparently here *ki-nam-tar* has a distributional equivalence to the Netherworld through the code of the theology of death and judgement.

2.2.2. *ki-gal* (*ki-gu-la*)⁵³

(27) *èš abzu ki-zu ki-gal-zu*

“Shrine Abzu, your place is a great place”

TCS III 15.

(28) *é me-ur₄-an-na ki-gal-la gub-ba*

“House of the gathered me’s of heaven standing on the great place”

TCS III 61.

(29) *[an-gal]-ta ki-gal-šè geštú-ga-ni na-an-gu[b]*

“From [the ‘great high’] she set her mind toward the great place”

Inanna’s Descent 1.

According to the Akkadian translation of Sumerian *ki-gal* in lexical references, *berūtu* or *kigallu* are not direct translations of the term. Rather they are interpretations of ‘great place’ whose paradigm are “foundation (pit),” “platform,” “base,” “foundation,” and “pedestal.” All of them semantically can be extended to the “Netherworld.”⁵⁴

Reference (27) indicates *ki-gal* to be the dwelling of Enki, whose shrine is a structure of the Netherworld, through the code of the cosmos. On the other hand, references (28) and (29) represent it more as the great place, earth, whose base reaches to the Netherworld. In this sense *ki-gal* in (28) and (29) are in distributional equivalence, or at

least overlapping distribution, with KI.

ki-gal also is attested in the well known divine name Ereshkigal, goddess of the Netherworld. Furthermore, Ninshubur, the vizier of Inanna, has the epithet *sukkal-ki-gal-kur-ra-ke₄*, “vizier of the great place, the Netherworld.”⁵⁵ Here ki-gal is either modified by or juxtaposed to KUR. In these references ki-gal undoubtedly denotes the Netherworld⁵⁶.

2.2.3. ki-gu-la

Ningizzida as one of the deities in the Netherworld is called *lugal-ki-gu-la*, “king of the Netherworld.” This is another form for ki-gal in a divine name or epithet.

2.2.4. ki-ul⁵⁷

(30) *ki-ul kur-sig galam-e gar-ra*

itima ki-huš šà-túm-ma ri-a

su-zi a-rá-mah lú nu-pà-dè

“Faraway/eternal place, ‘deep mountain’ founded in artful
fashion,

Dark cell, the furious place, lying on a field,

Awe, lofty way no one can find”

TCS III TH No.15 187.

ki-ul means “remote/primeval place.” The same usage of UL occurs in the combination *uru-ul*, the “remote/primeval city.”⁵⁸ A linkage with the idea of the Netherworld contributes to the idea of remoteness, in both time and space.

2.2.5. ki-ûr⁵⁹

(31) du₆-bâra-gal-mah ki-ûr-urī^{ki}-ma

“The hill, the exalted great dias, the foundation of Ur”

C.J. Gadd, *Iraq* XX II 165, 35.

(32) ki-ûr ki-gal-ta nigîn-û

“Go about in the kiur, the great place”

Ershemma no. 1.1: 12.

Similar to the epithet of the shrine in Ur (8) the goddess Ninlil has the epithet, nin-ki-ûr-<ra>⁶⁰. ki-ûr occurs in the phrase é-ki-ûr, the temple of Ninlil in Nippur. é-ki-ûr was registered as the annex of the Ekur in the city plan of Nippur⁶¹. The bilingual lexicography equates ki-ûr with *eršetum* “earth” and *duruššu* “base,”⁶² which is quite close to the concept of ki-gal of reference (28). As matter of fact, a combination ki-ûr ki-gal-(la) (32) is attested. A further reference of interest is Antagal G 21f : KI.UR = *duru[ššu]*, KI.UR.RA = *nē-reb* KI-*tim* “entrance to the Netherworld,” that is, ki-ûr is recognized as the foundation as well as an entrance to the Netherworld, since earth is an entrance to the other world. This statement suggests that Nippur was regarded as an entrance to the Netherworld since it was a sacred place on the earth within the “bond” of heaven and earth.

2.2.6. ki-mah

“Grave,” “tomb.” Akkadian *kimahhu*.

A literal translation is “exalted place,” a suitable expression of respect for the final physical destination of a human being. A tomb may have been regarded as an actual entrance to the other world. Inscriptions, offerings and rituals related to funerals in everyday life demonstrate that the grave is an entrance to the Netherworld. The

practice of ritual is the code in this case. The semantic distribution of ki-mah to the Netherworld is overlapping while it is in distributional inclusion to the earth.

The puzzle here is that ki-mah does not occur as an expression for the Netherworld in Sumerian literature. Perhaps the reason is that either ki-mah “grave” was presupposed to be an entrance to the other world, or the relevant vocabulary to describe precisely the Netherworld was preserved enough without using ki-mah.

2.2.7. ki-bad, ki-dagal, ki-ku₁₀-ku₁₀

- (33) ab-ba ki-ri-a-šè dumu-ni-ri kin bī-in-gi₄
dumu ki-bad-rā gen-na-ri u₄-ba ba-ra-an-BAD
“A father sent to far-off place for his son,
The son who had gone to the distant place...”

Two Elegies on a pushkin Museum Tablet 1-2.

- (34) ku₆-engur-ra-ke₄ giš-gi-a nunuz nu-mu-ni-in-nā-nā
mušen-an-na-ke₄ ki-dagal-la gūd nu-[mu-ni-ib-ús]
“The fish of the deep water does not spawn in its reed
thicket,
The bird of heaven does not make a nest on the wide
earth”

Enlil Hymn 116-117; SGL I 71.

- (35) kur-ra ki-ku₁₀-ku₁₀-ka u₄ hu-mu-na-na-gā-gā
“In the Netherworld, the place of darkness, let him give
light”

The Death of Gilgamesh A 26.

BAD, DAGAL⁶³ and KU₁₀.KU₁₀ are other modifiers describing the Netherworld. “To be distant, “to be wide” and “to be dark” all are

characterization which are common concepts of the other realm. These are put semantically in either distributional equivalence or distributional inclusion to the Netherworld by the modifiers themselves.

2.3. KI.MAH. See 2.2. KI.

Notes

Abbreviations for journals and reference works are those found in:

(1). *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago*, ed. E. Reiner, et. al. (Chicago-Glückstadt, 1956-1989.); (2). W. von Soden's *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-1981.); (3). R. Borger's *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* vol.I (Berlin, 1967) 661-672.

1. Knut Tallqvist, *Sumerisch-Akkadische Namen der Totenwelt StOr* 5/4 (Helsinki, 1934).
2. The word is used here as the strictly linguistic terms of the smallest unit of meaning. A discussion of the issue of linguistic semantics will follow later. Cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course de Linguistique Général* (Paris, 1916). De Saussure distinguishes between *langue* and *parole* whose English equivalents have been *language* and *speech* respectively. Chomsky has drawn roughly the distinction in terms of linguistics, competence and performance Cf. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, 1965). Linguistics now favors using the terms *code* and *message*, instead of language and speech. *Code* is the system which permits the encoding or decoding of the message between the sender and the receiver.
3. Slashes//mark phonemic transcription.
4. These codes are observed through the later textual references.
5. See John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge, 1968) 70-73.
6. In the following discussion one "set" of the distribution of meaning represents the "Netherworld," because our study here is limited to the terms regarding the "Netherworld."

7. Edited by A Shaffer, *Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgamesh* (Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1963). Partially translated by S.N.Kramer, *The Sumerian* (Chicago and London, 1963) 197-205. Cf. A.Koefoed, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Nether World," *ASJ* (1983) 17-23.
8. See M.Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: Eršemma* (Cincinnati, 1981) 68.
9. For example: "The captive gods have come out from the grave, the evil ghosts have come out from the grave, they have come out from the grave for the funerary offerings and libations." (*CT* 17 37 K. 3372 5f. Cf. *CAD* Q 18).
10. Cf. *CAD* E 308; *AHw* 245; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 23ff. According to Kramer's definition, "DUR thus cosmically conceived is the empty space between the earth's crust and the primeval sea. Moreover, it is not improbable that the monstrous creature that lived at the bottom of the 'great below' immediately over the primeval water is also called Kur..." (*Sumerian Mythology*, 76). His definition will be used in our further discussion, especially in relation to the concept of *Weltberg*. See 2. 4. Hur.SAG.
11. On this discussion see 2. 2. KI.
12. For example, KUR.NU.GI₄.A, IGI.KUR.
13. See 3. 1. *eršetu*.
14. The order of individual meaning is not based on fundamental semantic range (often trace back to the pictographic origin) and its extension, but rather depends on the perspective of the Netherworld.
15. ul-hé-sè mú kur-kur-ra zé-sè mu-bi ár-re-mu
 ušumgal-an-na-ke₄ elam-ma^{ki} hu-bu-úr-ra ha-ma-ab-bé ár-re-mu
 kur-kur-ra tés-be bí-í-sì-sì-ge ár-re-mu
 kur-kur-ra-bād-gal-bi dē-me-en za-e ^{giš}si-mar-bi dē-me-en ár-re-mu
 "Lifting up to the banks of heaven, in all the lands that name is to the
 very limits. My praising!
 May Ushumgalinna speak to you in Elam and Hubur! My praising!
 You have overthrown all the lands at once. My praising!
 You are towering wall of the lands; you are its bolt. My praising!"
Eršemma 34 2: 24-27
 ...ki-bal a-a-zu-[šè]

ba-e-te gur-sag-gul-la [zu-šè]

kur-erím-ma gi-dili-dù-a-gin₇[...]

“...To the land rebellious against your father

You approached. In order to destroy the mountain-land

[You trample down] the enemy like a single planted reed”

Ershemma 163. 2: a+8-10

These bilingual Ershemmas are examples indicating that KUR is semantically associated with the Elamite country. With application of our principle the association of KUR with Elam took place by the code of the geography (far mountainous country) as socio-psychology (land inimical to Sumer).

16. kur-utu-è-a, the “land where the sun rises (east)” (*Nungal Hymn* 9). As well as the sun god Utu Nergal, a god of the Netherworld occurs in the same expression:

[...]kur-utu-è zi-ga-me-en

“You (Nergal) rise in the mountain where the sun rises”

(*TCL* XV 26, 46; *SGL* II 37).

However, ki-utu-è-a, the “place where the sun rises” (*Inanna’s Descent* 80-81) is much more common than kur-utu-è-a. See *TCS* III 89-90.

17. Another cosmological code might be the mythological mountain “whose peak reaches to the vault of heaven and whose breast reaches to the Netherworld below” (*Epic of Gilgamesh* IX ii 4-5.), but this code is probably a later development in Akkadian literature.
18. Distinguishing between “sings” and “symbols” is one of approaches to the study of meaning. In our study of the myths and epics from the ancient world the contrasting of “signs” vs “symbols” is helpful in determining the clear meaning of a word. De Saussure separates signs from symbols; for example, the sign “scale” also implies “justice” as its symbol.
19. To illustrate, KUR, one out of six times, in the *Two Elegies on a Pushkin Museum Tablet* means, no doubt, “mountain” rather than the “Netherworld.” The context of KUR here is clear in that Ludingirra, son of Nannâ, has heard his father’s suffering in a remote mountain. Our view regarding KUR under these circumstances is that the notion

of KUR focuses on the physical distance or psychological isolation rather than the mountain itself. Therefore, this notion overlaps that of the Netherworld which represents the faraway place both physically and psychologically.

20. The confusion of Akkadian texts on this matter will be discussed in the *šdû* and *huršanu*.
21. Cf. h[ur]-sag-ki-a, "mountain of the earth."
22. For example: ke-en-gi-kur-gal-ma-da an-ki "Sumer, 'great mountain,' the land of heaven and earth", SGL 1 51. (= A.Falkenstein, *Sumerisch Götterlieder* 1 (Heidelberg, 1959).
23. *mātu* is the translation of KUR and KALAM. In terms of the semantics, the distinction between them is clear. KUR denotes, as we defined earlier, "land which is located at the mountain range," on the other hand, KALAM represents "country and land." However, in certain Akkadian texts KUR functions as a determinative for country, that is Sumerian KALAM is to be translated into Akkadian ^{KUR}*mātu*. Cf. H. Limet, "Étude sémantique de ma-da, kur, kalam," *RA* 82 (1978) 1-12.
24. For example, both KUR and HUR.SAG are translated as Akkadian *šadû* in Nimurta myth, J.van dijk, *LUGAL UD ME-LAM-BI NIR-GĀL* (Leiden, 1983).
25. This is a study of the terminology regarding the Netherworld; therefore, our study is limited to the category of the Netherworld. We might touch on the whole semantic range of the entry when necessary, but further study is required to investigate each term thoroughly.
26. Edited by S.N.Kramer, *JCS* 1 (1947) 3-46.
27. "Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living," *JCS* 1 (1946) 3-46. On Dilmun see 30 and "Dilmun, the Land of Living," *BASOR* 96 18-28. Kramer proposes southwestern Persia as the probable location of Dilmun. He also notes, quoting a conversation between (hur-ru-um-hur-sag-ga) is to be taken as the land of Living (*JCS* 1 45). The recent investigation on Dilmun's identification designates it with Bahrein in the Persian Gulf, see P.B.Cornwall, *BASOR* 103 3ff; *JCS* 6 137-38; C.Lamberg-Karlovsky, "Dilmun: Gateway to immortality," *JNES* 41 (1982) 45-50; D.Potts., ed., *Dilmun* (Berlin, 1983); Al-Khalifas and M.Rice, *Bahrein through Ages*:

The Archaeology (New York, 1986).

28. Line 1: [an-gal]-ta ki-gal-šè geštúg-ga-ni na-an-gu[b] “From the [“great above”] she set her mind toward the “great below.”
29. A comprehensive discussion on this matter will be developed in the next entry 2. 2. KI.
30. *JCS* 11 (1946) 11.
31. Edited by W.R.Sladek, *Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld* (Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1974). S.N.Kramer's contribution to the edition of the text should be recognized: several early partial editions culminating in “Inanna's Descent to the Nether World,” *JCS* 4 (1959) 199-211 & *JCS* 5 (1951) 1-17, and a re-editing of the end of the text in “Sumerian Literature and the British Museum: the Promise of the Future,” *PAPS* 124 (1980) 299-310. Another indispensable study of the story was offered by A.Falkenstein whose interpretation and commentary were based upon Kramer's first edition, “Zu ‘Inannas Gang zur Unterwelt,’” *AfO* 14 (1941/44) 113-138.
32. Th.Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven, 1976) 53.
33. *TCS* III (= Å.Sjöberg and E.Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns* in A.L.Oppenheim, ed., *Text from Cuneiform Sources* III) TH No.15 192; *SGL* II (= J.von dijk, *Sumerisch Götterlieder* II (Heidelberg, 1960) n.39, 73.
34. *CT* 15 26: 46; *SGL* II 35.
35. *Inanna's Descent* 80-81.
36. See *SGL* II 82ff.
37. On the discussion on *irat eršeti*, see the entry 3. 1. *eršetu*.
38. See *SGL* II 105.
39. On this comment see 2. 4. HUR.SAG.
40. Syllabic for abzu? If AB-zu is correct, read èš-zu and translate “Your shrine is very worthy of the holy dias.”
41. Cf. *SGL* I 57; *TCS* III 57.
 ê-tim-ma kur-ra-àm gal
 è u₄ nu-zu kur-ra-àm gal
 “The cell is as great as a mountain,
 The house with knows no light is, as a mountain great”

(Kramer, *RSO* 32 96, 4-5).

ITIMA is described as a dark cell. This concept would be identical with the concept of "cave" as link to *bīt mūti* "grave" and the Netherworld (private suggestion by A.D.Kilmer).

42. Cf. *SGL* I 57.
43. Edited by M.Geller, *Forerunners to Uduḡ-hul: Sumerian Exorcistic Incantations, Freiburger altorientalische studien* 12 (Stuttgart, 1985).
44. *JCS* 21 3: 2-3.
45. Cf. *Malku* I 290. There are some other connections with *du₆-kū*: as the home of Anunnaki (*BM* I No.8), the birth place of Lahar and Ashnan (*CT* 16 14 iv 30), an epithet of the Eridu temple (*STVC* 45 I 3-5).
46. Cf. *CAD* E 308; *AHw* 245; Tallqvist *StOr* 5/4 8-11.
47. "Ground" can be expanded to mean "land," but may not be "country" which is represented usually by the word KALAM, even though Sumerian KI, KUR, KALAM, MA.DA, GÚ can be Akkadian *mātu* "country as political unit, open country" and *eršetu* as well. But the old expressions like *ki-Lagaš^{k1}*, and *ku-uri* represent "the land/state of Lagaš, the land of Akkad" in contrast to the cities. These Sumerian words share their semantic distribution in either distributional inclusion or overlapping distribution. For more discussion on this issue see 3. 1. *eršetu*.
48. Pictographically KI is shown either as a "place" or "ground." In this respect "earth" and the "Netherworld" seem to be a secondary development. On the other hand, interestingly enough, an Akkadian equivalent to Sumerian KI *eršetu* implies primarily "earth" and the meaning "place" is derived from *eršetu* except determinative function for the place name. Beside *eršetu*, *ašru* in Akkadian responds to this meaning of KI, "place." *qaqqaru*, "ground" or the "earth" is also an Akkadian translation of KI. Nevertheless, *eršetu* still retains the meaning "place" just as KI does.
49. Cf. D.Edzard, "Deep-rooted Sky scrapers and Bricks: Ancient Mesopotamian Architecture and its Imaging," in *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M.Mindlin, et al. (London, 1987) 13-24.
50. Cf. Th.Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *JBL* 100/4 (1981) 513-529.
51. For example, the cosmogonical introduction of *Inanna's Descent* (1-6)

- and *Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld* (8-16).
52. For a typical judgement of fate in the Netherworld see *Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld. Death of Gilgamesh and Death of Ur-Nammu* also share a same perspective as to the their cause of death. Gods impose death upon Gilgamesh and Ur-Nammu like Enlil in the myth of *Enlil and Ninlil*. Cf. Rocheberg-Halton., "Fate and Divination," *AfO* Beiheft 19 (1982) 363ff.
 53. KI.GAL = *berūtu* "foundation pit (of building)," Deimel, *ŠL* 461, 175a; *CAD* B 213. KI.GAL = *kigallu* *ŠL* 461, 175c; *CAD* K 348; *AHw* 474; Tallqvist *StOr* 4/5 3, 5, 36; *TCS* III 53.
 54. See Akkadian 3. 13. *berūtu* and 3. 12. *kigallu*.
 55. *TCL* XV 26, 40; *SGL* II 37. Another reference of the same type is available: (Ninazu) *šita_x-ki-gal-la*, "(Ninazu), the pure one of the Netherworld (*TCS* III 182).
 56. *TCL* XV 25, 32; *SGL* II 106. *gu-la* is a by-form of *gal-a* "great." See reference (9).
 57. *TCS* III 187; *SGL* II 85.
 58. See *TCS* III 187. Cf. J.van Dijk, *AcOr* 28 (1964) 46ff.
 59. *MSL* IV 127, 3; XI 13, 8; *SGL* I J.van Dijk, *AcOr* 28 47ff.
 60. *Enlil and Ninlil* 54; Tallqvist *StOr* 7 171.
 61. *AfO* 13 174 Abb.8.
 62. *ki-ūr kur-ra-ke₄ kūkku-zu-šē gen-ba*: "Go to the base of the Netherworld, to your darkness" (*Udug hul* 845). This reference clearly show *ki-ūr*'s relationship with the Netherworld by *kur* the "Netherworld" and *kūkku* "darkness."
 63. *ki-gar-dagal* is attested: *a-ab-ba ki-gar-dagal-la-a-šē: ina tâmti eršeti rapašti* "in the sea, on the wide earth" *CT* 17, 21 ii 108.