A Kettle-Drum Ritual during Iyar Seleucid Era 85 – The astronomical diary Sachs-Hunger Diaries II -226 records the celebration of a ritual during the second month of the year, *ajaru*, Seleucid era 85:

20' ...............................arhu šuâtu(iti.bi)
21' [......] x ma bit mu-um-ma la ep-šú
22' [......] x pu-ha-du ik-ta-as-su-ú ūnâl[i-l]-su
23' [..... K]A.INIM in-da-nu ..............

LBAT 288+289 20’-23’

(= Sachs-Hunger Diaries II p.132 rev. 20’-23’, Photo pl. 95).

20' ..................................that month
21' [......] .. the workshop were not made/done.
22' [......] ..lambs they bound, the kett[le-dr]um
23' [..... in]cantation(s) he recited..............

This ritual may be compared with the ritual *ārâmu ša lilissi siparrī* « The Covering of the Bronze Kettle-Drum ». This ritual is known both from four versions of the ritual edited by F. Thureau-Dangin in Racc. 10-33, as well as five additional pieces from the Resh Temple in Uruk published by W. Mayer as Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5-9. The related text O 175 (F. Thureau-Dangin RA16 144-156) presents a theological-mystical commentary to the bronze kettle-drum ritual with a diagram of the ceremony.

The astronomical diary itself opens with a reference to the *bît mummi* « temple workshop », and then notes three elements of the ritual. The sacrifice of *puhâdû* « lambs », the presence of the kettle-drum, and the recitation of incantations. Similar elements are present in examples of the ritual *ārâmu ša lilissi siparrī*. The *bît mummi*, workshop, where the bull-skin for covering the bronze kettle-drum is prepared and placed on the drum, occurs in TCL 6 44, IVR 23 1, and Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5-7. Instructions for the actual covering of the bronze kettle-drum itself survive in TCL 6 44 ii 25, KAR 60 rev. 8, and IVR 32 1 i 7, and both TCL 6 44 i 1 and Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5 : 1 preserve parts of the opening line of the ritual : *enûma lilissi siparru ana arâmi ana pânîka* « When the bronze kettle-drum is before you for covering ». Incantations are recited in all four of the rituals edited by F. Thureau-Dangin in Racc., as well as
The ritual in the astronomical diary may or may not be the standard ritual for «The covering of the Bronze Kettle-Drum» although the ritual in the diary does refer to sheep, the bit nummi, and a kettle-drum. First, puhâdû «lambs» are sacrificed in line 22’ rather than the more general niqû «sacrificial sheep» as in the standard rituals. Second, Sachs-Hunger Diaries II 132 rev. 21’ states that something(s) are not done in the bit nummi, and third, the astronomical diary preserves bitu-lilissu, written with the determinative for copper, rather than the usual lilissi siparri «brass kettle-drum». Thus, Sachs-Hunger Diaries II 132 rev. 20’-23’ may preserve an unorthodox kettle-drum ceremony.

In any case, the celebration of a kettle-drum ritual in the astronomical diary for -226 (= SE 85) is not the first attestation of such rituals in astronomical diaries. Both the nêpešu ša arâmu ša li[lissi siparri] «The ritual for the covering of the bronze kettle[drum]», as well as the ritual for the renovation of temples enûma iqâr bit ili iqâpu «When the Wall of a Temple Buckles», including a recitation of the incantation enûma anu ibnû šamê «When Anu Built the Heavens», are performed by exorcists and lamentation priests 44 years earlier in the astronomical diary for -270 (= SE 41) (Hunger-Pingree Diaries I p. 352 rev. 13, 354 rev. 15-17).9

1Sachs-Hunger Diaries II p. 132 rev. 22’ reads bitu-li{-s}u but both the photograph and Sachs’ copy in LBAT support the reading bitu-lilissu «kettle-drum» and no examples of lilissu with the kuš determinative are attested in CAD or AHw. For kettle-drums made of urudu = (w)erû «copper», as opposed to kettle-drums of UD.KA.BAR = siparri «bronze», see TCL 5 6055 ii 9, ABL 1092 rev. 13-14; MSL 7 153 : 191-192. For other drums written with the urudu determinative see CAD N II 215 *niqkalaqû and MSL VII 153 : 193-196 (Urgud). For kettle-drums made of siparri see J.A. Brinkman in D. Curtis Bronze-Working Centres of Western Asia 140 n. 44. In this article urudu = (w)erû will be translated in the traditional manner as «copper», and siparri likewise will be translated as «bronze», although it cannot be certain that the «copper»-determinative urudu in urudu-lilissu in Sachs-Hunger Diaries II p.132 rev. 22’ indicates that the kettle-drum is made of copper, rather than bronze or another «non-iron» metal (see J.A. Brinkman Ibid 137). Furthermore, Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts do not always differentiate between the copper and bronze (see J.A. Brinkman ibid 136-138 with further bibliography), and no study of this
problem exists for the Hellenistic period.

2 Racc. 10-33 No.1 = TCL 6 44 ; No. 2 = KAR 60 ; No. 3 = KAR 50//BBR II 56 ; No. 4 = IVR 23 1 (+K 9421) see HKL II 229. For further bibliography see W. Mayer, Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 p. 16. An edition of Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 6 is published by W. Mayer in Or. 47 432-437. For English and German translations see ANET 334-338, TUAT II/2 234-236.

3 For an edition of O 175 and the partial duplicate AO 17626 (F. Thureau-Dangin, RA 41 30-32) see now also A. Livingstone, Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars (1986), 187-204.

4 For the bit mummi see W. Mayer, Or 47 (1978) 437 n. 41.

5 TCL 6 44 i 7-9, 11 ; IVR 23 1 iv 25 ; Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5 : 7, 6 : 41, 7 rev. 7’.

6 When complete, Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5 : 28, which duplicates parts of KAR 60 rev. 7-8, almost certainly preserved the instruction for covering the bronze kettle-drum.

7 TCL 6 44 ii 9-10 ; KAR 60 10, 12 ; KAR 50 obv., rev. 11 ; IVR 23 i 8-25 ; Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5 : 19, 21.

8 TCL 6 44 ii 3, 5, 33, iii 18 ; IVR 23 1 iii 27 ; Bagd. Mitt. Beih. 2 5 : 13.


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