

polemical, but several references are made to feeding the dead in ways that presuppose its ubiquity, if not its normativity.<sup>61</sup> Deuteronomy 26:14, for instance, calls upon those offering their tithes to declare the following regarding tithed food: “I have not eaten from it while in mourning, and I have not removed any of it while unclean, and I have not given any of it to the dead.” This text appears to address both commemorative meals as well as meal offerings to the dead, without appearing to prohibit either, in or of themselves. Rather, the sense appears to be that food offered to the dead is to be kept separate from food offered to YHWH.<sup>62</sup>

The dead also appear to have been in need of protection, primarily through provision with apotropaic and prophylactic beads and amulets, which have been found in numerous burials (Bloch-Smith 1992a, 81–86; Schmidt 2016, 124–28).<sup>63</sup> The most well-known are the two tightly rolled silver scrolls discovered in 1979 in the repository of a bench tomb in Ketef Hinnom (Barkay 1992; Suriano 2018, 123–26). The scrolls, which were designed to be threaded on a necklace and worn for protection, had inscribed upon them a version of the “Priestly Blessing” from Num 6:24–26 that praises YHWH’s power to deliver from evil.<sup>64</sup> An inscription that can be read as a similar prayer for protection was etched in the rock of a multi-chambered tomb from Khirbet el-Qôm (fig. 1.2).<sup>65</sup>

1. *’ryhw . h’šr . ktbh*

2. *brk . ’ryhw . lyhwh*

3. *wmsryh . l’šrth . hwš’lh.*

Uriyahu the notable has written it

Blessed be Uriyahu to YHWH,

Now from his enemies, to Asherah, deliver him

<sup>61</sup> Tryggve N. D. Mettinger (1995, 192) notes that cultic practices among the societies surrounding and preceding early Israel and Judah involved ritual slaughter of a sacrifice followed by a meal shared among the worshippers. “It is this communal meal and its ritual accoutrements, rather than the feeding of the gods known from Mesopotamian cult, that are central to the meaning of West Semitic sacrifices.”

<sup>62</sup> Kerry Sonia (2020, 51) notes, “this passage is concerned primarily with avoiding contamination of the tithe.” Schmitt (2012b, 459) notes that Isa 65:3–5, while being quite late, may refer to an actual practice in its polemicizing of those who spend the night in tombs and eat the flesh of swine, since pig bones have been found in two Iron Age IIC graves in Lachish. The apocryphal book of Tobit tells the reader, “Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to sinners” (Tobit 4:17 [NRSV]).

<sup>63</sup> Egyptian influence is particularly salient. Scarabs, *wedjat*-eye, Pataeke, and Bes amulets are the most common (cf. Albertz 2008, 101). For the most thorough analysis, see Herrmann 1994–2006.

<sup>64</sup> This is the earliest known attestation of any text from the Hebrew Bible (Berlejung 2008; Schmidt 2016, 123–44; Smoak 2016, 12–42).

<sup>65</sup> See Zevit 1984; Hadley 1987; Margalit 1989; Dobbs-Allsopp et al 2005, 408–14; Schmidt 2016, 139–40. On the material context of the inscription, see Mandell and Smoak 2017.