

Divorcing Lilith: from the Babylonian incantation bowls to the Cairo Genizah

DAN LEVENE & GIDEON BOHAK

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON, UK
TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY, ISRAEL

ABSTRACT One of the striking features of ancient Jewish magic is the disappearance of numerous magical spells and formulae that are known to us from the Babylonian Aramaic incantation bowls; spells that come to be absent from the register of later Jewish magic. In the present paper we present one exception to this general rule, by editing a Genizah fragment (Hebrew Union College 1029) that contains a spell which is well attested in the incantation bowls. The fragment in question was copied in the twelfth century as part of a larger magical recipe book. One of its recipes, entitled 'A deed of divorce for Lilith', contains an anti-demonic *get* (divorce formula) which is attested in several different versions in the Babylonian incantation bowls, produced half a millennium earlier. In our paper, we offer a synopsis of all these versions, and a detailed assessment of the significance of this discovery.

IN A RECENT STUDY, Shaul Shaked set out to compare some aspects of the Babylonian Jewish incantation bowls of Late Antiquity and the Jewish magical texts of the Arabic-speaking Jews of the Middle Ages, as found in

The present paper is the fruit of our joint project, Aramaic Magical Texts of Late Antiquity (AMTLA), funded by the Britain–Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership (BIRAX). In what follows, we use the following abbreviations: AIT = James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Publications of the Babylonian Section, vol. III; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1913); AMB = J. Naveh and Sh. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985); Borisov = A. Ja. Borisov, 'Epigrafičeskie zametki', *Epigrafika Vostoka* 19 (1969), pp. 3–13; HAITCG = L.H. Schiffman and M.D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Geniza. Selected Texts from Taylor–Schechter Box K1* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); M = Moussaieff bowls, published by Dan Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls. Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity* (The Kegan Paul Library of Jewish Studies; London: Kegan Paul, 2003); MSF = J. Naveh and Sh. Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993); MTKG = P. Schäfer and Sh. Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 42, 64, 72; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, vol. 1, 1994, vol. 2, 1997, vol. 3, 1999); ZHS = Christa Müller-Kessler, *Die Zauberschalentexte in der Hilprecht-Sammlung, Jena, und weitere Nippur-Texte anderer Sammlungen* (Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection of Babylonian Antiquities im Eigentum der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Jena, Bd. 7; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

the Cairo Genizah. He begins his analysis by noting that ‘Geniza magic and the Babylonian magic bowls ... represent a similar kind of Jewish magical material’, but quickly turns to highlighting the differences between the two corpora.¹ He then proceeds to present a detailed analysis of several test cases, that he concludes by noting that ‘Something must have changed in the perception of the use of power between the texts of Late Antiquity, as we have them on the bowls, and the medieval Muslim world of the Geniza, something that needs still to be explored and explained.’² This conclusion is no doubt correct, and the sense that despite some features which both corpora share in common there is a great gulf separating the Genizah magical texts from the Babylonian incantation bowls is certainly shared by other scholars, the present writers included.³ Most of all, one is struck by the absence of clear textual parallels between the c.200 Jewish Babylonian incantation bowls published thus far and the c.120 published Genizah magical texts. There are, to be sure, many small parallels between the two corpora, be they the use of the same biblical verses, the partial overlaps between the lists of demons against whom spells are recited, or the general vocabulary of adjuration, but such parallels are due to the fact that both are corpora of *Jewish* magical texts. What we are looking for are longer textual parallels that would be close enough and specific enough to rule out the possibility of a ‘general’ similarity and necessitate the assumption of direct channels of textual transmission from the earlier corpus to the later one. In this paper, we wish to present just such an example, and to assess its significance for the study of the textual transmission of the Jewish magical tradition from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages and beyond.⁴ As we shall soon see, the

1. Sh. Shaked, “‘Dramatis Personae’ in the Jewish Magic Texts. Some Differences Between Incantation Bowls and Geniza Magic”, *JSQ* 13 (2006), pp. 363–87, on p. 363.

2. Shaked, “‘Dramatis Personae’”, p. 385.

3. See, for instance, a comment by Markham J. Geller, ‘Review of *Magic Spells and Formulae. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* by Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked’, *BSOAS* 60 (1997), pp. 344–5, in which he remarks on the effectiveness of combining late-antique amulets and bowls and medieval magical texts in the same book: ‘The clear impression given is that although the amulets and magic bowls are not identical, they are nevertheless more homogeneous than the Genizah texts, which are later and very different. Hence, the value of having so much magical material in Aramaic, Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic in two volumes is somewhat diminished by the fact that these groups of texts actually represent two separate sub-genres within magical literature, and in many cases have little in common.’

4. Another example, of an unpublished bowl which presents a close parallel with a published Genizah magical text, has recently been identified by James Nathan Ford, to whom we are grateful for sharing his findings with us.

Genizah fragment which we publish below contains a significant portion of a formula that is well attested in the Babylonian incantation bowls, but has thus far not been attested in any other body of Jewish magical texts. In what follows, we first offer an edition and translation of the fragment in question, accompanied by a brief commentary. We then turn to a detailed study of the section titled **גַּט לִילִיָּהּ**, ‘a deed of divorce for Lilith’, especially in relation to the very similar formulae found in some of the incantation bowls. Following this comparison, we turn to a broader evaluation of the significance of this find for the study of the relations between these two textual corpora of Jewish magical texts. In the Appendix, we provide a synopsis of the relevant passages from our Genizah fragment and from the previously published Babylonian incantation bowls.

The Genizah fragment HUC 1029 – text, translation and comments⁵

The fragment in question is a paper folio, measuring *c.* 12.6 cm in height by 10.1 cm in width; the top part is missing, and the left and bottom sides are partly damaged. The handwriting probably points to the first half of the twelfth century.⁶ The fragment is written on both sides in what seems to be a single hand, and clearly is a leaf from a larger quire, which surely contained more magical recipes. That our leaf is a part of such a collection of magical recipes is made clear by the appearance upon it of several different recipes, and by the use of formulae such as **פִּלְבָּנִי**, ‘so-and-so son/daughter of so-and-so’ (which we will henceforth translate as N son/daughter of N), which are a characteristic feature of magical recipe books. Unfortunately, other folios from the original quire have yet to be identified. The preserved part of our fragment contains 16–17 lines per side, but there is no way of knowing how many lines are missing at the top. The order of recto and verso

5. This fragment (Genizah fragment 1029 of the collection of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Klau Library, Cincinnati), was first brought to the attention of Gideon Bohak by Amir Ashur, to whom we are most grateful. We should also like to thank Laurel Wolfson, of the Hebrew Union College, for providing us with excellent photographs of the fragment in question, and for the permission to publish it here.

6. We are grateful to Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, who dated the handwriting and added: ‘if the colour of the paper on the image is close to the reality, this text is written on what (Shlomo Dov) Goitein identified as red paper from Babylonia.’ If this identification can be substantiated, then the entire fragment might have come to Cairo from Babylonia.

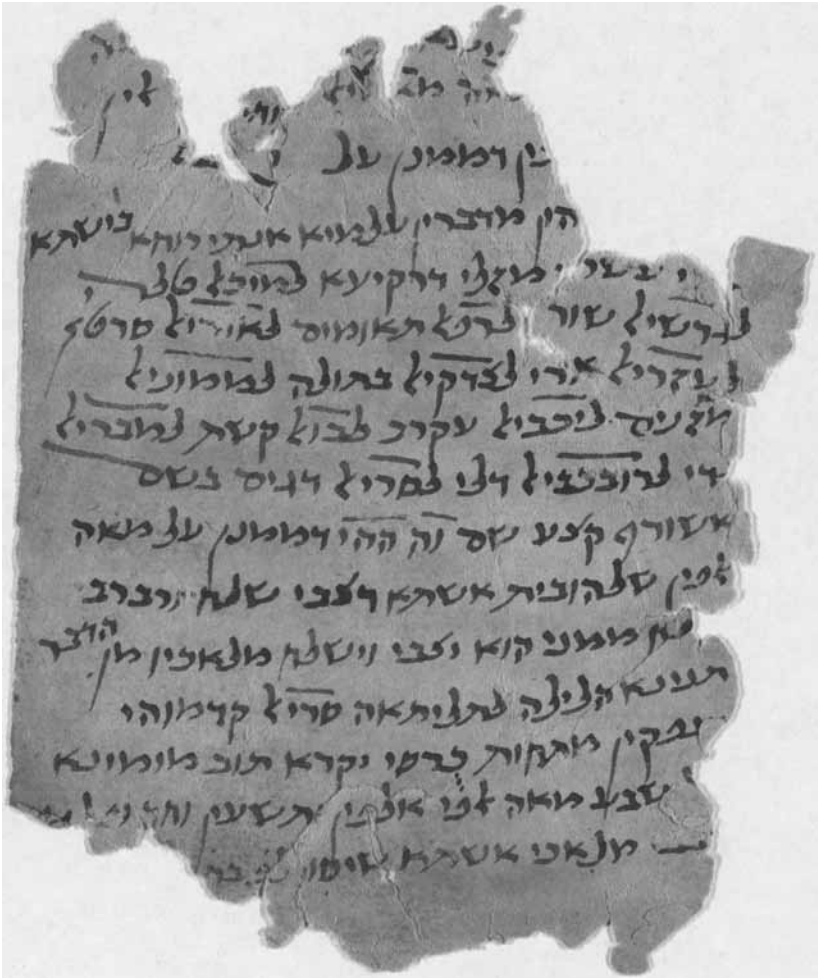


FIGURE 1 HUC Genizah Fragment 1029, Klau Library, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (recto)

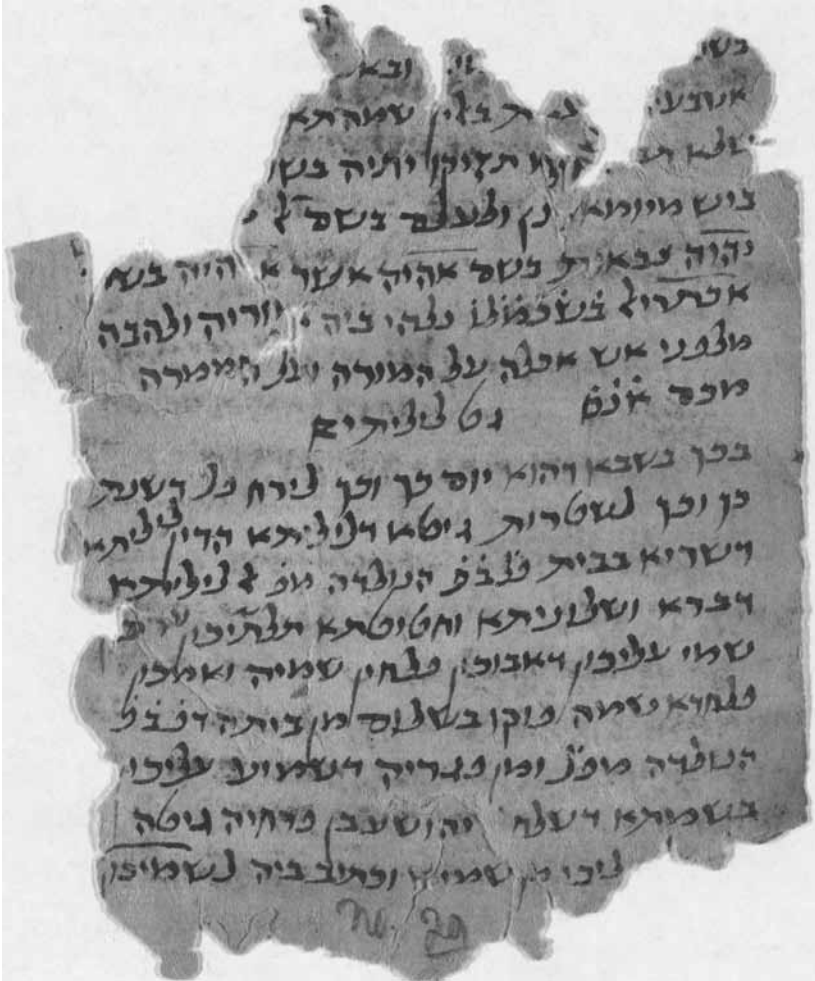


FIGURE 2 HUC Genizah Fragment 1029, Klau Library, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (verso)

can only be determined by the fact that the text of the *get* formula, which begins in the middle of one side, clearly does not continue on the other side, and this must therefore be the verso, with the *get* formula continuing into the next leaf. The text may be read and translated as follows (a line above the word is frequently used in Jewish magical texts to highlight angelic and divine names):

Recto

[א(א)ה	[ביעא]	1
אלין [א(א)ה מא] יאל [2
	מלא] כין דממנן על [3
	הון מדברין עלמיא אנתי רוחא בישתא	4
	ת] רי עשרי מזלי דרקייעא למיכאל טלה	5
	לגרשיאל שור לרפאל תאומים לאוריאל סרטן	6
	לעזריאל ארי לצדקאל בתולה לממוניאל	7
	מ>א<זנים ליכביאל עקרב לבואל קשת למבריאל	8
	ג] די לרובכביאל דלי לסריאל דגים בשם	9
	אשורף קצע שם וזה ההי דממנן על מאה	10
	אלפין שלהובית אשתא דצבי שלחי ורברבי	11
	א ממני הוא יצבי וישלח מלאכיו מן הדבר	12
	תנינא הלילה לתליתאה סריאל קדמוהי	13
	ד] נפקין מתחות כרסי יקרא טוב מומינא	14
	ע?] (ל) שבע מאה אלפי אלפין ותשעין וחד (يشابه)	15
	מ ⁷] מלאכי אשתא שיסו לפ' בר [פל'	16

Verso

בשם? [] י [] ובאי]	1
אשבעי] ת [ת באלין שמהתא]	2
שלא תב[ואו] ולא תזיקו יתיה בשו[ם מדעם?]	3
ביש מיומא [ד] נן ולעלם בשם אל (ש) [די?]	4
יהודה צבאות בשם אהיה אשר אהיה בשם	5

7. Our reading of the Arabic words is very tentative, and the words seem to make no sense here; if the word in line 16 was *تَمَّتْ* ('it ended'), it should have come at the recipe's end, and not here.

אכתריאל ב'ש'כ'מ'ל'י ⁸ נלהיביה (א)וריה ולהבה	6
מלפני אש אכלה על המורה ועל המורה	7
מכם א'נ'ס' ¹⁰ גט ליליתא ⁹	8
בכך בשבא דהוא יום כך וכך לירח פל' דשנת	9
כך וכך לשטרות גיטא דליליתא הדין ליליתא	10
דשריא בבית פ'ל ב'פ' הנולדה מפ' אל ליליתא	11
דברא ושלוניתא וחטיטתא תלתא ^(א) יכו ¹¹ (עריכ[ן])	12
שמי עליכו ^ן דאבוכו ^ן פלחין שמיה ואמכו ^ן	13
פלחדא שמה פוקו בשלום מן ביתה דפ'ב'פ'	14
הנולדה מפל' ומן פגריה דשמיע עליכו ^ן	15
בשמתא דשלח ר' יהושע בן פרחיה גיטה	16
[נחית?] ליכי מן שמיא וכתיב ביה לשמיכו ^ן	17

Recto

1 []
 2 []M'[]iel [] these
 3 [ang]els, who are appointed over []
 4 [] guide the world. You evil spirit
 5 [In the name of?] the twelve zodiacal signs of heaven – for Michael Aries
 6 for Garshiel Taurus, for Raphael Gemini, for Uriel Cancer,
 7 for Azriel Leo, for Šadkiel Virgo, for Memuniel
 8 Libra, for Yekhabel Scorpio, for Bouel Sagittarius, for Mabriel
 9 Capricorn, for Rubkhabiel Aquarius, for Sariel Pisces. In the name of
 10 Asuraph QS' ŠM WH HHY, who are appointed over one hundred
 11 thousand flames of fire; He who wishes messengers and great ones
 12 [] appointed¹² (?), He will wish and send His angels from the command (?)
 13 [to] the second, HLYLH, to the third, Sariel in his presence
 14 which go out from below the Throne of Glory. Again I adjure
 15 upon the seven hundred thousand thousands and ninety-one
 16 angels of fire that they should heal N son of [N]

Verso

1 In the name of [] and []
 2 I adjure [] by these names []

8. ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.
 9. The letter *alef* seems to have been crossed out, either by the original scribe or by a later user.
 10. אמן נצח סלה.
 11. Above the letter *tav* there is a sign which might be an *alef* (cf. the *alef* added above the word מזנים in line 8 of the *recto*). Another possibility is that the supralinear letter is the *sin* of סעריכו^ן, which somehow got detached from the rest of the word.
 12. Alternatively, one could take ממני as Hebrew, and translate 'from me'.

- 3 that you shall not co[me] and shall not harm him with [any]
 4 evil, from this day and for ever. In the name of El Sh[addai]
 5 YHWH Ševa'ot. In the name of I am that I am. In the name of
 6 Akatriel. Blessed is the Name of His glorious Kingdom for ever and ever.
 NLHYBYH 'WRYH, and a flame
 7 from before a consuming fire upon the rebellious and the seditious
 8 amongst you. Amen Eternity Selah. A deed of divorce for Lilith.
 9 On such a day of the week, that is such and such a day of the month X of
 the year
 10 such and such of the era of documents. A deed of divorce for Lilith. This
 Lilith
 11 who dwells in the house of N daughter of N who was born of N. To the
 field Lilith
 12 and raider demoness and HṬYṬṬ, you three, 'RYKWN
 13 It was made known¹³ about you that your father's name is Plḥyn and your
 mother's
 14 name is Plḥda. Go in peace from the house of N daughter of N
 15 who was born of N and from her body. For it was heard about you
 16 in a ban that R. Joshua ben Peraḥia sent a deed of divorce (which)
 17 [has come down?] to you from heaven and it is written in it, for your notice¹⁴

Comments

Recto

4 עלמא: 'the world', in spite of the plural form, just as in ליליתא on line 8 of the verso.

The formula אנתי רוחא בישתא is paralleled both in the Babylonian incantation bowls, for example M156:7, 9, 10; AIT 26:3, 4 (אנתי רוחא בישתא); Borisov p. 7: 3 (אנתין רוחי בישתא), and in other Genizah magical texts, for example JTS 3753.9–10, fol. 1a, line 10 (אנתי רוחא בישתא).

5–9 Lists of the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the angel appointed over each, are quite common in the Jewish magical tradition, for example, in *Sefer Raziel* fol. 41b. However, we have found no close parallel to the list presented here. Moreover, while some of the angels listed here are well attested in many Jewish magical texts, others – such as יכביאל and רובכביאל – are, as far as we could ascertain, unattested elsewhere.

13. In the light of the parallels (see the synopsis, below), we take שמי as a corruption of שמיע.

14. In the light of the parallels (see the synopsis, below), we take לשמיכון as a corruption of לשמועיכון.

10 אשורף: Given his connection with one hundred thousand flames of fire, we would suggest that this angel's name was derived from the root שרף, 'to burn'.

11 שלהובית אשתא: This is a phrase that is found also in the bowls, for example, in Borisov, p. 11: 9, where it appears as part of the formula נורא יקידא ושלהובית אשתא, 'burning fire and flames of fire'. Other parallels that might be closer in context to our Geniza fragment are found in an unpublished bowl from the Dehays collection (22: 8–9) where we have ואישתא נפקא מיתחות כורסי יקרא. This expression is also found several times in the Targumic literature, for example Targ-J. to Num. 11:26: בשלהובית אשתא. These parallels might be connected to the formula that we have here in lines 11–14: [ד]נפקין מתחות ... שלהובית אשתא... כרסי יקרא, in which case the obscure phrases occurring in lines 11–13 might be a misplaced interpolation.

11–12 דצבי שלחי ... יצבי וישלח מלאכיו: This obscure sentence might be partly paralleled in the *Pishra de-Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa*, a late-antique Babylonian Jewish magical text, where we find the expression: יסי ית פ'ב'פ' אסותא שלמתא דחיי שלחי קיים אמר ועביד ישלח מלאכיה ויסי, whose meaning is not entirely clear, but which could be translated as: 'May he heal N son/daughter of N. Perfect health and sent life, establishing, saying and doing, may he send his angels and heal...'.¹⁵

14 תוב מומינא: The use of תוב, 'again', is extremely common in the Babylonian incantation bowls, where it usually signifies the beginning of a new textual unit. It tends to precede a number of verbs such as אזל, 'to go' (AIT 2:1), אסר, 'to bind' (AIT 4:3) and צור, 'to bind', amongst others. The use with מומינא is less common, but is nevertheless attested, for example in MSF 19:5 and Dehays 40:14). It is not found in any other Genizah magical texts currently known to us.

15. See Franco Michelini Tocci, 'Note e documenti di letterature religiosa e parareligiosa giudaica', *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 46 (1986), pp. 101–8, on p. 103.

Verso

3 ולא תבואו אליו עוד ולא תזיקוהו: The Hebrew phrase finds a close parallel in the Cairo Genizah fragment T-S K 1.122 1a/1: ולא תבואו אליו עוד ולא תזיקוהו: 'and you shall no longer come to him, and never harm him'.¹⁶

4 מן יומא דנן ולעולם (מן יומא דנן ולעולם) and ZHS 11C: 12 (מן יומא דנן ולעולם), and is also attested in the *Pishra de-Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa* (מן יומא דנן ולעולם).¹⁷ It is also attested in the late-antique metal-plate amulets from Palestine (AMB A1/11-12: לעולם [דן ועד] למא [דן ועד] למא), and is common in the Cairo Genizah, where it is found in several different formulations, for example in JTSL ENA NS 73.12/11 (מיומא דנן ולעולם), or in HAITCG 13 (T-S K 1.168)/37 (מן יומא הדין ועד לעולם).

6 ב'ש'כ'מ'ל'י' is a common liturgical response. The unabbreviated form is found also in the bowls such as M108:7, VA 3853 and VA 3854.¹⁸ It is common in the Genizah magical texts, for example in MTKG II, 29 (T-S NS 322.50), 1b/6-7, where it appears as לעו' ועד ב'ש'כ'מ'ל'י' לעו' ועד.

6-8 For the formula in these three lines see the close parallel in MTKG I, 2 (T-S K 1.56), 1b/1-2: (1) ובאלו השמות התמתי נלהביה נראויה אש להבה (2) מלפני אש (2) אוכלה על המורה ועל הממרה מכם. The same formula is repeated, in a slightly garbled form, in MTKG I, 20 (T-S K 1.147) 1a/39-40. The text of the long spell found in both fragments bears some signs of its possible Babylonian origins.¹⁹ A similar, but much shorter formula is found in a fifteenth-century collection of Jewish magical texts, MS New York Public Library, Heb. 190 (*olim* Sassoon 56), on p. 157: נר אוריה נל (!) אשתא לכביתא הבהיה.

16. This fragment was published by Claudia Rohrbacher-Sticker, 'Die Namen Gottes und die Namen Metatrons. Zwei Geniza-Fragmente zur *Hekhalot*-Literatur', *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 19 (1991/92), pp. 95-168, on p. 165.

17. Tocci, 'Note' (see n. 15), p. 103.

18. These are bowls from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin published in Dan Levene, 'Heal O' Israel. A Pair of Duplicate Magic Bowls from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin', *JJS* 54 (2003), pp. 104-21. For the relationship between the Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls and liturgy, see Dan Levene, 'Jewish Liturgy and Magic Bowls', in R. Hayward (ed.), *Studies in Jewish Prayer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 163-84.

19. For a detailed analysis of the parallel spell in these Genizah fragments, see T. Kwasman, 'The Demon of the Roof', in Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller (eds), *Disease in Babylonia* (Cuneiform Monographs 36; Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 160-86.

8 גַּט לִילִיָּהּ: This is the title of the next recipe, and is centrally justified, this being a common feature of many Genizah magical recipe books.²⁰ לִילִיָּהּ is singular, in spite of the plural form, just as in עַלְמִיָּא on line 4 of the recto. The final *alef* seems to have been crossed out, either by the original scribe or by a later reader, perhaps in an attempt to correct the grammatical error.

9–10 None of the published incantation bowls contain a dating formula, but several dated *get*-bowls are currently being studied by Shaul Shaked; as our knowledge of their dating formulae comes from Shaked's lecture about this issue, which has yet to be published, no comparison of the different dating formulae will be undertaken here. Needless to add, the inclusion of an exact date is a crucial part of the Jewish *get*-document, from the Masada *get* (P Mur. 19) onwards. It must be noted, however, that in the human *gittin*, the date is always followed by a specification of the place where the *get* was written, a feature which is absent from our magical recipe.²¹ It may have fallen out of the text during the process of textual transmission, but may also reflect a deliberate deviation from the standard practice with regards to human *gittin*.

10 הַדִּין לִילִיָּהּ: The coupling of a masculine demonstrative pronoun with a feminine noun is yet another example of the faulty grammar of the Aramaic text, probably the result of a long process of textual transmission.

11 הַנּוֹלְדָה מַ, 'who was born of', is a Hebrew perfect feminine form. This formula is unattested in the bowls, and is not very common in the Genizah magical texts, but it does appear, for example, in MSF, G17 (T-S K 1.132), p. 1, lines 14–16: <הַנּוֹלְדָה מַ בְּלִבּ פְּלִי בְּלִבּ פְּלִי הַנּוֹלְדָה מַ בְּלִבּ פְּלִי>. It is also found in an amulet from Afghanistan which was produced for the protection of כַּדְבָּאָנוּ מִן כַּדְבָּאָנוּ הַנּוֹלְדָה מִן כַּדְבָּאָנוּ.²² The use in our text both of פְּלִי בְּפִי and of הַנּוֹלְדָה מַ is probably due to the need in magical texts to mention the name of one's mother, but in a *get* (as in any other non-magical document) to mention that of one's father, hence the use of both patronymic and matronymic in this specific formula. For a similar occurrence, see the three Genizah fragments published by Ortal-Paz Saar, and prepared by, or

20. See, for example, the layout of MSF, G9 (T-S K 1.15), or G16 (T-S K 1.91).

21. See A. Gulak, *Otsar ha-shetarot ha-nehugot be-Yisrael* (Jerusalem: Defus ha-Poalim, 1926), pp. 70–1 (Heb.), and esp. Y. David, *Formulae of the Bill of Divorce as Reflected in the Genizah Documents and Other Sources* (unpubl. MA thesis, Tel Aviv: 1991), pp. 15–37 (Heb.).

22. See Sh. Shaked, 'A Jewish Aramaic Amulet from Afghanistan', in Károly Dániel Dobos and Miklós Köszeghy (eds), *With Wisdom as a Robe. Qumran and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Ida Fröhlich* (Hebrew Bible Monographs, 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), pp. 485–94.

for, יהודה בר יאשיה הנולד מן מיאם, who is also identified as יהודה בר [יאשיה] זרע מיאם, thus proving that Miam was his mother, and Josiah was his father, and that he was identified in his magical recipe book both by his matronymic *and* by his patronymic.²³

אל: We have taken this word to be the Hebrew preposition meaning ‘to’, which would make perfect sense here. But when we look at the synopsis of this part of the formula we see that in the bowls this is not likely to be the correct meaning but rather the divine appellation אל, ‘God’, as it follows יהוה in AIT 8 and is joined as part of the larger string יהאל in ZHS 11b (see the synopsis below). Clearly, a slip of a scribe somewhere along the road of transmission between the Babylonian formula to its Geniza descendant has turned a divine name into a mere preposition.

12 דברא, ‘field’,²⁴ ZHS 11a, one of a number that have parallel sections to our formula, has the same expression לילית דברא which Müller-Kessler translates as ‘Wüsten-Lilit’ (‘desert Lilit’).²⁵ Geller translates דברא as ‘steppe’ in a bowl that also contains a version of our formula, but with דברא שידא rather than לילית דברא.²⁶ However, one must also note that in ZHS 11b and AIT 8 we find, instead of לילית דברא, a string that is very common in the bowls: ליליתא לילי דיכרא וליליתא ניקבתא, ‘Lilith, male liliths and female liliths’ (see synopsis below). The interchange between the *bet* in דברא and the *kaf* in דיכרא is quite natural, given their orthographic similarity, and both readings make perfect sense, and clearly co-existed side-by-side already in Late Antiquity.

שלוניתא: This epithet is translated by Müller-Kessler as ‘Plünderin’.²⁷

חטיפתא: Probably a corruption of חטיפתא, which occurs in the bowl parallels to this part of the formula (see synopsis below).

(עריכ[ו]ן): This seems to be a corruption of סעריכון, as may be seen from the synopsis below. As the synopsis makes quite clear, some seven words

23. See Ortal-Paz Saar, ‘Success, Protection and Grace. Three Fragments of a Personalized Magical Handbook’, *Ginzei Qedem* 3 (2007), pp. 101–35. In that specific case, the use of the patronymic in addition to the matronymic (which is the norm in most magical texts), was probably due to the high social status of יהודה בר יאשיה, who may have been quite well known by his patronymic.

24. Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Publications of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 313b.

25. ZHS, p. 46.

26. Mark J. Geller, ‘Two Incantation Bowls Inscribed in Syriac and Aramaic’, *BSOAS* 39 (1976), pp. 422–7, on p. 426.

27. ZHS, p. 191a.

(ארבעתיכין... סתיר) were lost during transmission (presumably, when a copyist skipped a line of text while copying his *Vorlage*), a loss that left the word סעריכון entirely devoid of any context or meaning.

13 שמי: Read שמיע as found in bowl parallels, see end of line 15 (דשמיע) and synopsis below.²⁸

16–17 ליכי [נחית] גיטה Our reconstruction of the lacuna is based on the parallel provided by the bowls, as may be seen in the synopsis below.

17 לשמיכון Here too the ע has been elided and might attest to an element of oral transmission from the east, where the gutturals were less pronounced.

The *get* formula and its parallels in the Babylonian incantation bowls

As noted above, the Genizah fragment published here is a part of a magical recipe book, probably dating to the first half of the twelfth century, one of many such fragments in the Cairo Genizah. What makes this one unusual is the recipe titled גט ליליתיא, ‘A deed of divorce for Lilith’, which clearly is based on a long formula that is already attested in the Babylonian incantation bowls. The first example of such a magical *get* was initially edited by Thomas Ellis and soon after by Montgomery, who made some additional comments about it.²⁹ Shaked considered the magical *get* in greater detail in a paper he published in 1999.³⁰ Most recently one of the current authors devoted another article to this aspect of the Jewish Aramaic Babylonian incantations.³¹ It seems that although the concept of ‘divorce’ can be found in association with the expulsion of demons in earlier Babylonian magical literature, the use of the human divorce-writ formula *per se* for this purpose

28. On the weakening of the *ayin* see M. Morgenstern, ‘On Some Non-Standard Spellings in the Aramaic Magic Bowls and Their Linguistic Significance’, *JSS* 52 (2007), pp. 245–77, on pp. 249–51.

29. See Ellis in A.H. Layard, *Discoveries Among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (New York: John Murray, 1853), pp. 512–14; for Montgomery’s notes, see AIT, pp. 158–9.

30. Sh. Shaked, ‘The Poetics of Spells. Language and Structure in Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity. 1: The Divorce Formula and Its Ramifications’, in Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn (eds), *Mesopotamian Magic. Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* (Groningen: Styx, 1999), pp. 173–95.

31. Dan Levene, ‘“A Happy Thought of the Magicians”: The Magical *Get*’, in Robert Deutsch (ed.), *Shlomo: Studies in Epigraphy, Iconography, History and Archaeology in Honor of Shlomo Moussaieff* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 2003), pp. 175–84.

is unique to the late-antique bowls.³² It also seems that this usage originated in the Jewish magical tradition, but spread to other communities as well, since some of its elements are also found in the contemporary Syriac and Mandaic magical texts.³³

While the appearances of the *get* formula in the Babylonian incantation bowls have often been noted, no parallel formula has ever been identified outside this specific corpus, and hence the significance of the close parallel presented here, stemming from the Cairo Genizah and copied half a millennium after the latest incantation bowls, which date to the seventh or eighth century. To highlight the importance of this parallel, we may note that while the use of *get* formulae against demons occasionally appears in the Genizah magical texts, in all the other Genizah fragments which use ‘divorce’ clauses to drive demons away these clauses seem based on the standard rabbinic *get* formula, and thus show no indebtedness to the formulae found in the Babylonian incantation bowls.³⁴ Moreover, in more modern Jewish amulets one often finds a reference to a *get* sent out against Lilith, and even to the *get* of R. Joshua ben Peraḥia, but these formulae are very different from the elaborate deeds of anti-demonic divorce found in the bowls.³⁵ It is only in this fragment that we find a magical *get* formula which is closely paralleled in the Babylonian incantation bowls.

To clarify the structure of our recipe, and for easy reference in the ensuing discussion, we have divided the relevant lines of the Genizah fragment HUC 1029 into five sections, as follows:

32. For the Babylonian precedents, see Shaked, ‘The Poetics of Spells’ (above, n. 30), p. 175, n. 11, citing Stol’s discussion of how the ‘enactment of a divorce lived on in the much later Aramaic incantation bowls’ (M. Stol, *Epilepsy in Babylonia*, Cuneiform Monographs, 2; Groningen: Styx Publications, 1993, p. 100). See also W. Farber, ‘How to Marry a Disease. Epidemics, Contagion, and Magic Ritual Against the “Hand of a Ghost”’, in H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, Marten Stol and C.R. van Tilburg (eds), *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 117–32.

33. See Shaked, ‘The Poetics of Spells’ (above, n. 30), p. 175, n. 9, p. 176, n. 13, and p. 184, n. 41.

34. The Genizah anti-demonic *get* formulae currently known to us are JTS 3381.7–8 and T-S AS 143.416. Both bear no real resemblance to the *get* formula which interests us here.

35. For a pertinent example, see the amulet photographed in Filip Vukosavović (ed.), *Angels and Demons. Jewish Magic Through the Ages* (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 2010), p. 92, which begins with: *דין גטא דלילית משמיה דרבי יהושוע בן פרחיה*, but is based almost exclusively on the standard rabbinic *get* formula, and not on those found in the bowls. There is a similar amulet in the Moussaieff collection, which has yet to be published.

1. גט ליליתא
2. (9) בכך בשבא דהוא יום כך וכך לירח פל' דשנת (10) כך וכך לשטרות
3. גיטא דליליתא
4. הדין ליליתא (11) דשריא בבית פ'ל ב'פ' הנולדה מפ'
5. אל ליליתא (12) דברא ושלוניתא וחטיטתא תלתיכון (עריכ[ו]ן) (13) שמי עליכון דאבוכון פלחין שמיה ואמכון (14) פלחדא שמה פוקו בשלום מן ביתה דפ'ב'פ' (15) הנולדה מפ'ל' ומן פגריה דשמיע עליכון (16) בשמתא דשלח ר' יהושע בן פרחיה גיטה (17) [נחית?]³⁶ ליכי מן שמיא וכתוב ביה לשמיכון

1. 'A deed of divorce for Lilith' (גט ליליתא) is the title of the recipe that follows and represents the motif of the magical *get*. The phrase is almost identical with the גיטא דליליתא found in part 3, on which see further below.

2. This section of the formula is one that we also find in human deeds of divorce. In the earliest extant Jewish *get*, the one from Masada (P. Mur. 19), the date is given as *באחד למרחשון שנת שח*, 'On the first of Marḥeshwan, year 6' (presumably, of the Great Revolt, that is 72 CE), but the Gaonic and medieval *gittin* already carry longer dating formulae.³⁶ According to Yehezkel David, the use of the era of documents was common both in Babylonia and in Fustat (Cairo), and he notes that *gittin* from eleventh-century Fustat tend to refer to 'the year X in our common reckoning (למנינא דרגיליננא ביה)', but from around the middle of the twelfth century refer to 'the year X of the era of documents (לשטרות)'.³⁷ This change might be reflected in the phrasing of the dating formula in our recipe, but it must be noted that a fuller study of this issue will only become possible once all the dated incantation bowls are identified and published, so that their own dating formulae may be analysed, and compared with the one attested by our Genizah recipe. This also applies to the absence of any reference in our Genizah recipe to the place where the

36. For the Masada *get*, see P. Benoit, J.T. Milik and R. de Vaux, *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (DJD II; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 104–9; for the history of the *get* formula, see Shamma Friedman, 'The Jewish Bill of Divorce from Masada Onwards', in Albert I. Baumgarten, Hanan Eshel, Ranon Katzoff and Shani Tzoref (eds), *Halakhah in Light of Epigraphy* (Journal of Ancient Judaism, Suppl. 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), pp. 175–84.

37. David, *Formulae of the Bill of Divorce* (above, n. 21), p. 21.

get was written, which would be obligatory in a human *get* but may have been deemed unnecessary, or merely optional, in *gittin* written for Lilith.

3. In his discussion of the magical *get*, Shaked presents five groups of bowl texts in which it is articulated in distinct formulaic variants. He classifies them as A–E and provides examples of each variant. The example given for variant D starts with the words **הדיין גיטא לשידא**, ‘this is a deed of divorce for a demon’, quite like the opening formula presented here.³⁸ A possible sixth variant, which we might call F, is found in Moussaieff bowls 103 and 119, both of which start with an even closer parallel to our Geniza fragment: **הדיין גיטא דליליהא**, ‘this is a deed of divorce for Lilith’.³⁹

4. The use of the Aramaic verb **שרי** to refer to the demon ‘dwelling’ in the house of its human victim is common to a variety of bowl formulae, but is found only in one of the other variants of the bowl *get* formula, the one classified by Shaked as D.⁴⁰ This does not exclude the possibility that there might have been a late-antique formula that combined both a formula with the verb **שרי** and one like that found in section 5 of our Geniza recipe. If, however, the evidence we have from the bowls is representative, one might suggest that the Geniza formula is the product of a gradual evolution or editing in the medieval stage of its textual transmission, a suggestion that is supported by the presence of the Hebrew expression (**בבית פל ב'פ' הנולדה**) (**ב'פ'**) that is only known to us from the later sources.

5. This section is the most striking in that it is closely paralleled in the variant of the *get* formula which Shaked has classified as B.⁴¹ This particular formula is divided by him into six parts (a–f) of which the third (c), that he considers as the body of the spell, is the one within which our parallel occurs. As we can see from the synopsis below the formula in the Genizah fragment is truncated as it misses out the invocation ‘By the name of’ that starts it in the bowl. The repetition of the demonic lineage in the bowl is also absent from the Genizah fragment.

38. Shaked, ‘The Poetics of Spells’ (above, n. 30), p. 193.

39. See Dan Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls. Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity* (The Kegan Paul Library of Jewish Studies; London: Kegan Paul, 2003), pp. 51–62.

40. Shaked, ‘The Poetics of Spells’ (above, n. 30), pp. 184–6 and 193–4.

41. In the following synopsis, we ignore one more example found in bowl MS 2053/251, as it was only partially edited by Shaked, ‘“Dramatis Personae”’ (above, n. 1), pp. 383–4.

Some broader conclusions

Having shown that the *get* formula found in the Cairo Genizah fragment HUC 1029 is at least partly based on older precedents, which are well attested in the Babylonian incantation bowls (and hitherto unattested in any other body of Jewish magical texts), we may be fairly certain that this formula had made it, presumably in written form, from Sasanian Babylonia to the Middle Ages. This raises several important questions, the first of which is whether the other magical recipes in the quire of which HUC 1029 once formed a part came from a similar source: in other words, whether this is a copy of a copy of a much older Jewish magical recipe book, whose ultimate origins lie in Sasanian Babylonia, or a single recipe of an older Babylonian origin, embedded in a magical recipe book whose other recipes stem from non-Babylonian origins. As a rule, the magical recipe books from the Cairo Genizah tend to be very eclectic, copying their recipes from many different sources and combining them on an *ad hoc* basis.⁴² And yet it is quite common for a collection of magical recipes to contain a series of recipes which clearly stem from the same origins, and especially of recipes of a late-antique Palestinian origin.⁴³ Unfortunately, only one other magical recipe is extant on our fragment, and as we noted in our brief comments, it finds several parallels in the Babylonian incantation bowls and in the *Pishra de-Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa*, but also finds several parallels in the Cairo Genizah. However, the longest and clearest parallel is found in a Genizah magical recipe (found in both MTKG I, 2 and MTKG I, 20) which displays some signs of a late-antique Babylonian origin (see above, notes to verso, lines 6–8), and the paper on which our fragment was written may also point in a similar direction (see above, n. 6). Thus we should like to leave room for the possibility that the entire fragment HUC 1029 is of Babylonian origins, without, however, pressing this point any further, at least until other fragments from the same quire are identified and published. And yet, regardless of its ultimate provenance, the fact that this fragment was copied in the twelfth century, and that it ended

42. For a case in point, see G. Bohak, 'Catching a Thief. The Jewish Trials of a Christian Ordeal', *JSQ* 13 (2006), pp. 344–62, but many other examples could easily be adduced.

43. For example, see MSF, G18 (T-S K 1.143); another example is Bodleian Heb. a.3.31, for which see G. Bohak, 'The Magical Rotuli from the Cairo Genizah', in Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari and Shaul Shaked (eds), *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition* (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture, 15; Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 321–40.

up in the Cairo Genizah, clearly shows that some late-antique Babylonian Jewish magical spells could still be available to the Jews of medieval Cairo.

As noted at the beginning of this paper, the Genizah fragment HUC 1029 provides the first clear example of a long, close and specific parallel between the Aramaic incantation bowls and the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, and we are currently aware of one more such example, discovered by James Nathan Ford (see above, n. 4). In both cases, there is no doubt that the parallels between the bowls and the Genizah fragments are not due to a general similarity of different corpora of Jewish magical texts, but to the direct transmission of late-antique magical formulae into the Middle Ages.⁴⁴ It is perhaps not a coincidence that the example presented in the present study happens to be a formula which recurs quite often in the bowls themselves, as its great popularity among the bowl-writers of Sasanian Babylonia abetted its survival into the Middle Ages. However, it clearly did not enjoy much popularity among the magical practitioners of the Middle Ages, hence its survival in a single copy only (at least among the c.120 published Genizah magical texts, and c.800 unpublished ones, that we have surveyed thus far), as against the multiple copies of more popular magical recipes in the Cairo Genizah and in later Jewish magical manuscripts. With the change of time, place, and surrounding cultural environment, the magicians' preferences, and those of their clients, tend to change as well, and a formula that was very popular in one period may become quite useless, or even meaningless, in a later period, especially if it also was corrupted during the long period of textual transmission.

To end the present paper, we may note that the formula whose survival into the Cairo Genizah we can now document with certainty happens to be one of the eight examples adduced by Shaked as unique to the Babylonian incantation bowls and unattested in the Cairo Genizah materials.⁴⁵ It is our hope that as more bowls, and more Genizah fragments, are published and analysed, more such parallels would be identified. Moreover, it is our hope that the identification of such parallels would help establish criteria

44. These data join the more extensive evidence for the transmission of late-antique Palestinian Jewish magical texts in the Cairo Genizah, for which see G. Bohak, 'The Jewish Magical Tradition from Late Antique Palestine to the Cairo Genizah', in Hannah M. Cotton, David Wasserstein, Jonathan J. Price and Robert Hoyland (eds), *From Hellenism to Islam. Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 321–39.

45. Shaked, "Dramatis personae" (above, n. 1), pp. 383–4.

for identifying other Genizah magical recipes as ultimately stemming from Sasanian Babylonia rather than from Byzantine Palestine. And yet the volume of hitherto published texts from both corpora already is large enough to make it very clear that such parallels are the exception rather than the rule, and that even the *get* formula discussed in the present paper did not enjoy a wide circulation in the world of the Cairo Genizah. In fact, the few long magical formulae from Sasanian Babylonia that somehow survived into the Middle Ages only serve to highlight the great gulf separating the Babylonian incantation bowls from all the textual remains of later Jewish magic. Perhaps because of its mostly oral nature, the Babylonian Jewish magical tradition seems to have perished with the Muslim conquest, leaving only a few relics in the Jewish magical tradition of the Middle Ages.

Appendix: a synopsis of the Genizah formula and the parallels from the incantation bowls⁴⁶

HUC 1029	AIT 8	ZHS 11a	ZHS 11b
גט ליליתא בכך	בישמיה דמרי	דין יומא מכל	בישמיה דמרי
בשבא דהוא יום	אסואתא מזמן הדין	יומא שני ודרי	אסואתא אסיא
כך וכך לירח פל'	כסא לחתמתא	עלמא אנה הוניק	רבא דרחמי מזמן
דשנת כך וכך	דביתיה דהדין	בר אחת שביקת	הדין כסא לחתמתא
לשטרות גיטא	גיונאי בר מאמי	ופיטריית ותרכית	דביתיה דארדוי בר
דליליתא הדין	דתיזא מינה ליליתא	יתיכי כומי{ט}ש	הורמיזודך דתיזא
ליליתא דשריא	בישתא בישמיה	ליליתא אנהי	ותיתרחק מיניה
בבית פ'ל ב'פ'	דפזר(יה)		ומין ביתיה ומין
הנולדה מפ'			דירתייה ומין אחת
			איתתייה בת פרכוי
			ליליתא בישתא
			דמיתחזיא לה
			בחילמא דליליא
			בישמיה דפזריה
אל	יהאל		יהאל

46. We have taken the text of AIT 8 from Shaked, 'The Poetics of Spells' (above, n. 30), pp. 189–90; for a slightly different reading, see ZHS 11c.

