

Chapter X LAMAŠTU, DAUGHTER OF ANU. A PROFILE

F.A.M. Wiggermann

Introduction and sources

Outstanding among all supernatural evils defined by the ancient Mesopotamians is the child snatching demoness called Dimme in Sumerian, and Lamaštu in Akkadian.¹ Whereas all other demons remain vague entities often operating in groups and hardly distinct from each other, Dimme/Lamaštu has become a definite personality, with a mythology, an iconography, and a recognizable pattern of destructive action. The fear she obviously inspired gave rise to a varied set of counter measures, involving incantation-rituals, herbs and stones, amulets, and the support of benevolent gods and spirits. These counter measures have left their traces in the archaeological record, the written and figurative sources from which a profile of the demoness can be reconstructed.

Often the name of a demon or god gives a valuable clue to his (original) nature, but both Dimme and Lamaštu have resisted interpretation. The reading of the Sumerian logogram ^dDIM(ME) as Dim(m)e is indicated by graphemics: the ME wick is usually (but not always) added to the base ^dDIM does not change the meaning, and must be a phonetic indicator. The presumed gloss *g a b a š k u (YOS 11 90:4, see Tonietti 1979:308) has been collated and reinterpreted (A. Cavigneaux, ZA 85 [1995] 170). The word may be identical with the Sumerian word for "corpse", "figurine", but this is far from certain, and does not clarify the behaviour of the demoness. Lamaštu should be and could be a Semitic word, but the Akkadian lexicon does not offer a suitable root to derive it from. It remains possible that Lamaštu is an irregular (and specialized) by-form of *lamassu*, and consequently a loan from Sumerian l a m a š, "(lower) goddess", "figurine". In fact the regular form *lamassu* occurs as a variant of *Lamaštu* in some SB sources (MSL 10 105:221, M.J. Geller, Iraq 42 [1980] 31:178' with var.); an unpublished Babylonian duplicate to KAR 44:13 has *Lamma-sa* instead of ^dDIM.ME (Rm 717+, to be published by M.J. Geller). If this derivation holds true, "figurine" would be the common denominator of the Sumerian and Akkadian names. This tallies with the fact that ^dDIM.ME denoting a supernatural being may be supplied with the determinative for wooden objects (UET 7 93 r. 18, OB Lex., gloss damaged; MSL 6 142:177, 143:194a, SB Lex., cf. UHF 433; see also Cavigneaux, ZA 85 [1995] 38f.).

The earliest evidence for rituals specifically against Dimme/Lamaštu stems from the early second millennium (Middle Bronze Age), when we find her described or addressed

¹ This chapter is not a literal translation of the original chapter in Dutch, but a completely rewritten and updated new version. A final study of the Lamaštu material must await W. Farber's re-edition of the texts, and a detailed assessment of the amulets. The canonical text (abbreviated Lam.) is cited after Farber's aforementioned reconstruction, and I owe him gratitude for letting me use his text before publication. The literature is cited according to Assyriological customs; items cited as AUTHOR DATE appear in the bibliography at the end of the chapter. An important review of all material is Farber 1980-83.

in incantations written in the Sumerian,² Old Babylonian,³ and Old Assyrian⁴ languages. Although some of the material in these early incantations does not recur in the later tradition, there is little or no difference in content, and the image of the demoness appears fully formed, defined by fixed epithets and descriptive phrases. That these texts stem from an oral rather than a written tradition is shown by the many minor variations between essentially identical texts. Dimme occurs in Sumerian incantations of the late third millennium, but the contexts are fairly unspecific,⁵ and do not allow a reconstruction of her early history. It has been suggested that Lamaštu originates in Elam, not in Sumer, and that her history goes back at least to the Proto-Elamite Period, when a supposedly Lamaštu-like lion figure appears in Elamite art (van Dijk 1982:104ff., following E. Porada, *JAOS* 70 [1975] 223ff.).⁶ The relation between the Elamite lion figure and the Lamaštu of Mesopotamian iconography is extremely tenuous, however, and since without this relation the theory of Lamaštu's Elamite origin loses its main support, it must be rejected.⁷

The most complete source of information on Lamaštu is a first millennium text (SB) on three tablets, describing the progress of an incantation ritual (*agenda* and *dicenda*) against Lamaštu. The text comprises some 600 lines, of which only 30 are missing or incompletely preserved. On account of its standardized form this series is called the "canonical"; manuscripts have come to light from Nineveh (library of Ashurbanipal), Sultantepe (ancient Huzirina), Aššur, and southern Mesopotamia.⁸ The Middle Babylo-

² *TIM* 9 63 (cf. Toniatti 1979, with duplicates) contains a sequence of incantations in Sumerian and Akkadian (Left edge: *a-a-i-tu-ra*); *YOS* 11 88; Cl. Wilcke, *AFO* 24 [1973] 14f. no. 5:8 (incipit only).

³ *BIN* 2 72 (von Soden 1954; collations Farber 1981:72; translation B. Foster, *Before the Muses* [1993] 130); BM 122691 (Farber 1981:60ff.), with duplicate Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994:85f. (Wasserman 1994; van der Toorn 1999; translation Foster, *Before the Muses* 132); BM 120022 (Farber 1981:60 h, translation *TUAT* II/2 257f.); CBS 10455 (Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994:88f.); *YOS* 11 19 (translation Foster, *Before the Muses* 131; in the first line read *'nam-ra'-a[?]* instead of *bi-ša-at*); *YOS* 11 20; *YOS* 11 21 (against a Lamaštu-like demoness).

⁴ *BIN* 4 126 (von Soden 1956; collations Farber 1981:72; translation Foster, *Before the Muses* 59); Michel 1997.

⁵ 5N-T 42:9 *ki-sikil-dim-me-imin-na* (unpub.), "the seven Dimme damsels"; HS 1552:2 *dim-gig-dè-èš-ba-an-dib-lú-i-tag* (unpub., ref. courtesy M.J. Geller), "Dimme, in order to cause illness, passed through the house and touched the person"; HS 1600 i 7 *dim-a-dingir-re-ne-kam-lú-i-ur-ur-e* (unpub., ref. courtesy M.J. Geller), "Dimme, who is the offspring of gods, sweeps over the person". In *UHF*, an OB series of third millennium descent, Dimme occurs in lists besides Dimme-a and Dimme-LAGAB (Geller, *FAOS* 12 152).

⁶ For this figure see P. Amiet, *La Glyptique Mésopotamienne Archaique*² [1980] nos. 576–589.

⁷ Although the Elamite lion figure is in certain respects similar to Lamaštu (masters animals, travels by boat), she is not an evil demon. Iconography expresses the difference by the position of the jaws: those of Lamaštu are always aggressively opened, those of the Elamite figure are always peacefully shut. Rather than an evil demon the Elamite figure is some sort of cosmic deity (matched by a similar bull figure), who together with her peers carries the earth (Amiet, *GMA* nos. 577f.). The ibex-demon adduced by van Dijk 1982:106 (see now E. von der Osten-Sacken, *Der Ziegen-Dämon* [1992]) is just another early master of the animals, and does not belong in the genealogy of Lamaštu. More relevant for the early history of Lamaštu is S. Dunham's attempt to reconstruct a Lamaštu-type ritual from the MBA child burials at Tell al-Raqā'ī (Dunham 1993); an image of Lamaštu herself, however, is not present, unless she is represented by the dog figurine (we will return to the dog below in connection with the mythology of Lamaštu; in Mesopotamia proper clay dog figurines occur as grave gifts in III millennium Ur, see E. Stronmenger, *RIA* 3 [1957–1971] 606).

⁸ Large parts of the canonical series were published in 1891 by Th.G. Pinches, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. IV² nos. 55, 56, and 58. A first edition, with some additional material, was made by Myhrman 1902. Much new material (in part already available to F. Köcher for his unpublished edition of the 1960s) will be published by W. Farber in his forthcoming edition of all Lamaštu texts.

nian (Late Bronze Age) forerunner form Ugarit has essentially the same incantations, but lacks a description of the ritual (Nougayrol 1969). One of the incantations (Inc. 10) of the canonical series appears occasionally on Middle Babylonian amulets; the first millennium amulets are inscribed with a similar incantation, or with a variety of others chosen partly from the Lamaštu series, and partly from elsewhere.

Outside of the canonical series directed specifically against the child snatching demoness, similar or identical incantation-rituals occur here and there in the context of other apotropaic or exorcistic manuals, for instance in a collection of rituals accompanying pregnancy and birth (Thureau-Dangin 1921 = *TCL* 6 49),⁹ and in one against (unnaturally) excited babies (Farber 1989a). A collection of alternative rituals stems from LB Uruk (*SBTU* 3 84), where manuscripts of the canonical series have not come to light (cf. Farber 1989b, and p. 240).¹⁰

Lamaštu is the only evil demon with an iconography. Textual clues enabled Thureau-Dangin to identify the demon on a group of figurative amulets, which by now has grown to 85 items (Thureau-Dangin 1921).¹¹ The amulets have received a fair amount of attention, especially from philological side,¹² but a full scale archaeological and art-historical study is still wanting. The corpus needs to be ridded of (possible) fakes (Nougayrol 1965, 1966, Farber 1989) and other types of amulets (no. 26), and related material, amulets¹³ as well as seals and wall reliefs, should be taken into consideration. Such a study cannot be undertaken here, but a provisional classification of the amulets is essential for the history of the demoness.

Towards a classification of the amulets

On the basis of provenance, paleography, choice of texts, and iconographical details the amulets can be distributed over four groups:

– Group A. In as far as provenanced, all amulets of this group stem from southern

⁹ With duplicate *SBTU* 3 118:121ff., cf. Farber 1989a § 39A, 1989b:229f., translation Foster, *Before the Muses* 864f.

¹⁰ For further Lamaštu-texts see Farber 1980–83 § 2, 1998, I.J. Finkel, *AuOr* 9 [1991] 92 (large tablet of Lamaštu incantations from the Hellenistic library of Tanittu-Bêl), *CTN* 4 104. An unknown Lamaštu incantation occurs in the catalogue VAT 13723+iv 25f.: *én u₄-bi u₄-kalag-ga kin-nam/ka-inim-ma-dim-me-kam nu-gig*; the canonical series is cited in the same text (iv 1f.). In the catalogue *KAR* 44:15 the series is adduced between those concerning women in childbirth and crying babies. Contrary to Nougayrol 1965:230², 1969 notes 7, 91, 92 (and B. Landsberger, *AfOB* 17 [1967] 52) *KUB* 37 61+ does not belong to the corpus (see now D. Schwemer, *Akkadische Rituale aus Hattuša* [1998] with an edition).

¹¹ The amulets are numbered as follows: 1–5 (Klengel 1960, 1961), 51–63 (Farber 1980–83:441), 64–67 (Wiggermann 1992:xiii), 68–70 (Farber 1989c), 71–78 (Farber 1997, 1998:63f.), 79 (Green 1997:152, 157 Fig. 19), 80–83 (*Auction Catalogue Sotheby's, Antiquities Erlenneyer Collection, Part II, Thursday, June 12 1997*), 84 (*Auction Catalogue Christie's, Wensday, December 13, 1995*, ref. courtesy R. de Maaijer), 85 (LB, no number; Photo in: M.A. Beek, *De Wereld van de Bijbel. Tentoonstelling ter gelegenheid van het honderdvijftig jarig bestaan van het Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1964–1965*, no. 18, Zutphen, Drukkerij Tesink, n. d.; below Fig. 1). A provisionally published amulet from Emar can be found in St. Dalley, B. Teissier, *Iraq* 54 [1992] 109 no. 8.

¹² Besides the works cited in the previous note see Frank 1908, 1941, Wiggermann 1983, Farber 1987.

¹³ Stone amulets (R.M. Boehmer, *BaM* 16 [1985] 101 no. 81, from Uruk, date uncertain); OB clay plaque with lion-demoness (?) brandishing dagger (F.M.Th. Böhl, *JEOL* 4 [1936] 266 Tf. 24h, A.R. Green, *BaM* 17 [1986] 172 no. 13); NA "stamp seal" representing Pazuzu, with incised Lamaštu on broken under-surface (S. Lloyd, *AnSt* 4 [1954] 104. Fig. 2). For possibly related foreign material see D.T. Potts, *Further Excavations at Tell Abraq. The 1990 Season* [1991] 93, Patzek 1988. For the Arslan Tash amulet see below note 79.

sources (including Elam), with the exception of two from Aššur (nos. 11 and 48), and one from Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta (no. 72). The inscriptions (including the pseudo-inscriptions)¹⁴ are paleographically Old or Middle Babylonian; the attested incantations are from the Lamaštu series (Inc. no. 10; see note 37), or from the series Ḫulbazizi, “The Evil is Eradicated”.¹⁵ The incantations of this collection are not specifically against Lamaštu, but against evil in general (*mimma lemnu*, “Any Evil”), which in the Akkadian versions is always addressed with masculine forms. Except on amulets featuring an image of Lamaštu, the same incantations occur on non-figurative objects, and on seals that date to the Kassite period.¹⁶ A (Late) Bronze Age date for the group is also indicated by the archaeological contexts of the provenanced pieces; the one exception (no. 73, from a LB grave) can be considered coincidental.¹⁷

Most pieces are cursorily executed, with lightly incised figures and signs (Figs. 1 and 2). Three amulets are well worked (nos. 18, Fig. 5; 39, 67), with the figures in deep relief. Unless holding something the demoness is depicted with outstretched arms and opened hands, the fingers widely spread. She has talons for feet, which may be cursorily executed (no. 22), or altogether omitted (nos. 12, 13, 40, 65, 69). Female characteristics are usually not expressed, but there seem to be pudenda on nos. 25 and 74, and breasts on no. 67. Twice the figure is dressed (nos. 40, 74). The most variable part of the demoness is the head, to which we will return below (Fig. 3); sometimes she is supplied with a tail (Fig. 3).

Scattered in the field are the objects that mark the figure as Lamaštu: practically always a comb and a spindle (never held in the hands), often a puppy and a piglet, rarely a scorpion, a snake, a donkey’s leg, and other objects,¹⁸ such as the toggle pin which

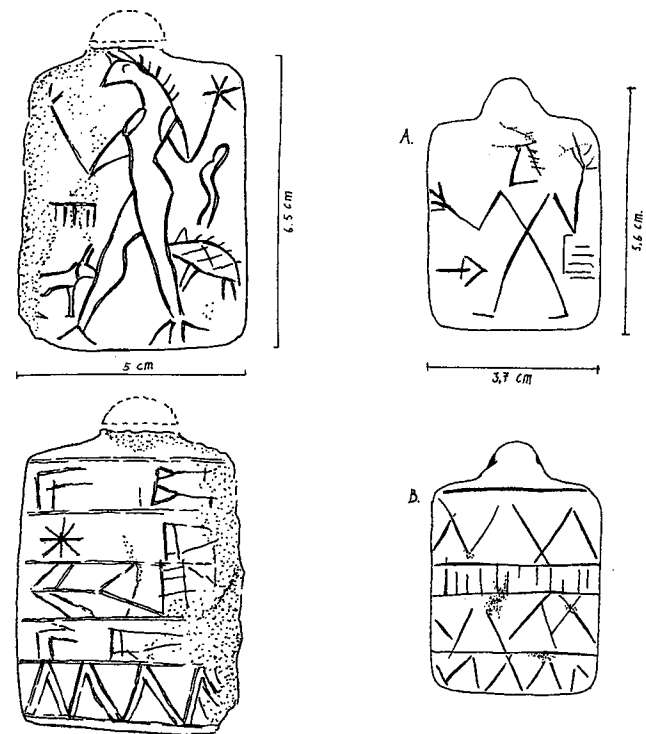
¹⁴ The many “PAP”, “GAG” and “DINGIR” like signs show the pseudo-inscriptions to be imitating Babylonian models; such inscriptions occur on provenanced (nos. 11, 16, 17, 21, 28, 42, 48, 57, 73, 74) and unprovenanced (51, 71, 85) pieces, as well as occasionally on Middle Babylonian (G. Loud, *Megiddo II* [1948] Pl. 160/6) and later (B. Parker, *Iraq* 24 [1962] Pl. XII/1) seals. The inscription on no. 66 from LBA Tchoga Zanbil is apparently copied from an OB schooltablet (Syllable Alphabet B 12–14, M.S. Ciğ, B. Landsberger, *Zwei Altbabylonische Schulbücher aus Nippur* [1959] 66). Pseudo-inscriptions imitating Assyrian paleographic models are very rare: no. 47 (apparently from Sam’al; see Farber, *N.A.B.U.* 1998/91, W. Schramm, *OrNS* 52 [1983] 458f., with an interpretation), no. 52 (unprovenanced).

¹⁵ The series is to be edited by I.J. Finkel; see provisionally E. Ebeling, *ArOr* 21 [1953] 357ff., E. von Weier, *SBTU* 2 105ff., A. Cavigneaux, B.K. Ismail, *BaM* 21 [1990] 447ff.

¹⁶ The incantation *zi-zi-i-g* (Ḫulbazizi no. 36ff., amulets nos. 13, 78, 82) occurs on D.M. Matthews, *Principles of Composition in Near Eastern Glyptic of the Later Second Millennium B.C.* [1991] nos. 65, 70, 144, 168, the incantations *silg-lá-lú-érim-ma* (Ḫulbazizi no. 2, amulet no. 15) on *ibid.* no. 143. Its is certainly no coincidence that two of the three first appearances of the fish-sage (*apkallu*) in Mesopotamian iconography (*ibid.* 180) occur on seals with these incantations (*ibid.* nos. 143, 144, and see below); the themes of the other seals do not have an obvious relation to magic. The incantation concerning the “seven heavens, seven earths” (Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994:73ff., W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* [1998] 208ff., 366f.) is another Ḫulbazizi incantation (*SBTU* 2 83:15f.), adapted for use against various evils, among them Lamaštu (*TIM* 9 63, see Tonietti 1979). It occurs regularly on (non-figurative) stone amulets, but also on clay tablets, some of which are amulets too (*YOS* 11 66 has a hole for suspension), rather than the products of ancient scholarship. A further Ḫulbazizi incantation (*ša maldi eršija*) is found on first millennium amulets (see below not 30).

¹⁷ Such coincidences are less uncommon than they may seem. At Tell Sabi Abyad, for instance, the expedition of the RMO Leyden found Halaf Pottery and third/second millennium seals and sealings in good Late Bronze Age contexts.

¹⁸ Some of the other objects are discussed below in connection with amulet no. 18 (Fig. 5).



Figs. 1 and 2. Bronze Age amulets nos. 85 (left) and 22 (right) belonging to Group A. Lamaštu is shown in a stance which is typical for this group, with in the field a comb, a spindle, a dog, a pig, and the lower leg of a donkey; on the reverse a pseudo-inscription and magical triangles. (Drawn from the original objects by F. Wiggermann).

helps to date the group to the Bronze Age.¹⁹ Sometimes Lamaštu holds a dagger (nos. 25, 79), or a dagger in one hand, and a snake in the other (nos. 28, 66).²⁰

Limited to this group are the triangles, which may occur in a square surrounding the demoness (nos. 12, 17), or as fill on either side of the amulet, sometimes replacing an inscription (nos. 22, 25, 43; Figs. 1, 2). The triangles (often in groups of seven) probably have a magical meaning, at which we can make an educated guess. Starting point are the two elaborate pieces of this group (nos. 18, 67), on which instead by triangles the demoness is squared in by *zi pa*-formulas (“be conjured by . . .”). During

¹⁹ After the Bronze Age the toggle pin is replaced by the fibula, which appears on amulets of groups C and D, see Wiggermann 1983:113⁷⁶, Farber 1987:96ff., H. Klein, *ZA* 73 [1983] 255ff.

²⁰ On the OB clay plaque (note 13) the figure seems to have breasts, and holds a dagger in her right hand, and a quadruped in her left. These details distinguish the figure from the contemporary lion-demon.

the performance of an exorcistic ritual the utterance of these formulas is accompanied by drawing a circle of flour around (a figure of) the evil to be exorcized. The purpose of the *zipa*-formulas is to bring the evil force under obligation of the addressed gods; the circle visualizes the boundary it is not to transgress,²¹ and it is more than likely that the triangles replacing the spoken word are a rendering of this circle.

The triangles on the inscription side of the amulets are probably related to the cancellation crosses that are sometimes encountered on OB clay tablets with incantations,²² and on OB and later amulets.²³ As is shown by the inscriptions on the later amulets, these crosses denote the presence of gods.²⁴ The triangles replacing an inscription can be viewed as variants of the pseudo-inscriptions that adorn so many amulets of this group; they could well be the visual counter-part of the abacadabra incantations that are common in the magical corpus.

– Group B. All provenanced items in this group originate in Assyria: Aššur (no. 9), Nineveh (no. 10), and Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta (unpublished, see K. Bastert, R. Dittmann, *AoF* 22 [1995] 29⁵⁸). The ones from Aššur and Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta are dated to the Late Bronze Age;²⁵ the one from Nineveh occurs on a stone mould together with a variety of trinkets that cannot be closely dated, but are consistent with a date in the same period. The Lamaštu of this group differs markedly from the one of group A; it is the fully developed canonical one, with heavy breasts, a lion's head, and donkey's ears. One detail, however, distinguishes this Lamaštu from that of groups C and D: she always holds comb and spindle in her hands, the later (and earlier) Lamaštu's never do (Fig. 4). On the basis of this observation a few items of dubious date and origin can be added to the group: no. 44, and probably no. 68 (Fig. 4, head different). The attribution of no. 44 to this group is confirmed by paleography, especially by the deviant form of ÉN (written "BAR/MAŠ+AN"), which is MA and occurs on other amulets of this period (nos. 27, and 9 writing AN+BAR).²⁶ The only incantation attested is the one from the Lamaštu-series (Inc. no. 10) that was current already in Group A (nos. 9, 44; cf. also nos. 27, and 35); the Sumerian *Ḫulbazizi* incantations from this time on disappear.

Thus, in Late Bronze Age Assyria, there were two images of Lamaštu current: the sketchy one without female characteristics of group A (nos. 11, 48, 72), and the modern one of group B. It has been proposed (Farber 1980–83:444, E.A. Braun-Holzinger, *RIA* 7 [1987] 97) to recognize yet a third Lamaštu figure (Fig. 4, no. 34) on amulets inscribed with Lamaštu incantations, and originating from the same place and period. The figure in question, however, has a long and well known history as an associate of Adad, Nergal, or Ninurta, and has nothing to do with Lamaštu. Since elsewhere it appears in apotropaic functions, it is probably as such that it appears on the Lamaštu amulets (Wiggermann 1992:185). On amulets of groups C and D it is replaced in this function by Pazuzu, an apotropaic figure that did not yet exist in the Bronze Age (Wiggermann forthc.).

²¹ See provisionally K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sancton in Israel and Mesopotamia* [1985] 51f., Lam. III 106ff.

²² *TIM* 9 68, *YOS* 11 66 (cf. Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994:79¹³; no empty spaces on this amulet), *YOS* 11 17.

²³ N. Wassermann, *RA* 88 [1994] 54 (OB); S.M. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung* [1994] 175ff. (SB, on clay amulets). See also Dalley, Teissier, *Iraq* 54, 109:8 (MB).

²⁴ The SB examples are unscrubbed (rarely), or contain a prayer for the protection of the house.

²⁵ The finds from Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta belong in the Late Bronze Age; for the date of the Aššur piece see O. Pedersen, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur, Part I* [1985] 120, 125 (M 14:35).

²⁶ The same spelling ("BAR/MAŠ+AN"), occurs on no. 24, which seems to be a later Assyrian amulet, with a more developed iconography.

That the exorcistic rituals involving this type of amulets enjoyed a certain popularity is shown by the mass production implied by the existence of a mould (no. 10). The actual metal amulets have not come to light.²⁷

Since they are fairly well known, and of less importance for the history of Lamaštu, the next two groups will not be treated in detail here. Group C comprises the Assyrian amulets of the Iron Age, Group D the Babylonian ones. The amulets of Group C (including Fig. 6) are related in style (and subject matter) to other products of Neo-Assyrian art, especially the palace reliefs, which eventually will allow a narrower dating. The style of the Babylonian amulets (nos. 6, 7, 8, 20², 33, 49, 53, 54, 61, 77, 80², 84) is sometimes comparable to that of the Assyrian ones (no. 77), and sometimes quite different, with less sturdy figures and a Lamaštu that could be called fair, if it were not for her head (no. 61). The most common incantation on amulets of both groups is an Akkadian one from the series *Ḫulbazizi*,²⁸ which just as the other incantations of this series is not specifically against Lamaštu. Further incantations stem from the Lamaštu series, or concern the apotropaic demon Pazuzu (19, 63).²⁹

A themically and stylistically related group of Iron Age amulets is conveniently treated in association with the Lamaštu amulets groups C and D. A demon to be exorcised is absent on these amulets, and all themes are protective or apotropaic. The two main actors are the protective figures Big-Day (Ugallu) and Lulal (Fig. 8), often assisted by Pazuzu, and once by a series of animal-headed spirits; divine supervision is denoted by the presence of the symbols of the main gods. The same iconographic elements recur on the Lamaštu amulets, and they will receive proper attention below in connection with the exorcistic rituals. If the amulet bears a text, it is either the same general *Ḫulbazizi* incantation as on the Lamaštu amulets,³⁰ or, on an amulet featuring Pazuzu, the self-introductory statement of this protective demon: "I am Pazuzu, the son of Hanbu ..."³¹

The scope of this type of amulets can be deduced from the scope of the figurative and inscriptional elements: the Ugallu and Lulal are very general protective figures,³² Pazuzu is occupied mainly, but not exclusively, with Lamaštu,³³ and the *Ḫulbazizi* incantation is directed against everything scary that hides below one's bed at night. Thus these amulets are not specifically against Lamaštu, but against various evils, including Lamaštu.³⁴

²⁷ The amulet of the mould shows Lamaštu standing on a boat, a common element on amulets of groups C and D, which here appears for the first time (also on no. 68; on donkey: no. 24).

²⁸ The incantation *ša maldi eršija* (*Ḫulbazizi* no. 60); see Wilhelm 1979, and the translation below p. 246.

²⁹ A few peripheral amulets are not discussed here: those from Sam'al (nos. 31, 46, 47, the former two with alphabetic inscriptions), one from Byblos (no. 60, with a deviant Lamaštu holding a quadruped), one from Tell Burate in the Judean Shephelah (no. 76, deviant Lamaštu with tail). Deviant members of groups A are nos. 14 and 24 (see note 37). The NB amulet from Suḫu (Cavigneaux, Ismail, *BaM* 21 [1990] 406f.) has an unusual concentration of incantations (one from the Lamaštu series, and four from *Ḫulbazizi*, including *ša maldi eršija*).

³⁰ The incantation *ša maldi eršija* occurs on the amulets Ass 4850 (Klengel 1960 no. 40c) and MAH 19228 (E. Sollberger, *Bulletin mensuel des musées et collections de la ville de Genève* 8/2 [1951] 2).

³¹ H.W.F. Sagg, *AfO* 19 [1960] 124ff. (= Klengel 1960 no. 40b).

³² Employed against a variety of evils in the ritual "To prevent Evil from Entering Someone's House" (Wiggermann 1992:7, 1ff.).

³³ Some of the evils against which Pazuzu is employed are enumerated in the Pazuzu ritual (Borger 1987:24, 97ff.; see also W.G. Lambert, *FuB* 12 [1970] 46f.: "Any Evil").

³⁴ All amulets of this group can be found together in A. Green, *BaM* 17 [1986] nos. 106–109, 111, 134 (Fig. 8). For other occurrences of the Ugallu and Lulal on (presumably) apotropaic objects see E.A. Braun-Holzinger, *Figürliche Bronzen aus Mesopotamien* [1984] 84f., Wiggermann 1992:173, 217, 220.

An inspired variant of this more general type of amulets occurs in LB Uruk.³⁵ The upper register shows two Ugallu's brandishing maces in order to keep intruding evil at a distance. The lower register visualizes the theme of the Hulbazizi incantation: the scared sufferer is sitting straight up in his bed, from under which crawls a little dragon, attacked by someone with a spear. The incantation on the other side is unreadable, at least on the published photograph.

The classification of the amulets reveals three major points: in the first place that typology and chronology are firmly connected, in the second place that the Bronze Age Lamaštu does not yet have a definite image, and in the third place that the canonical Lamaštu was developed on the threshold of the Iron Age in the Middle Assyrian north. The Middle Assyrian Empire is in many ways transitional between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, and it is during this period that Middle Assyrian artists created the compositional and iconographic canons that lie at the root of later Neo-Assyrian art.³⁶ Viewed in this perspective the Assyrian origin of Lamaštu's canonical image³⁷ becomes acceptable, although the possibility remains that future finds from Babylonia will change the picture.

In comparison to other demons Lamaštu's presence in the sources, written as well as figurative, is overwhelming. Her singular position is confirmed and defined by native demonology, to which we will now turn our attention.

Demonology and pathogenic activities³⁸

Lamaštu's specialty is killing babies. In order to understand the demonic, not to say satanic quality of her nature, the place of man in the cosmic order must be briefly reviewed. According to Mesopotamian mythology man was created to serve the gods, to build their temples, to feed and clothe them. Satisfactory service was rewarded with prosperity and a (long) life, failure (sin) was punished with adversity, disease, and untimely death. In the dominant theistic view of the universe (van Binsbergen, Wiggermann 1999) demons and ghosts implement divine rule. To be sure, demons tend to operate on their own, but they could be called to order as soon as the innocent human sufferer brings their insubordination to the attention of the gods. Babies are not yet employed in the service of the gods, and cannot yet have failed at it (sinned); in the absence of original sin, their innocence is exemplary. Lamaštu's specialty runs squarely against the divinely ordained order: by killing off innocent beings she interferes with the use of demonic punishment as an instrument of divine rule, by preventing potentially useful humans from reaching

³⁵ A. Becker, *Uruk. Kleinfunde I. Stein* [1993] 5 no. 7. A row of six similar (and slightly deviant) *ugallu*'s execute the orders of the gods named in the incantation on a NA amulet (Farber 1989:103ff.).

³⁶ For a review see D. Stein, *Mittelassyrische Kunstperiode*, *RIA* 9 299–308.

³⁷ The only element added to her image in the Iron Age is the "Knielauf" stance, to which we will return below. The incantation "Lamaštu, daughter of Anu, is her first name" occurs only on amulets of the Iron Age (nos. 5, 6, 16; Lam. Inc. 1), and seems to replace the incantation "Lamaštu, daughter of Anu, named by the gods" (Lam. Inc. 10; once on a badly broken Iron Age amulet no. 55) of the Bronze Age series (nos. 18, 24, 32, 67; on amulets with apotropaic Anzu: nos. 27, 34², 35²).

³⁸ For general background on the subjects discussed in this paragraph see W.G. Lambert (1825ff., *Myth and Mythmaking*), F.A.M. Wiggermann (1857ff., *Theologies, Priests, and Worship*), J. Scurlock (1883ff., *Death and the After-life*), W. Farber (1895ff., *Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination*), R.D. Biggs (1911ff., *Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*) in J.M. Sasson ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* [1995].

maturity she overrules the cosmic order in which the gods need man just as much as he needs them. Lamaštu must be thoroughly evil, the counterpart of exemplary innocence.³⁹

It is against this general cosmic background that the evidence for Lamaštu's position must be judged. Lamaštu is a daughter of Anu, the god of heaven,⁴⁰ and the sister of Inanna/Ištar and as such a high-ranking goddess. The incantations repeatedly stress her divinity,⁴¹ which is exceptional for demons. She is "singular" (*ištīar*) among the gods, however, and more like an evil spirit (*utukkat*); then, on account of her "bad disposition" (*tēmu la damqu*) and her "disrespectful/insubordinate proposal" (*malku parru'usah'u*), Anu expels her from heaven.⁴² The occasion for this irreversible measure was her request to have human flesh (babies) for dinner.⁴³

Lamaštu in this view is something unplanned, the occasional bad apple that is thrown out. Her presence on earth is only the consequence of her expulsion from heaven, not part of the divinely ordained cosmos, and it is for this reason that man can call upon the gods for help against her, which in fact he does in the exorcistic rituals. A different view is presented by the Arta-ḥasis myth, which attempts a grand scheme for human history, and comes up with a version of original sin. In this myth man is created from clay mixed with the blood of an executed rebel god, whose nature continues in the human taste for unruly behaviour. The noise gets so bad that Enlil is disturbed in his sleep, which forces him to radical measures, a flood that all but whipes out mankind. After the flood, the human cosmos is reorganized, on a less liberal basis in order to prevent a repetition of the events which led to the flood. To keep population growth in check certain types of women are not allowed to bear children, and *Pāšittu*, the "Exterminator" (a name of Lamaštu), is called up to "snatch the baby from the lap of her who bore it".⁴⁴ This Lamaštu is part of the divine order, she kills off innocent beings because they are overcomplete. Obviously it is not possible to solicit the help of the

³⁹ Innocent beings (women, servants, children) can become the victims of justified divine punishment only if they are viewed as extensions of their owner, at whose sins the punishment is directed. This derived construction occurs not only in the magical corpus (Wiggermann 1992:93 ad *KAR* 74; *SBTU* 3 84:37ff. involving Lamaštu), but also in the interpretation of history, when the nation is seen to suffer on account of an impious king. A related principle occurs in the laws, for instance in *CH* § 230, where an innocent child is put to death in order to punish his failing father.

⁴⁰ *BIN* 2 72:1, and passim the epithet *dumu-an-na* (Farber 1998). Sometimes Enlil or Enki/Ea is her father (Farber 1980–83:439). In the godlists Lamaštu is rare: *SLT* 122 v 18, dupl. 124 vii 22 (OB, context unrevealing), *An = Anu ša amēli* 153 (SB, followed by the other Dimme demons *Labašu*, *Aḥḥazu*, *Bibītu*, *Līlītu*).

⁴¹ E.g. *YOS* 11 20:3, *BIN* 4 126:1, Michel 1997:59f., 2, all with *ilat*, "she is a goddess"; see also note 185.

⁴² Quotations from *BIN* 4 126 (OA). For the later texts see Lam. I 112f., II 141ff., Thureau-Dangin 1921:16, 21ff. and duplicates.

⁴³ Lam. I 187ff., II 92ff.

⁴⁴ W.G. Lambert, A.R. Millard, Atra-ḥasis. *The Babylonian Story of the Flood* [1969] 102 vi 3f. *Pašittu* (var. *pišittu*, *Emar* VI. 3 no. 282:21), more explicitly *martu pašittu*, "exterminating bile" (cf. *BAM* 6 578 ii 39, in an incantation against bile), denotes the poison (*martu = imtu*) with which Lamaštu kills her victims, as well as a related but independent (note *CT* 4 3:12, 28 and duplicates, OB Sumerian inc.) demonic disease, perhaps biliary colic (F. Köcher, in C. Habrich et al eds., *Medizinische Diagnostik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* [1978] 35 f.³⁹), or a form of jaundice (see note 151). The reading of the Sumerian word for *Pašittu*, *zū-muš-i-kū-a*, is ascertained by an OB syllabic spelling (*zu-mu-še-ga*, *Iraq* 55 [1993] 102:18f.), and by a RS variant (W) of *Hh* XVI (KA-muš-še-ga-na, *MSL* 10 44:179). In *UET* 7 93:23f. (OB) *pašittu* is equated with Sumerian *līl-līl-ūs-sa* and *KA-ba-in-ši-ma-ku*, probably a corruption. The meaning of the Sumerian word can only be "consumed by the worm" (translated *ana ultim maruṣ* in *Iraq* 55 102:19, cf. *zū-muš = tulitu*), which should denote the same symptoms; the RS recension of *Hh* XVI translates *ma-na-šim-te* (*MSL* 10 44:179, 111:114, unclear). For an incantation against *zū-muš* - see *YOS* 11 36.

gods against a demoness that operates on divine assignment; but since in fact the gods do help against her, this legalized version of Lamaštu must represent a minority view, or at least not the one that informs the exorcistic rituals.

Although the evidence for the third millennium history of Lamaštu is limited, there are clear indications that in origin she was not the individual mythological figure of later tradition. In the Ur III period her Sumerian name, Dimme, is not spelled with the divine determinative, even though she is called the “offspring of gods”. A text of the same period reveals the early existence of the “seven Dimme damsels” (note 5), a feature which persists through time,⁴⁵ and adheres to the individualized Lamaštu in the form of her seven names.⁴⁶ Other early demons, specifically the *u d u g* and the *a s a g*, usually operate in vaguely defined groups of seven, and the Dimme damsels probably are just such a group, from which the later individual Dimme was singled out. The same happens to *A s a g*, who gets to play the part of the individualized evil demon “Disorder” in the Sumerian myth Lugal-e.⁴⁷

After her expulsion from heaven, the deity becomes a demon, a sister of the seven evil *utukku*-spirits, the “gods of the street”.⁴⁸ The defining characteristic of all evil spirits, demons as well as ghosts (souls of dead people) is that, unlike the gods, they do not have a cult, that they do not have temples where they are fed and clothed by their human servants. Rooflessly they roam the earth, and take by force what they do not get by right; mankind is useless to them, and therefore preyed on without restraint. Man counts on the gods for help against these illegal forces, but also places his hope in their selfish nature: instead of preying on him the demons may choose to take refuge with their father Enlil,⁴⁹ who apparently runs a home for the homeless members of the spiritual cosmos. The incantation concerning the “seven heavens and seven earths” (note 16) contains a clear expression of this exorcistic theme:⁵⁰ “as long as the man, the son of his god, is not well, may you (the demon) not eat food, may you not drink water, may you not sit on a chair, may you not lie in a bed . . . , may your hand not reach out to the table of your father Enlil”.⁵¹

⁴⁵ In *CT* 16 13 iii 21f. (*UH V*) the “seven evil Dimme/Lamaštu” (between other groups of sevenfold demons) are followed by a reference to the “seven heavens and seven earths”, which recur in an incantation against Lamaštu (and other sevenfold demons), see note 16. Her activities can be described as sevenfold (*BIN* 2 72:9, OB), as well as the measures taken against her (*BM* 120022:32f., *SBTU* 3 84:37ff., OB and SB). That the original Dimme is a type rather than an individual appears from the fact that with various additions (-a/LAGAB/ta b/gi a) the names of various individual demons result (see the dictionaries for Labašu, Aḥḥāzu, Bibītu, and Lilītu). These are referred to as “all Lamaštu’s” (^dDIM.ME *gab-bi*) in a first millennium prescription (stones and plants) against various evils (*CT* 14 16, *BM* 93084). ^dDIM.ME becomes a noun meaning “Lamaštu-type being” when it is used in the plural (A.R. George, *RA* 85 [1991] 148:156b, Commentary to *TDP* I; see also Lambert, *NABU* 1992/129:1), a usage that is attested also for the names of gods, e.g. in *KAR* 142 (seven “Enlils”, “Ninurta’s” etc.).

⁴⁶ Attested from the early second millennium onwards (*TIM* 9 63, Sumerian inc.), see Tonietti 1979:314ff.
⁴⁷ See J.J.A. van Dijk, *RIA* 7 [1987] 134ff., art. Lugal-e. An individualized cosmic version of the *ki-siki-lil-lá* lives in the trunk of the *huluppu* tree, where she represents the “air” (lil) in between Heaven (Anzu in the crown) and Earth (the snake at the roots), cf. V. Haas, *Geschichte der Hethitischen Religion* [1994] 145f. ad *EG* XII.

⁴⁸ See Tonietti 1979 315:3 (one of Lamaštu’s seven names).

⁴⁹ For the demonic quality of Enlil see provisionally van Binsbergen, Wiggermann 1999:26. A clear signal of Enlil’s quasi-demonic disinterest in man is the fact that the noise which leads him to ordain a flood recurs in *Enūma Eliš* as the motif of the primordial gods of chaos to act against the younger generation of cosmic gods.

⁵⁰ Also attested in the Lamaštu incantation *YOS* 11 88:34ff. and in *CT* 16 13:55ff. (*UH V*).

⁵¹ This passage lists the basic ingredients of a cult (food and shelter), and is the closest native formulation of the opinion expressed here, that demons do not have one.

Lamaštu stands out among the demons not only because of the severity of her destructive operations, but also because she, and she alone, is in origin fully divine. The *utukku* and their like are the “the brood of Heaven and Earth”,⁵² a by-product of creation without fixed place in the universe.⁵³ Ghosts (*eṭemmu*) are the souls of dead people, which would normally be taken care of and fed in the context of the domestic cult; only those that remain hungry or otherwise dissatisfied exhibit demonic behaviour and become carriers of disorder and disease.⁵⁴ Although in theory the evils can be distinguished according to descent, their choice of victims and aggressive arsenal is fairly unspecific, so that in practice there is much overlap between the members of the various classes, and a large pool of shared epithets and motifs.⁵⁵

An example of overlapping traits is supplied by Lamaštu and *Lilītu*. *Lilītu* (also *Ardat Lilī*), the “Spectre(-Damsel)”,⁵⁶ and her male counterpart *Lilū*, “Spectre”, form a sub-class of dissatisfied ghosts, the souls of those who died in a state of virginity and never knew the pleasures of love-making and family life.⁵⁷ Trying to make up for their unsatisfactory lives, they visit the living at night, and select a mate: *Lilītu* is a succuba, and *Lilū* an incubus.⁵⁸ Although *Lilītu*’s interest in babies is explicit in an OB incantation,⁵⁹ it is so far only her male counterpart who is attested in the medical corpus as a threat for the newly born.⁶⁰ According to an OB Sumerian prayer to the goddess of healing, Lamaštu prefers the cover of the night for her operations,⁶¹ just like the *lil*-spirits,⁶² so that the two different demonic types can be seen to converge in their timing (night) and victims (babies, but not exclusively). The observed convergence is made explicit in a SB explanatory god list, in which “Lamaštu of the night” (^dD i m - m e - ḡ i ḳ) is equated with *Lilītu* (*An* = *Anu ša amēli* 157).⁶³ The equation is based on a popular etymology, which derives *Lilītu* from Semitic **lyl*, “night”, instead of from Sumerian

⁵² *UHF* 247, and passim. The biographies of the various demons are not yet written, but see provisionally Frank 1908:14ff.

⁵³ For the relation between the primordial past and the demonic present see Wiggermann 1996:210ff.

⁵⁴ Although Lamaštu stands out among the demons, she does not become cosmic Evil (Satan) in a dualistic universe founded on the antagonism of Good and Evil; for the development of these ideas see N. Forsyth, *The Old Enemy. Satan and the Combat Myth* [1987].

⁵⁵ The description of “Fire” (fever) for instance shows similarities to that of Lamaštu; it descends from Heaven, attacks people and animals, and “extirpates [the baby] from its breast” (W.G. Lambert, *AfO* 23 [1970] 44, see also *STT* 136 iii 32’ff. with comparable statements concerning *išat pē muttaprištu*, the “flying fire of (burning) chaff”). The disease *anašubba* (a form of epilepsy), literally “Fallen-down-from-Heaven” (*miḡit šamē*), is, like Lamaštu, surnamed “Daughter of Anu” (*CT* 14 16 *BM* 93084:21, listed separate from ^dDIM.ME in the same text 22).

⁵⁶ Both Akkadian terms translate Sumerian *ki-siki-lil-lá*, which is comparable to *ki-siki-l-dim-me* (note 5) and probably in origin not a genitive construction (cf. the loanword *kiskililu*, and Lackenbacher 1971 ii 3), although occasionally construed as such (*EG* XII 44/142). Akkadian *Ardat Lilī* Literally means “Lilū’s girl”, but solely on this basis it cannot be concluded that the term denotes the souls of young women who by life were chosen by a *lilū*, and thereby missed out on a real husband (Scurlock 1991:181¹⁹²).

⁵⁷ For the basic texts see Farber 1989, M.J. Geller, *AfO* 35 [1988] 7ff., Lackenbacher 1971.

⁵⁸ The demoness is discussed by W. Farber, *RIA* 7 [1987] 23f., W. Fauth, *Lilītu und die Eulen von Pylos*, 53–64 in J. Tischler ed., *Serta Indogermanica* (Fs. G. Neumann) [1982], Scurlock 1991:153ff., M. Stol, *Epilepsy in Babylonia* [1993] 46ff., Ribichini 1978. For English translations of the basic texts see Foster, *Before the Muses* 870ff., Scurlock 1991:153ff.

⁵⁹ *YOS* 11 92:15f., Farber 1989:14ff. (edition): “she did not kiss the soft lips of a baby”.

⁶⁰ Passage cited by Stol, *Epilepsy* (note 58) 48, Volk 1999, 4⁺²⁰, Farber *RIA* 7 23 § 2.

⁶¹ Ninisina A. r. 47, cf. W.H.Ph. Römer, *AOAT* 1 [1969] 285: “Dimme and Dimme-a, who enter at night (*ku₄-ra ḡiḳ-ū-na*)”.

⁶² *Lam*. I 114f., cf. Farber *RIA* 7 23 § 2.

⁶³ Perhaps related is the Anatolian *DINGIR(-lim) GI₆(-ši)*, “Deity of the Night”, a demonic figure only partly

líl, “wind, spirit, spectre”, the true etymon.⁶⁴ When she “picks” (*hiāru*) the nation in order to select a victim, Lamaštu’s “fury” (*uzzu*) is compared to that of a *lilū*; the verb *hiāru* usually means “to select a mate”, and typically describes the activities of demons of the “spectre”-class.⁶⁵ Lamaštu is included in this class when she is chased off by the apotropaic demon Pazuzu, whom the accompanying incantations call “king of the evil *lilū*-demons”.⁶⁶ In a late variant version of the old incantation concerned with her names, Lamaštu is actually identified as *Ardat Lilī*.⁶⁷

In later Aramaic⁶⁸ and Jewish sources the Mesopotamian *Lilitu* survives as *Lilith*,⁶⁹ who is both a succuba and a child snatching demoness. She appears under the form of a woman with long hair and wings; men sleeping alone are in danger of being seized by her,⁷⁰ and she was Adam’s wife before Eve.⁷¹ In Aramaic and Syrian incantations she is the one who carries off, assaults, and strangles children,⁷² in later Jewish magic she enters the house of the woman in childbirth, to “kill and take away her son, to drink his blood, to suck the marrow of his bones and to eat his flesh”.⁷³

Hellenistic and later sources from Palestine, Babylonia, Ethiopia, and Greece (medieval) preserve a curious etiological historiola concerning the apotropaic measures to be taken against a baby-snatching demon(ess) variously called “Iron” (*Sideros*, *Wertzelya*) in the Aramaic and Ethiopian versions, and *Gyllou* in the Greek one.⁷⁴ The “childloving” (*paidophilōtéra*) *Gyllou*

anthropomorphic (partly woman, partly wolf or lion, wings; attribute animal lion or wolf) and receiving cultic attention in Šamuha, Parnašša, and Lagurama, see A. Únal, *The Nature and Iconographical Traits of “Goddess of Darkness”, 639–644* in M.J. Mellink et al. eds., *Aspects of Art and Iconography. Anatolia and its Neighbors* (Fs. N. Özgüç) [1993]. The meaning of *Ardat Lilī*’s epithet *u₄-da-kar-ra* (UHF 223 and passim) is in doubt (A. Ungnad, *Afo* 14 [1941–44] 267: “Lichtäuberin”, Wiggermann 1983:1007: “Girl, who has been snatched away from the light”). A late Akkadian translation has *ardat ša U₄-ma ihiruši*, “Girl, whom the storm-demon chose” (Geller, *Afo* 35 ff. ad 1, differently Farber 1989e), which, however, would require *u₄-dē-* in Sumerian, instead of consequent *u₄-da-*. Ignoring the late (and not necessarily true) Akkadian translation, and in accordance with grammar and demonology, I would prefer: “(Girl), who missed out on (her) day”.

⁶⁴ Discussed by Th. Jacobsen 1989.

⁶⁵ *YOS* 11 19:8f. For the phrase *ina uzzu ša lilī* see also B. Groneberg, *Lob der Ištar. Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin* [1997] 26 ff 18 with comments.

⁶⁶ K. Frank, *RA* 7 [1909] 25:2f., W.G. Lambert, *FuB* 12 [1970] 41ff., Text F (and duplicates), and note 189.

⁶⁷ *STT* 144:19ff., duplicated by the text on a clay cylinder from a Hellenistic grave in Ugarit, Nougayrol 1969:404 D, *RA* 61 [1967] 95. On the amulets Lamaštu is never winged, once in an incantation she is adhornto “fly away with the birds of the sky” (Lam. I 8, cf. forerunner Tonietti 1979:305, 23). The only time she is “supplied with wings” (Lam. I 114) occurs in a comparison with *lilū*-spectres, which unequivocally points to the existence of a winged *Lilitu/Ardat lilī* (cf. Wiggermann, *RIA* 8 [1994] 239ff. for wings on beings doing their work in the skies). Groneberg *o. c.* (note 65) 125ff. recognizes *Lilitu* in the winged goddess of the Burney relief (and other plaques), against which the objections of Jacobsen (cf. Wiggermann, *RIA* 8 240f.) and H. Frankfort (*Afo* 12 [1937–39] 128ff. concerning a cult of *Lilitu* still hold).

⁶⁸ The occurrence *llyn* on the amulet from Arslan Tash (note 79) is epigraphically uncertain (cf. C. Butterweck, *TUAT* II/3 [1988] 437, reading *ll wym*, “day and night”).

⁶⁹ Cf. L.K. Handy, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [1992] IV 324f., M. Hutter, in K. van der Toorn et al. eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*² [1999] s.v. *Lilith*. In the Hebrew Bible *Lilith* appears between other demonic beings in Isa 34:14. The Greek (LXX) and Latin (Vulgate) translations use (besides *onokéntauros*) *Lamia*, the name of a well attested Greek demoness perhaps of foreign origin (daughter of Belos and Libyē), who killed her own children, and sleeplessly roams the earth to steal those of other mothers.

⁷⁰ See Handy, *o. c.* (note 69) 325, with reference to Talmudic sources.

⁷¹ Krebs 1975.

⁷² Th.H. Gaster, *A Canaanite Magical Text, OrNS* 11 [1942] 41–79, esp. 51f. for strangling *Liliths* and related demons; J. Naveh, S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* [1985] 118, with reference to the *Qarīna al-Tāb’ia* of Arabic Islamic charms.

⁷³ Quoted from the late Jewish amulet adduced by Naveh, Shaked, *o. c.* (note 72) 118f.

⁷⁴ The text of a Palestinian Aramaic amulet on a sheet of silver is published and discussed with the parallels

(Gellō), “who, according to tradition, robs women from their newly born children” (Hesychios), has a venerable ancestry in Greece,⁷⁵ and seems to derive her name from Babylonia.⁷⁶ At the end of the historiola the demon(ess) swears that: “wherever the name of *s’wny wss’wny wsngrw w’rtyqw* is mentioned, I shall not kill or strangle”.⁷⁷ The apotropaic (supernatural) helpers are usually three, and their names vary somewhat, the most stable being that of *ss’wny*, who appears in the other sources as *swswny* (Palestinian Aramaic), *Sisinios* (Greek), *Susneyos* (Ethiopic), and *snswny* (Jewish magic).⁷⁸ This protective figure makes its first appearance in the West-Semitic sources in the VII century B.C. on a Phoenician amulet from Arslan Tash,⁷⁹ in which he is called to help against the “flying (demoness)” (represented by a sphinx), and against *hnqt’mr*, “she who strangles the lamb” (represented by a wolf devouring a child), obviously a version of the Mesopotamian Lamaštu.⁸⁰ In this early source the protective figure is called *Ssm bn Pdr*,⁸¹ who in its turn is a version of the Mesopotamian protective demon Pazuzu, son of *Ḥanbi*.⁸² Pazuzu’s apotropaic quality lies not only in his deterring appearance, but also, like that of *Ssn/Ssm*, in the mention of his name.⁸³

by Naveh, Shaked, *o. c.* (note 72) 104–117. For general background see W. Fauth, *Liliths und Astarten in aramäischen, mandäischen und syrischen Zaubertexten, WdO* 17 [1986] 66–94.

⁷⁵ West 1991, K. Krämer, *MAOG* 4 [1929] 113 (Syriac).

⁷⁶ Babylonian *gallū* denotes a death dealing being in the service of a god. As such he kills people when it is their time (cf. Lam. I 156: “without being a *gallū*, she (Lamaštu) has ended his life”), or corrects demons who transgress divine rules (Lam. II 7, where *Asalluḫi* acts as *gallū* against Lamaštu). The black dog who is Lamaštu’s *gallū* in Lam. I 14 executes her deadly orders, and can be called a manifestation of the demoness. It is this *gallū* which is the possible etymon for Greek Gellō, see K. Frank, *ZA* 24 [1910] 161, West 1991.

⁷⁷ Cited from an Aramaic incantation bowl from Mesopotamia, Naveh, Shaked *o. c.* (note 72) 191:12 (at the end the text refers to the demoness as *Lilith*).

⁷⁸ For the same figure as martyr in an Arabic source based on a Coptic rite, see Naveh, Shaked *o. c.* (note 72) 117: St. Sūsniyūs, the son of Sūspatros. The patronym reminds of *Ssm*’s father *Pdr* (note 81).

⁷⁹ For recent literature and a translation with comments see C. Butterweck, *TUAT* II/3 [1988] 435ff. (largely ignoring the remarks of A. Caquot, *JANES* 5 [1975] 45ff.). See also J. Teixidor, *Les tablettes d’Arslan Tash au Musée d’Alep, AuOr* 1 [1983] 105–109, J. van Dijk, *The Authenticity of the Arslan Tash Amulets, Iraq* 54 [1992] 65–68.

⁸⁰ For strangling *Liliths* and other baby snatching demons see the literature cited in note 72, for Lamaštu strangling her victims see *YOS* 11 20:10f., Farber 1981 BM 122691:7’ (both OB), Lam. I 157, and especially *SBTU* 3 84, in which a strangled lamb, dressed up as a child, functions as replacement of the threatened baby (Farber 1989b). The wolf (or dog) of the amulet has a scorpion’s sting, which marks it as supernatural. Lamaštu is imagined both as a dog and a wolf (see below), but rarely as tailed (see Fig. 3 for amulets of Group A; for a first millennium amulet form Israel see no. 76). See Fig. 4.

⁸¹ For this figure see W. Fauth, *SSM BN PDRŠŠA, ZDMG* 120 [1970] 229–256, for the variant *ssm ibid.* 252f.; according to Caquot’s collation (from a mould) the reading is *ssm bn pdr* (*JANES* 5 47). The nature of this figure as a protective god (rather than as a demon) is based on Fauth’s assessment of the parallels; the amulet is ambiguous on this point.

⁸² If indeed *Ssm* is a protective figure, and not a demon, he must be a protective figure as well in the Aramaic inscription on a bronze Pazuzu from Egypt (P.R.S. Moorey, *Iraq* 27 [1965] 33ff.): *lssm br pdr . . .*, “Oh, SSM, son of PDR”. Since in this case only Pazuzu (the statue) is present, since Pazuzu is like *Ssm* almost exclusively employed against baby-snatching demons, and since figures of Pazuzu are usually inscribed with their own name (note 83), we may conclude that *Ssm bnbr pdr* is the West-Semitic name of Pazuzu. This leaves open the identity of the axe wielding figure on the reverse of the Arslan Tash amulet. From a Mesopotamian point of view the “smiting god” can only be apotropaic, probably Nergal/Meslamtaea (Wiggermann, *RIA* 9 [1999] Nergal A § 6, B § 2). The only apotropaic figure of the text which fits is the chthonic god *Ḥauron* (see differently van Dijk, *Iraq* 54 66f., where the decisive Mesopotamian material is ignored; id., *The Canaanite God Ḥauron and his Cult in Egypt, GM* 107 [1989] 59ff., esp. 61ff. for his apotropaic role).

⁸³ The Pazuzu incantations inscribed on heads and figures of this demon relate immediately to the speech situation, the exorcistic act. In one Pazuzu introduces himself (“I am Pazuzu”), in the other he is directly addressed (“you, mighty one”). Pazuzu’s presence in the room is reinforced by the analysis of the amulets (see below p. 243f.).

The Greek version of the historiola (featuring Gyllou) preserves another trait that has its roots in Mesopotamia: the importance of knowing the names of the demoness. After a flogging⁸⁴ by Saint Sisinius and his companions, the demoness swears that: "wherever your name is written . . . , and my twelve and a half names, I shall not dare approach that house": then, requested to do so, she discloses her names.⁸⁵ The Mesopotamian rituals against Lamaštu specifically prescribe that Lamaštu's seven names be written on a cylinder seal of clay to be worn on the body (Lam. I 1ff.), and in fact incantations concerning her names (Lam. Inc. 1 or 10) are a persistent feature of the actual amulets.⁸⁶

Like demons, ghosts, and anti-social elements in general, Lamaštu seeks refuge beyond the edges of the oikumene, in the deserts, swamps and mountains where she makes home with the animals.⁸⁷ From there, with divine autocracy and stubborn fury,⁸⁸ she pursues her destructive goals: "she is furious, splendid, [frighte]ning, thoroughly independent, a goddess; though no physician, she bandages, though no midwife she wipes of the baby; she counts the months of those pregnant one by one, and blocks the gate of the one who gives birth".⁸⁹

Her favorite trick is to pose as midwife: "Bring me your sons, that I may suckle them, and your daughters, that I may nurse them, let me put my breasts⁹⁰ in your daughters' mouths."⁹¹ Presumably she learned this trade while still in heaven, where, according to an OB incantation, "Ea educated her".⁹² Once she gets hold of her victim, she kills it,

⁸⁴ On one first millennium amulet Pazuzu is replaced by a lion-man holding a whip and chasing Lamaštu (amulet no. 2; for identification with Latarek see Wiggermann, 1992:64).

⁸⁵ Naveh, Shaked, *o. c.* (note 72) 114, and see note 188.

⁸⁶ Other foreign deities which show similarities with Lamaštu are the Hittite goddesses "Deity of the Night" (note 63), "Mama" (^dDIM.NUN.ME), a mother goddess with demonic traits at home in SO Anatolia (V. Haas, *OrAnt* 27 [1988] 85–104), and the "evil woman" *Wišuriant*, the "Strangler", a Mother Earth type goddess with demonic traits (O. Carruba, *Das Beschwörungsritual für die Göttin Wišuriyanza*, *StBo* 2 [1966], V. Haas, *Geschichte der Hethitischen Religion* [1994] 156, 312, 642). The Turkish baby snatching demoness *Albmasty* (U. Johansen, *ZDMG* 109, 303–316) is probably etymologically connected with Lamaštu (E. Reiner, *Le Monde du Sorcier, Sources Orientales* 7 [1966] 80, differently W. Eilers, *Die Al, ein Persisches Kindbettgespenst* [1979] 58, with a Turkish etymology).

⁸⁷ Lam. I 195 ("climb your mountain like a wild ass"), II 41, W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [1960] 40:55, 52:8 (mountain); Lam. I 104, II 85 (*apu*, "canebrake"); *YOS* 11 20:5, Michel 1997:5 (*sassu*, "grass", *elpetu*, "reed"); in BM 120022:47ff. (OB) // Lam. II 188ff. Lamaštu is exhorted to go back to the mountain where she came from (behind seven and seven streams and mountain chains), and there play midwife (*wulludu*) for the animals of the steppe. For the uninhabited fringes of the earth as a netherworld see Wiggermann 1996; this horizontal netherworld is also the destination of Lamaštu in the rituals (discussions Thureau-Dangin 1921:183, *RA* 31 [1934] 120, B. Meissner, *MAOG* 8, 1/2 [1934] 14ff., *AJO* 10 [1935–36] 161²).

⁸⁸ Lam. I 37ff., and passim.

⁸⁹ *YOS* 11 19 (OB). In another incantation Lamaštu keeps a record of the passing months on the wall (Lam. I 119), a human interpretation of the ominous mud (see note 96).

⁹⁰ BM 120022:10 uses for breasts the word *kakku*, "weapon", a rare metaphor attested only in a late hymn to Nanaya (E. Reiner, *JNES* 33 [1974] 233, citing Lam. II 159).

⁹¹ Lam. I 120ff., B. Foster, *Before the Muses* 684f., with further references and translation.

⁹² *BIN* 2 72:1 (OB). Ea is the god of white magic and the art of healing. Babylonian *qadištu* usually denotes adult women living alone, who for their upkeep act (among other) as midwife. That in the case of Lamaštu the epithet "*qadištu*" of her divine brothers" (Lam. I 160) denotes midwifery is made entirely clear by the context of the OB parallel BM 120022:7ff. (for *kakku*, "breast" see note 90), with its reversal (play midwife, *ullidi*, for the animals) in *ibid.* 50.

either with her venomous milk,⁹³ or by strangulation.⁹⁴ Her evil being shows its presence by disturbing regularity: when she comes along, roads become impassable, she tears branches and fruit from the trees, churns up water, and leaves mud behind on the walls of houses.⁹⁶ Her destructive action is likened to the poison of a snake or scorpion,⁹⁷ to heat and cold,⁹⁸ she weakens muscles and limbs, turns the face yellow, and changes the features;⁹⁹ she is a "dagger that splits the skull", a headache.¹⁰⁰

Although babies and young children are her favorite victims,¹⁰¹ adolescents, adults, and old people are not excluded. This wider range of activities is acknowledged by the incantations against the demoness,¹⁰² by the diagnostic omens (next paragraph), and by the first millennium amulets, on which the ritual is performed for a bearded man.¹⁰³ Pregnant women are persued because of their unborn babies.¹⁰⁴

The appearance of Lamaštu matches the terror she inspires.¹⁰⁵ On the Bronze Age amulets (Figs. 1, 2, 5) she usually spreads out her arms and stretches her fingers: "her hands are a net, her grip means death",¹⁰⁶ "furious, and with very long hands, very long fingers and nails, . . . she entered the house through the front door, . . . spotted the baby,

⁹³ She spatters her victim with poison (*UHF* 649, 685 and duplicates), or kills him with the venom of a snake or scorpion (Lam. I 127); for her bile (= venom) see note 44. The enigmatic *mē pišri*, "water of deliverance" (*YOS* 11 20:12, Michel 1997:16, with comments) or *mē pušqi*, "water of anxiety" (Lam. I 43, II 125) denotes the fluids produced during birth giving, on which the baby may choke. Lamaštu uses it to kill babies as well as the elderly (Michel 1997:15), and it is probably one of the activities that make her a strangler.

⁹⁴ See notes 80, 93.

⁹⁵ Lam. I 38f., II 121ff. (and forerunner *YOS* 11 20).

⁹⁶ Lam. I 181ff. On this kind of traces left behind by a passing demon the omen specialist (*barū*) bases his interpretations (see above note 89).

⁹⁷ See note 93.

⁹⁸ Denoting fever, see Lam. I 4 ("who kindles the fire"), 62 (clad in heat and cold), 75 (burns the body like fire), 123 (carries heat and cold in her hand), 178 (brings sun stroke), II 10 (heat and cold). In the diagnostic omens fever is one of the elements leading up to the identification of Lamaštu as the evil agent: *TDP* 3:36, 82, 13:11, 12, 26:13f. (cf. *SBTU* 1 37:14f.), 40:30, 51, 52f., 53, (54), (59), (106); when the child does not run a fever, this is specifically observed (*TDP* 40:59, 106), and may alter the diagnosis (59: hand of the *Aḫḫāzu*, a Lamaštu like figure). Two canonical Lamaštu incantations are noted to be against *ummu lazzu*, "persistent fever", in their subscripts (Lam. I 22, II 209).

⁹⁹ *BIN* 4 126:20ff. (OA), Lam. I 71ff.

¹⁰⁰ Lam. I 3. In *CT* 17 25:5 *Lamaštu pašitu* is in apposition to SAG.GIG.

¹⁰¹ Lam. I 45ff., 132ff., II 88ff., II 138ff., Thureau-Dangin 1921:163, 17, and passim in the forerunners (e.g. *BIN* II 72 6ff.); under the name *pašitu*: see note 44, and *YOS* 10 23:8, 25:69 (OB omens). The canonical Lamaštu ritual is specifically for the protection of babies and young children.

¹⁰² That adolescents (*epḫu*, *ardatu*) are attacked is partly due to identification with *lilûlilûtu* (note especially *YOS* 11 19:8ff., also BM 120022:21, and passim, e.g. Lam. I 128f.). In Lam. I 67ff. the demoness has different names depending on her victims: the elderly (*Pasūsatu*, the "Cripple", see Wiggermann forthc.), young women (Lamaštu), children (Dimme). The artificial character of this passage – Dimme and Lamaštu are normally not differentiated, *Pasūsatu* is a hapax based on Pazuzu – reveals the intention to acknowledge adult victims on a mythological level. For the elderly (*šibūrum*) see also Michel 1997:15 (OA).

¹⁰³ Amulets 1, 5, 37, etc. Note that amulet 60 (from Byblos) was owned by an adult, Ili-ittiya, an officer of Šamši-Adad V and eponym of the year 804 (J.A. Brinkman, *JNES* 32 [1973] 46).

¹⁰⁴ For instance Farber 1989a § 39A, Thureau-Dangin 1921 (Lamaštu set on pregnant women and their babies by sorcery); *SBTU* 3 84:1ff. (Lamaštu causing miscarriage); cf. *Maqlû* IV 45 (witch sets up Lamaštu against someone).

¹⁰⁵ *palḫat*, "feared" (*YOS* 11 20:1, *palḫat* in Michel 1997:1); she inspires fear like Huwawa (*melammūša* kima *ḫumbaba*, Farber 1998:17).

¹⁰⁶ BM 120022:3, Lam. II 153; Farber 1981 BM 12269:1'ff.

and grasped him in his belly seven times".¹⁰⁷ According to the texts her head is that of a dog¹⁰⁸ or a lion,¹⁰⁹ her face that of an Anzû;¹¹⁰ her teeth are donkey's teeth,¹¹¹ her hair hangs loose, her breasts are bared,¹¹² she is spotted like a leopard¹¹³ or a fish;¹¹⁴ sometimes she is winged,¹¹⁵ rarely tailed.¹¹⁶ The evil eye of Lamaštu seems to operate as an independent entity, flying around in the house, causing quarrels among the tots, and destroying peaceful family life.¹¹⁷

Textually the image of Lamaštu is fully formed in the early second millennium, while iconographically it remains in flux until the Iron Age. On one point text and image agree from the start: like the other beings that are somewhere between god and man she is not completely anthropomorphic, she is a *Mischwesen* (monster), a hybrid composed out of human and animal parts. A clear verbal expression of Lamaštu's hybrid image occurs in an OB incantation: "Anu created her, Ea educated her, and Enlil allotted her the face of a bitch".¹¹⁸ The Lamaštu of the Bronze Age amulets (Group A) shows much variation, especially in the head, which may be that of a dog (wolf, or lion),¹¹⁹ a bird of prey,¹²⁰ a snake,¹²¹ or an *ugallu* (lion-demon).¹²² For feet she usually has the talons of a bird of prey, but her hands are human, on one amulet she has an excess of fingers corresponding to her sevenfold grasp (no. 18, Fig. 5).

The rest of Lamaštu's body is in most cases fully human, though without any sexual characteristics.¹²³ On an amulet from Ur (no. 42) and one from Thchoga Zanbil (no. 66, Fig. 3) she is practically all dog. Lamaštu's canine image survives, but only in the



Fig. 3 On amulets of the Bronze Age (Group A) the image of Lamaštu shows much variability, especially in the head. The body is usually formed as on Figs. 1 and 2, but there are a number of exceptions.

¹⁰⁷ BIN 2 72:3f. (OB, reading *i-za-at* for *ezzat* with CAD E 433a).

¹⁰⁸ Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994 88f.:5' *qaqqassa qaqqad ka-[al-ba-tim* (text broken, name of Lamaštu not preserved); the reading of BIN 2 72:2 *pa-ni KAL-ba-tim* remains uncertain (W. von Soden. *OrNS* 23 240 prefers *kal-* above *lab-*), see also Farber 1998:18 (*KAL-l^{ba}-pi re-e-e[s-sa]*).

¹⁰⁹ Lam. II 36, II 61 (and forerunner BM 120022:11), Thureau-Dangin 1921, 163:14 *qaqqadpān nēši dapini*, "the head/face of a ferocious lion".

¹¹⁰ Farber 1998:18.

¹¹¹ BM 120022:11, Lam. II 161.

¹¹² BIN 4 126:16f., Lam. I 143, Thureau-Dangin 1921:163 rev. 20.

¹¹³ Lam. II 37 (the usual translation of *nimru* is "panther").

¹¹⁴ Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994 88f.:3 (implying scales).

¹¹⁵ See note 67, and *itrus kappēša* in the incantation against Lamaštu's evil eye, in which her name is not mentioned, however.

¹¹⁶ See note 80, and Michel 1997:13.

¹¹⁷ Farber 1971 BM 122691:1ff., Cavigneaux, al-Rawi 1994:85, cf. Wasserman 1995, van der Toorn 1999. Note that Lamaštu is not named in these incantations. A reminiscence of Lamaštu's evil eye occurs in BIN 2 72:17f.: "they will fill your eyes with finely ground cress seeds".

¹¹⁸ BIN 2 72:1f.

¹¹⁹ According to native classification dog (UR.GI₇), wolf (UR.BAR.RA), and lion (UR.MAH) belong to the same family of UR-beings. In the Near East dogs are often half wild scavengers, and not very different from wolves. For examples see Fig. 3 (nos. 42, 66).

¹²⁰ Nos. 18 (Fig. 5), 32, 71 (not available to me), 74 (?), 78, 83. The bird's head is probably the visual expression of the "face of an Anzû" (note 110).

¹²¹ No. 69.

¹²² Nos. 13, 25, 79; 14 (divergent).

¹²³ It may be argued that this lack of sexual characteristics is due to the fact that demons in general (*utukku*) have bodies that are "neither male nor female" (UHF 405, 426, 428 with comments, CT 16 15 v 36f.). In that case the permanence of comb and spindle (e.g. Figs. 2, 5, 6) gets a natural explanation (express femininity, as in the texts); the incantations list comb and spindle among the gifts to Lamaštu, but they clearly differ from the other gifts, which have an utilitarian nature and serve to support her travel to the netherworld.

periphery, where *hnqt 'mr*. “She who strangles the lamb” is represented by a wolf (or dog) devouring a child.¹²⁴

On two peripheral amulets dating to the Late Bronze Age (nos. 28, 66; Fig. 3) Lamaštu holds in one hand a dagger, and in the other a snake. “Dagger that splits the skull” is one of her names (note 100), and the snake too must be understood as an instrument of death, the carrier of the poison with which she kills.¹²⁵ A snake and a scorpion, another of her deadly “weapons”, regularly appear in the field of the Bronze Age amulets from Mesopotamia,¹²⁶ and on the Iron Age amulets Lamaštu invariably holds one or two snakes in either hand, while often a scorpion is depicted between her legs (Fig. 6).¹²⁷

According to the canonical text the black dog is Lamaštu’s companion/manifestation,¹²⁸ and something similar is implied by an OB ritual for the protection of mother and child, in which a Lamaštu incantation and one to calm a baby are followed by an incantation against a dog,¹²⁹ a black dog in a partially duplicating text.¹⁴⁰ That this dog is a demonic agent of disease, and not some nasty shepherd’s dog running loose in the fields, is made clear by the impossible environment where such a dog is said to have attacked his victim: “between Quti and Baraḥši”.¹³¹ A snake, presumably just as little real as the dog, is combatted in conjunction with Lamaštu in another OB magical text.¹³²

Dog, snake, and scorpion are in origin certainly independent evil agents, and, to judge from the relatively large number of preserved incantations, a serious source of worry in the third and early second millennia.¹³³ After that time they practically disappear as independent evil agents, but linger on in the mythology of Lamaštu as instruments/manifestations of her evil will. The connection between Lamaštu and the once independent evil agents is manifested by an amulet of the Bronze Age group (no. 79), which devotes one side to Lamaštu, and the other to (from top to bottom) scorpion, dog, and snake.¹³⁵

Lamaštu’s mastery over these demonic beings in animal shape is not an isolated feature of her mythology, but belongs to the imagery of her mountainous homeland,

¹²⁴ For the amulet from Arslan Tash see note 79 and discussion.

¹²⁵ A similar image with a different interpretation (Adad with defeated dragon) is shown on the cover of CM 16 and other books of this series.

¹²⁶ E.g. nos. 25, 79 (Lamaštu side); scorpion alone: no. 65, snake alone: no. 32, Lamaštu herself with scorpion’s sting: no. 21.

¹²⁷ A scorpion and the snakes in her hands belong to the image of Lamaštu as described in Lam. III 5ff.

¹²⁸ See note 76 and below for her ritual marriage to a black dog.

¹²⁹ Farber 1981, BM 122691.

¹⁴⁰ K.R. Veenhof, An Old Assyrian Incantation against a Black Dog (kt a/k 611), *WZKM* 86 [1996] 425–433.

¹³¹ M. Sigrist, On the Bite of a Dog, 85–88 in J.H. Marks, R.M. Good eds., *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East* [1987]. In If. we read (with the unrecognized duplicate form Ugarit, *Ug. V 32 g-i*): [bi]-ri-it Ku-ti-'i-im ù Pa-ra-aḥ-ši-im.

¹³² *YOS* 11 19.

¹³³ Collected and discussed by I.L. Finkel, On Some Dog, Snake and Scorpion Incantations, 213–250 in T. Abusch, K. van der Toorn eds., *Mesopotamian Magic. Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* [1999].

¹³⁵ The amulet L. Legrain, *PBS* 15 [1925] Pl. XLIX no. 1052 shows on one side a dog, and on the other a scorpion. Since amulets against the independent evils dog, snake, and scorpion do not seem to exist, the dog may well be an image of Lamaštu. A connection between Lamaštu and the dog incantations was suggested already by van Dijk 1982:100, 104¹⁴; Dunham 1993:246 suspects that the dog figurine from a grave in third millennium Tell al-Raḡā'i represents Lamaštu (note 7). The sitting dog on the reverse of no. 42 may be apotropaic just as well as evil.

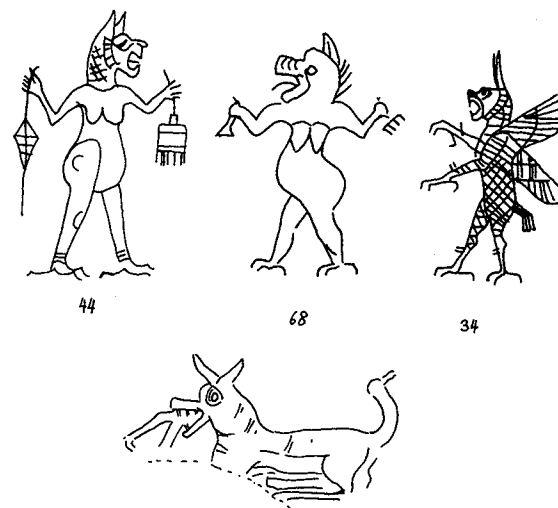


Fig. 4 A fully formed Lamaštu (no. 44) first appears in Assyria at the end of the Bronze Age, but not all variation (no. 68) has disappeared (Group B). Anzû, Ninurta’s mount, appears on amulets of this group as an apotropaic being. Locally the wolf or dog image of the child-snatching demoness continues into the Iron Age (amulet from Arslan Tash).

where she acts as a kind of mistress of the animals.¹³⁵

Fully formed, with bared breasts and holding comb and spindle (Fig. 4), Lamaštu appears for the first time in Late Bronze Age Assyria. The only important addition to Lamaštu’s image in the Iron Age is her “Knielauf” stance.¹³⁶ With *Huwawa* this stance signals defeat, but with Lamaštu, who is not involved in any combats, it might mean something else, such as the speed of her hoped for departure. The incantation accompanying the drawing of her image on the wall of the house indicates, however, that it signifies something akin to defeat: weakness induced by divine counteraction.¹³⁷

The mythology of demons in general, and of Lamaštu in particular, is informed by two themes, fear and guilt. The adversities and diseases which the demons embody are real enough, and feared with reason. More subtle, and at the heart of the whole religious structure, is the operation of guilt. As explained above, the arrival of misfortune is viewed as the consequence of human failure (sin), of neglected obligations towards one’s fellow men (*lilû*-ghosts), ancestors (*etemmu*), demons (*utukku* e.a.), and gods, especially the personal god.¹³⁸ This negligence reveals the existence of a wide web of obligations, naturally rooted in the human world, but extended to include what

¹³⁵ BM 120022:47ff. Lam. II 41ff., II 87, Farber 1998:60, 11f.

¹³⁶ See provisionally P. Calmeyer, *RIA* 6 1980–83 38f. An inspired half “Knielauf” occurs on no. 52.

¹³⁷ Lam. II 40: “by his expert operations he (Asaluḫi) weakened her muscles”.

¹³⁸ The *bēl lā ilim*, “he who does not have a (personal) god” is Lamaštu’s victim in *BIN* 4 126:18. See in general T. Abusch, Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God, 83–121 in T. Abusch, K. van der Toorn eds., *Mesopotamian Magic. Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* [1999].

we would call nature. Demons, supernatural beings without a cult and therefore permanently neglected, are the mythological expression of permanent human failure, of an inborn inability to meet these obligations. Evil is justified cosmic retaliation, demons spring from irreparable human guilt.

More generally speaking it appears that Mesopotamian mythology is based on an anthropomorphic view of the universe, in which the relations between man and "nature" follow a human model, and are regulated by the type of mutual obligations that inform contemporary society. "Nature" becomes an active but silent partner, whose intentions can be guessed at on the basis of its supposed human mentality. "Nature" communicates with its human partner not only by way of retaliating demons, but also by leaving written messages about its position: omens.

Diagnosis and counter measures

The correct diagnosis of any individual case of misfortune or disease is a problem: the activities of demons and ghosts overlap, and the ultimate cause may lie in the dissatisfaction of gods about someone's performance. In order to identify the correct source of evil among the many possible ones,¹³⁹ the conjuror (*āšipu*) searches for clues on the body of the patient, as well as in his environment. The omens of the Diagnostic Handbook¹⁴⁰ give an impression of his methods, which in detail are still largely opaque, and even in antiquity did not always lead to a definite diagnosis.¹⁴¹

Before making a house call the conjuror protects himself with prayers and incantations against the evils he will encounter: "I am the messenger of the great gods, Enki and Asaluhi have given me their exalted orders".¹⁴² Immediately after his departure for the house of the patient, he starts reading the signs: "If he sees a dappled ox: that patient is afflicted by the demon Lamaštu; (or), a curse; he will die soon."¹⁴³ A different diagnosis follows when he sees a black ox or a white ox. Fortunately in this case we know what association connects a "dappled ox" with Lamaštu; a commentary to the omen in question reads: Lamaštu (^dDim - me): fever (*ummu*), daughter of Anu; me = "fever" (*ummu*); "he will die of her [curse (nam-érim)]", nam = "death", érim = "wicked" ...: he will die [the death of the] wicked; gùn = "to be dappled", as was said "[Her kidneys] are spotted like a leopard": Lamaštu demons; giš-ḥur, sag-ba, sag-dingir, [mu-dingir-ra = "engraving"], "curse", "river-ordeal", "by the life of the gods".¹⁴⁴

Such commentaries supply condensed versions of a more ample oral tradition supporting the interpretation of omens, but the basic association is clear: the dappled ox denotes Lamaštu because her kidneys are spotted, which the commentator proves by citing a line from the canonical Lamaštu series (Lam. II 37).

Arriving at the home of the patient, the conjuror examines his complaints, and questions him or his environment on their course. The contents of certain omens with the diagnosis Lamaštu show that not only babies are involved: "if his head gives him

¹³⁹ Other demons threatening children are listed and discussed by Cadelli 1998, Scurlock 1991, Volk 1999.
¹⁴⁰ R. Labat, *Traité Akkadien de Diagnostics et Prognostics Médicaux* [1951] (henceforth TDP).

¹⁴¹ E.g. BWL 44:108ff.

¹⁴² KAR 31:1ff.

¹⁴³ A.R. George, *Babylonian Texts from the Folios of Sidney Smith. Part Two: Prognostic and Diagnostic Omens. Tablet I, RA 85 [1991] 137-163.*

¹⁴⁴ George, RA 85 148:15.

continually complaints, while at the same time the fever ... and his sickness recedes, if he gets dizzy and his eye-sight diminishes, if he loses his mind and wanders about aimlessly: (it looks) as if he were grasped by a ghost, but (in fact) Lamaštu ... on him".¹⁴⁵

A separate tablet of the Diagnostic Handbook is devoted to babies and small children.¹⁴⁶ The diagnosis Lamaštu appears a number of times, and the symptoms leading to this diagnosis are consistent with a specific disease, namely typhoid fever, a prominent cause of infant deaths in contemporary Iraq.¹⁴⁷ That fever is a decisive symptom of Lamaštu's presence is born out not only by the incantations (note 98), but also by the fanciful etymology of Lamaštu's Sumerian name in the commentary cited above: "fever, daughter of Anu." In fact many, but not all,¹⁴⁸ omens with the diagnosis Lamaštu list fever among the symptoms. Further a loss of appetite may occur, and abdominal distensions or diarrhea: "if the child, when he is born, goes two or three days and does not take milk and he has an attack similar to 'hand of a god', it is called 'hand of a goddess', the Snatcher (Lamaštu)",¹⁴⁹ and: "if the child's bowels are inflated and he cries continually, it is the hand of the daughter of Anu; (alternatively) it is the hand of a god (and) he will get well".¹⁵⁰ Jaundice as a consequence of Lamaštu's activities is described by the incantations,¹⁵¹ as well as the maculopapular rash, which at the onset of the disease consists of six to ten 'rose-spots'.¹⁵²

Besides fever and other medical symptoms it is regularly the crying of the infant which indicates the presence of Lamaštu: "if the child shivers and cries all the time at his mother's breast, or if he is unsettled, wriggles on his mother's lap, and cries a lot: the daughter of Anu (Lamaštu) has chosen him".¹⁵³ Crying babies are calmed by means of incantation-rituals and magically charged apotropaic substances.¹⁵⁴ A text devoted to this subject contains a prescription for such a substance, which according to the subscript applies to a constantly fearful and shivering baby.¹⁵⁵ The canonical Lamaštu text contains a nearly identical prescription against Lamaštu,¹⁵⁶ and generally speaking these texts

¹⁴⁵ TDP 3:36f.

¹⁴⁶ TDP 40. The children treated in this tablet are infants from their birth up to at least their fourth year (cf. TDP 40 21 and 26).

¹⁴⁷ The brief discussion here leans on Scurlock 1991:157f. "Abdominal typhus" was identified as connected with the diagnosis Lamaštu by J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *Gleanings from the Iraqi Medical Journals, JNES 27 [1968] 243-247* (on the basis of the text cited in note 151).

¹⁴⁸ When the absence of fever is specifically mentioned among the symptoms, this must be because the other symptoms suggest the presence of fever; in TDP 40:106 these are crying and abdominal cramps, which lead, even without fever, to the diagnosis Lamaštu. Most omens in which fever is not mentioned list crying among the symptoms.

¹⁴⁹ TDP 40:26. Snatcher (*Ekkentu*) is a designation of Lamaštu.

¹⁵⁰ TDP 40:30.

¹⁵¹ Lam. I 74, *zīmī turraqī*, "you (Lamaštu) turn (the victim's) face yellow"; "when his face is yellow: Lamaštu has grasped him" (TDP 9:11). F. Köcher identified *martu pašittu* (a name of Lamaštu) as biliary colic (note 44), but it may just as well denote (a form of) jaundice, or designate its supposed source in the liver. When *pašittu* threatens small children (Lambert, *Atra-Ḥasis* 102:3, *YOS* 10 23:8) biliary colic is an unlikely option.

¹⁵² *BIN* 2 72:9: "and she grasped him (the baby) in his belly seven times", cited above in connection with Lamaštu's death dealing hands (and nails).

¹⁵³ TDP 40:24f.

¹⁵⁴ Farber 1989a.

¹⁵⁵ Farber 1989a § 19.

¹⁵⁶ Lam. III 61ff.

tend to overlap when the crying is understood as indicating demonic threats.¹⁵⁷

In conclusion it may be observed that the conjuror bases his diagnosis not only on medical symptoms like fever, but also on psychosomatic (crying) and circumstantial (dappled ox) indications, so that a one to one correspondance with a modern "scientific" disease is not to be expected. Even if, as is likely, typhoid fever underlies some of the diagnoses, it must be expected that, by lack of a "scientific" definition, other, superficially similar diseases contributed to the differently defined pathogenic Lamaštu.

The etymological explanation of Lamaštu's Sumerian name (^dD ì m - m e) as "fever, daughter of Anu" is based on a widely spread method of verbal analysis, in which the meaning of the isolated elements reveals the hidden nature of the named phenomenon.¹⁵⁸ A version of this method may have served to unify Lamaštu's mythological and pathogenic roles: as a mythological figure she is the (frustrated) mother (*ummu*), who poisons instead of nurtures, and the (rejected) daughter (*martu*) of Anu, who rebels instead of obeys. As a pathogenic agent Lamaštu is fever (*ummu*) and bile (*martu*), the reversed evil variants of what she is not, a good mother and a good daughter.¹⁵⁹

Once the conjuror has identified Lamaštu as the source of the infants problems, he initiates the proceedings which must lead to her expulsion (exorcistic) and insure the house and its inhabitants against future demonic threats (apotropaic).¹⁶⁰ The proceedings are completely described in the first millennium (canonical) Lamaštu series, but are in essence traditional in Mesopotamian magic, and attested for the second millennium in OB Lamaštu incantations and on amulets of Group A. None of the prescribed treatments can be called medical in any sense, although the choice of some of the ingredients in the salves may be based on observed healing properties. Medically inspired recipes against Lamaštu occur elsewhere in the Mesopotamian tradition.¹⁶¹

The expulsion of the demoness is brought about by installing and then removing three figurines representing her under her three most common names, Lamaštu, Daughter of Anu, and Dimme. The activities (*agenda*) are supported by incantations (*dicenda*). The first figurine is married¹⁶² to a black dog, and buried in a corner of the city wall; the second figurine is provided with food, items of personal care (a comb, a spindle, an oil jar), and means of transportation, and then sent through the desert and across the river Ulaya to her mountainous netherworld home;¹⁶³ the third figurine is stabbed to death with a thorn, and again buried in a corner of the city wall.¹⁶⁴ Meanwhile the

¹⁵⁷ Farber 1989a:142ff.

¹⁵⁸ The sign group AN:DÌM:ME is reversed, giving me (*ummu*) - dime_x - an (for dumu - an - na).

¹⁵⁹ The cited commentary practically proves the point, if it is translated "mother, daughter of Anu", which combines Lamaštu's relevant mythological properties with the explanation of her pathogenic role. Since m e, "mother" is rooted in Sumerian (< a m a, e m e₄), while m e, "fever" is not, the only remaining objection would be that "mother" is not attested as an epithet of Lamaštu.

¹⁶⁰ For the sources see above paragraphs one (texts) and two (amulets).

¹⁶¹ A "Lamaštu-plant" occurs regularly in the lexical lists, in the pharmaceutical handbook, and (among other ingredients) in the medical texts, cf. e.g. *MSL* 10 111:113, 103:182, 105:221, *KADP* 1 v 3, *BAM* 4 379 ii 8'f., *BAM* 5 423 i 18, 438 f. 10 (among other herbs in a recipe against witchcraft); herbs and stones against various demons, including Lamaštu: *RA* 54 [1960] 175 r. 12.

¹⁶² Giving dissatisfied demons in marriage is common, cf. D. Schwemer, *Akkadische Rituale aus Hattuša* [1998] 59ff. for parallels.

¹⁶³ For the horizontal netherworld see above notes 87, 135, and (differently) Schwemer, *o. c.* (note 162) 70f. In incantation 6 she travels to the sea by way of Eridu, where her passage is observed by the sage Adapa (*Lam.* II 21 ff.).

¹⁶⁴ Farber 1987:94f. proposes to recognize the object (a pot with ashes and a dagger stuck into it) accompa-

house is smoked out with fumigations, and the demoness adjured by the great gods, lest she returns.¹⁶⁵ Complex amuletic salves drive the demoness from the child's body, and protect him against her return; ingredients such as "ship's tar" and "dust of quay and ferry" have a symbolic (Lamaštu's journey home) rather than a medical value, but the associations are not always obvious.

A more permanent protection of the child is provided by chains of amuletic stones and other substances, which are hung around his neck and bound to his hands and feet.¹⁶⁶ Also on his neck was a cylinder seal of clay inscribed with the seven names of Lamaštu.¹⁶⁷ At the head of the patient's bed an amulet was hung, on it the symbols of the gods: the crescent moon of Sin, the star of Ištar, the sun disc of Šamaš, and the crook of Amurru.¹⁶⁸ The incantation prescribed to be written on this amulet orders Lamaštu back to the netherworld, and adjures her: "may you not approach the door (of the bedroom), whose bolt is Justice, whose pole is Anu, whose gate keeper is Papsukkal, - one adjured by him does not return".¹⁶⁹ The entrance to the bedroom and the other entrances in the house are guarded by clay models of watch dogs,¹⁷⁰ with their names, or rather assignments, written on their flanks: "chase away the daughter of Anu", "stand watch during the night", "don't fail at your watch", "Sin is the shepherd of the dogs", etc.

Like the amulet and the watch dogs, and covered by the same incantation (*Lam.* Inc. 7), the drawings opposite the entrance to the bedroom and to the left and right of the gate serve both an exorcistic and an apotropaic purposes. The text¹⁷¹ prescribes a Daughter of Anu with snakes in her hands, and a number of further items whose relation to the main figure are not spelled out. Since the prescriptions of the text add up to the image of the demoness as known from the amulets (Fig. 6. IV), these two sources will be discussed here as one. On the amulets Lamaštu is depicted in the "Knielauf" stance, which according to the incantation covering the drawing signifies weakness induced by the god of white magic, Asaluhi (note 137). The snakes in her hands and the scorpion between her legs represent the poison with which she kills; the dog and the pig suckle her breasts, and are supposed to replace the infants she wants to poison with her milk;¹⁷² a comb, a spindle, and a *mušālu*¹⁷³ symbolize her doubtful femininity; a lamp represents the light god Nuska, who guards the gate at night;¹⁷⁴ the "lower leg of a donkey" (*kursinni*

nying Dimme in this exorcism with the object to the left of the demoness on no. 6.

¹⁶⁵ *Lam.* III 74f., I 60, II 31ff.

¹⁶⁶ Necklaces of various stones to expel Lamaštu and prevent "Any Evil" from approaching occur in various collections (Farber 1989a § 16, 16A, *STT* 275 ii 10'). See note 177 for necklaces found in graves together with amulets.

¹⁶⁷ *Lam.* I 1ff.

¹⁶⁸ *Lam.* III 13. The crook of Amurru is rare in the first millennium, but not unattested (cf. J. Reade, *Iran* 12 [1974] 40). It does not occur among the divine symbols on the amulets; Lamaštu is adjured by Amurru once, see St. Dalley, B. Teissier, *Iraq* 54 [1992] 109, no. 8:21f.

¹⁶⁹ *Lam.* II Inc. 7.

¹⁷⁰ *Lam.* III 15ff., II 68ff. Clay dogs are common guardians of private houses and palaces (Wiggermann 1992:215 s.v. *kalbu*).

¹⁷¹ *Lam.* III 2ff.

¹⁷² In the Sumerian incantation Tonietti 1979: 305 (*TIM* 9 36:28f.) a black dog and a white dog replace the dog and the pig. Cf. Nougayrol 1969 iv 9' "may she suckle the puppies of the bitch", and in general BM 120022:47ff., where Lamaštu is advised to go home and be midwife of the animals.

¹⁷³ Farber 1987:94, meaning uncertain.

¹⁷⁴ The names of the watch dogs and the presence of Nuska indicate that demonic attacks were expected

imēri) draws the angry glare of passers-by,¹⁷⁵ and thus supports Lamaštu's dismissal.¹⁷⁶

Alternative rituals against Lamaštu occur in a LB text from Uruk (*SBTU* 3 84, see Farber 1989b) with ritual instructions for the protection of parents and children against demonic and divine threats. Lamaštu, induced by witchcraft or not, is made responsible for miscarriages (see note 104), or (in another section) kills off the children of someone who has lost the support of the gods because of sinful behaviour. The counter measures involve not only the dismissal (by boat or burial) of the demoness, but also replacement (*pūhu*) rituals, which are not represented in the canonical text. The most explicit one replaces the threatened baby by a strangled lamb dressed up as a child and cuddled by the worried mother between her breasts.

A passage in one of the canonical Lamaštu incantations (Lam. II 97ff.) points to the existence of a preventive ritual against Lamaštu, to be performed by the young bride. In this incantation Enlil denies Lamaštu her wish to eat human flesh with the following words: "because you have requested this of me, may people build you a temple (literally house) of clods of earth, and may the young bride bring you a broken comb, a broken spindle, and hot soup which is cooked over coals". The young bride, a potential victim, honors the demoness with a sort of mock cult in a mock temple, which is all she will ever have. The spot where such rituals were performed may have occasioned the street name *sila la-ma-aš-tim* (Lamaštu-street) in OB Sippar (*CT* 2 27:6, cf. Farber 1999:142¹¹).

From the early second millennium onwards¹⁷⁷ the exorcistic and apotropaic rituals of the canonical and earlier¹⁷⁸ texts are reflected by amulets, inscribed as well as uninscribed, figurative as well as non-figurative. The Iron Age amulets are much more elaborate than those of the Bronze Age, and represent full versions of exorcisms that in the ritual text are performed on figurines and (miniature) objects. A reason for the expanded scope of the late amulets may lie in the duration of the prescribed rituals, which take up 7 or more days; if, which is likely, the figurative version of a ritual is not just a commemoration of its actual performance, but a performance by itself, the expanded amulets would shorten the duration of the ritual considerably. Since many of the Bronze Age pieces of group C and D are well worked and undoubtedly expensive, the amulets may not have lowered

especially during the night. On the amulets there is a lamp in the bedroom of the patient, rarely (no. 2) there is one both next to the patient and next to Lamaštu. The prescription, in which the demoness is drawn opposite the entrance of the bedroom, indicates that the scenes which are separate on many amulets, the bedroom and the demoness (no. 1; Fig. 6. III/IV), are in reality belonging together, and in fact some amulets combine the two scenes in one register (cf. nos. 37, 58, 61, 54).

¹⁷⁵ The symbolic meaning of the donkey's lower leg is revealed by *Maqlû* V 45: "may the passer-by look angrily upon her (the witch), as upon a donkey's lower leg" (cf. *AfO* 21:77), the context of which is the expulsion of witches.

¹⁷⁶ Five general incantations that serve the protection of house and patient are mentioned in Lam. III 105ff. Since they belong to the basic stock of the conjuror, they are not written out in this series (cf. Abusch, *JNES* 33 [1974] 253f., Wiggermann 1992 16:258, Geller, *AfO* 35 [1988] 6:47'ff.).

¹⁷⁷ A still earlier version of a Lamaštu ritual is reconstructed by Dunham 1993 from Early Bronze (ED III) grave gifts in a child burial from Tell al-Raqā'ī; figurines of a dog (Lamaštu) and an ugly faced figure (a kind of proto-Pazuzu or *Huwawa*); travel theme represented by figurines of a boat, fishes, a shoe, a vessel; divine supervision by the figurine of Anzû (Enlil), see also note 7. Lamaštu amulets are regularly found in graves, but it is more likely that they were simply among the personal possessions of the child when it died (undoubtedly of the pathogenic Lamaštu), than that they served to protect it against the demoness in the afterlife (nos. 9, 27¹, 28, 35, 40, 45, 57, 59, 73). Two amulets (57, 73) were found together with complicated necklaces, undoubtedly apotropaic (see note 166).

¹⁷⁸ The basic exorcistic themes are represented for the OB period by *TIM* 9 63 (Tonietti 1979) and especially by BM 120022, the forerunner of Lam. Inc. 12.



Fig. 5 A well worked example (no. 18) of Group A, showing Lamaštu with the head of an eagle, and on the reverse the incantation with her seven names. Musée du Louvre.

the price of an exorcism, unless they were somehow on loan.¹⁷⁹

The way in which the exorcistic and apotropaic themes of the canonical ritual are reflected by the amulets can be demonstrated by a closer look at representatives of each of the two more important groups, Group A (Bronze Age) and Group C (Iron Age, Assyria).

A good representative of the Bronze Age Group A is the well worked amulet no. 18, reproduced here as Fig. 5. The execution in deep relief contrasts with that of most other pieces of this group, which are lightly incised with primitive figures, but the subject matter is not influenced by the different styles of execution. The Lamaštu of no. 18 has claws with 6/7 nails, widely spread and ready for her deadly sevenfold grasp. The lower part of the amulet is broken away, but undoubtedly she had the talons of a bird of prey, as practically all other Lamaštu's. Her head is that of an eagle with manes (Anzû ?), unusual, but not unattested elsewhere in this group (Fig. 3). To her left and right are a comb and a (double) spindle, in the upper left a toggle pin; a dog and a pig, still just visible along the lower edge, jump up at her breasts, which are not shown. The lower leg of a donkey supports her expulsion, the pot to the left is probably an oil jar.¹⁸⁰ Other amulets of this group may show a scorpion and/or a snake.

The figurative elements found on amulets of Group A correspond with those prescribed for the drawings on the bedroom wall in the canonical ritual. The travel theme

¹⁷⁹ The subscript of the very well worked amulet no 77 (Farber 1997) records the owner (maker ?) of the piece, and continues: "whoever takes it out, and does not return it, may Nabû order his destruction". Contrary to the *editio princeps* I read the beginning of the line as *šá TUM*¹ rather than as *šá UD.Ú.ŠÚ*. Presumably this amulet was a library piece, on loan for instruction or use. Privately owned is the amulet of *Ilī-itija* (no. 60).

¹⁸⁰ Most of the objects surrounding Lamaštu (gifts and travel necessities) have been discussed by Farber 1987.

is completely absent on the amulets, but since it is attested in the contemporary incantations (BM 120022) it presumably existed in another form; if the grave goods from Tell al-Raqā'ī can be taken as evidence, the corresponding rituals were enacted with figurines and miniature objects (note 177), just as prescribed by the canonical ritual.

Lamaštu is squared in by *zipa*-formulas, "be adjured by god so-or-so", which, as was seen above (p. 221f.), are replaced elsewhere in this group by triangles. In the canonical ritual the drawing on the wall is accompanied by an incantation in which Lamaštu is adjured by various gods; meanwhile the exorcist encloses her in a circle of flour (note 21).¹⁸¹ The triangles replacing the adjuration formulas probably represent this circle of flour, and thus denote the presence of the gods by which Lamaštu is adjured. The canonical text makes the presence of the gods explicit by prescribing an amulet figuring divine symbols and inscribed with the incantation in which she is adjured by various gods.¹⁸² The contemporary amulets of groups C and D practically always show divine symbols, never triangles; on amulets of group A divine symbols are essentially non-existent.¹⁸³

The incantation on the reverse of amulet 18 is the Bronze Age version of the incantation with Lamaštu's seven names, which the canonical ritual prescribes for a cylinder seal to be worn on a necklace:¹⁸⁴

Oh, 'Dimme', 'Daughter of Anu',
 'Who was named by the gods',
 'Victoria, heroine among ladies',
 'Dimme (or: Lamaštu) the exalted',
 'Who holds the evil Asakku in a tight grip',
 'South Wind weighing heavily on mankind',
 you must not approach (this) person,
 (followed by *zipa*-formulas)¹⁸⁵

That in this period amulets depicting Lamaštu could have a wider scope than just Lamaštu is shown by the occurrence of *Ḫulbazizi* incantations on these amulets (note 16). Such incantations are against evil in general, and in addition may serve to identify the bearer of the amulet as someone protected by the gods. The *Ḫulbazizi* incantation on amulet 15 runs as follows:¹⁸⁶

Incantation: make yourself scarce, accursed one, let off, evil being, for fear of Ninurta, the leader of the pack; me, being a follower of Ninurta, Oh 'Any Evil', you should not approach me. Be adjured by Heaven, be adjured by Earth.

¹⁸¹ Lam. II 48ff.

¹⁸² Lam. Inc. 7.

¹⁸³ Divine symbols are very rare on Group A amulets, but cf. no. 65 (moon and star as symbols ?), no. 79 (lion-scutum of a warrior god, and another symbol).

¹⁸⁴ Lam. Inc. 10 becomes rare or non-existent in the Iron Age, but cf. no. 55 (badly broken), no. 59 (variant), no. 24 (difficult to date); it is well attested (though with much variation) on amulets of groups A (18, 32, 29, 67, 69) and B (9, 27, 34, 35, 44, partly unpublished or uncertain). Inc. 2 occurs only on amulets of groups C and D (nos. 5, 6, 61).

¹⁸⁵ The contemporary amulet no. 67 has a different version of this incantation, in which 'Dimme, daughter of Anu' is a single name, followed by the epithet "who was named by the gods". Lamaštu is addressed in part as a goddess, and has some of her epithets on loan from Inanna; note in no. 67: 'Dimme, august lady' and 'Dimme, who answers prayer', and cf. note 41.

¹⁸⁶ See note 16 for references.

On Kassite seals the two *Ḫulbazizi* incantations of the Bronze Age Lamaštu amulets are associated with representations of the fish-sage (note 16). In a magical context this sage legitimizes the ritual proceedings, and as such he appears in action on the Lamaštu amulets of the Iron Age.

Thus the Bronze Age amulets in general, and no 18 (Fig. 5) in particular, show a fairly close correspondance to the canonical ritual. The figurative elements correspond to the elements prescribed for the bedroom wall, the incantation with the seven names to its later counterpart prescribed for an amuletic seal. The incantation may be omitted, however, or replaced by other incantations against evil in general. One figurative element of the canonical ritual is only alluded to, the divine symbols. The patient, prominently present on the later amulets, makes himself heard in the *Ḫulbazizi* incantation cited above, but is never depicted; the sage legitimizing the proceedings can be shown to have existed in the final stage of group A, but never makes his appearance on the amulets. Depictions of the travel theme, a boat underneath the demoness, first appear at the very end of the Bronze Age on Middle Assyrian amulets (Group B).¹⁸⁷ In the same period the image of Lamaštu loses most of its variability, and develops a definite form (Fig. 4).

The amulets of Group C belong to the Assyrian Iron Age, and are contemporary with the canonical ritual. The group is represented here by no. 1 (Fig. 6), an amulet of bronze, with holes for suspension and a ridge to stand on. Presumably it hung or stood somewhere in the house, since it is too big (13.5 cm.) and too heavy to carry around comfortably. One would expect it in the bedroom of the patient, on which both the ritual and the scenes on the amulet converge. The excellent workmanship, the well balanced composition, and the stylistic links to the palace reliefs indicate a patient with access to the best Assyria had to offer.

The obverse (here depicted) is subdivided in five registers (I-V), each with its own theme: I divine symbols; II apotropaic figures; III bedroom of the patient; IV Lamaštu and her expulsion; V line of communication with the netherworld. The three lead-players stand out immediately: Pazuzu, Lamaštu, and the patient. We will discuss these elements one by one, starting with Pazuzu.

Pazuzu takes a peculiar position in the composition, which sets him apart from the other players. His head, fully modelled, sticks out above the scenes, and belongs to a body that is depicted on the other side of the amulet (not reproduced). He has wings, the talons of a bird of prey, and a scorpion's sting for tail (Fig. 7). The position of his hands, just visible on the upper edge of the amulet, shows that he is holding it, or in other words, that he does not partake in the scenes below, but somehow forms part of the reality of the patient's bedroom. The difference between Pazuzu and the scenes below him is manifested most emphatically in his full frontality: he is the only figure that looks straight into the room, reviewing the proceedings. The main object of his glare is undoubtedly Lamaštu herself, the other supernatural guest.

Above we have already commented on the fact that the more common Pazuzu incantations are in direct speech, and presuppose a speech situation, the here and now of the exorcistic act, with all actors present. In one incantation the conjurer first addresses Pazuzu as a match for all winds, then continues with a description of the combatted evil

¹⁸⁷ Amulets no. 10, 68. The authenticity of no. 68 is proved by the coherence of the details which place it in the Middle Assyrian Group B, previously unidentified.

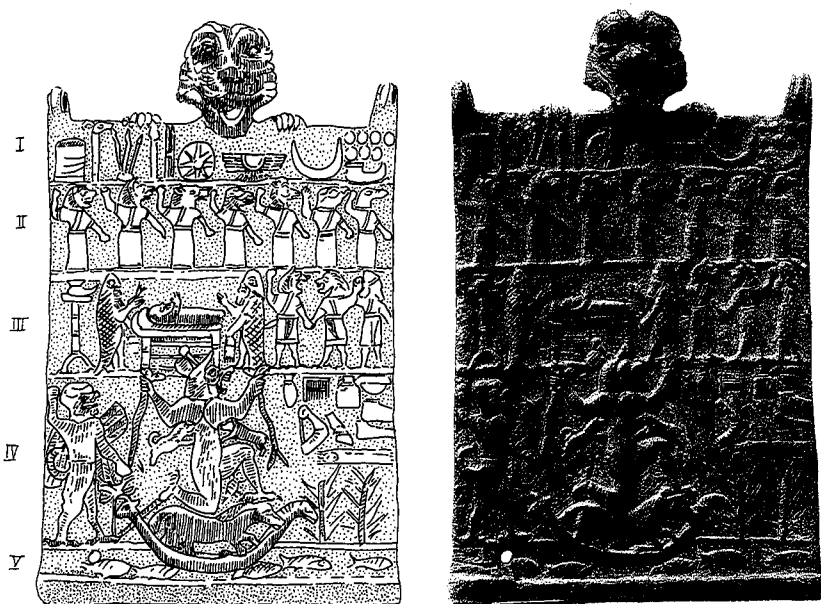


Fig. 6 Bronze amulet (no. 1), 13.5 cm high, dating to the Neo-Assyrian period (Group C). The amulets of this group show a number of innovations: divine symbols (I), apotropaic spirits (II), the bedroom of the patient (III), and the travel necessities and means of transportation of Lamaštu (IV). The reverse, not reproduced, shows the body of Pazuzu, whose head is visible on top of the amulet. Pazuzu is seen in action on the left of Lamaštu (IV), chasing her out. Musée du Louvre, Collection de Clercq (drawing F. Wiggermann).

presented as a destructive storm, and finally again addresses Pazuzu: “the house which you enter, may it (the destructive storm) not enter it, the house which you approach, may it not approach it”.¹⁸⁸ In the other incantation Pazuzu introduces himself as “king of the evil wind (*lilū*) demons”, thus legitimizing himself in the face of his adversaries, among whom Lamaštu.¹⁸⁹ In IV Pazuzu is encountered again, but now in action. With one fist raised, he drives Lamaštu out and back to the netherworld. On amulet no. 2 the god Lataarak replaces Pazuzu in this function.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ For this incantation see Borger 1987:19, 31ff. The description of the destructive storm is similar to that of Lamaštu in Lam. I 181ff. The translation of the final lines, ambiguous in their logographic writing, is based on the assumption that it is Pazuzu rather than the exorcist who prevents the demon from entering the house. Foreign but related parallels concerning Pazuzu’s functional double *Ssm* (Saint Sisinius) occur in the Arslan Tash amulet (5ff., but uncertain), and in the magical historiola treated above (p. 228ff.).

¹⁸⁹ See Borger 1987:24ff. (incantation), Wiggermann *forthc.* (origin of Pazuzu).

¹⁹⁰ The four dogs which accompany Lamaštu on her trip to the netherworld may have the same function (Lam. II 45). Farber 1987:102ff. identifies a centipede on certain Lamaštu amulets (102⁵²), who as an assistant of the divine court probably stands on the side of the victim.



Fig. 7 Neo-Assyrian bronze figure of the demon Pazuzu, who plays an important part in the expulsion of Lamaštu and other evils. Figures or heads of Pazuzu are often inscribed with his self-introduction: “I am Pazuzu, the king of the evil *lil*-spirits”. Musée du Louvre.

The other lead-player of supernatural origin is Lamaštu, whose position in the middle of the amulet matches her importance. Basically the image of Lamaštu is that prescribed by the canonical ritual for the bedroom wall; the additional elements in register IV derive from exorcistic activities described in the ritual text as performed with a figurine of Lamaštu and miniature objects. The figurine is provided with food, items of personal care, and means of transportation, and then sent through the desert and across the river Ulaya to her mountainous netherworld home, the “travel theme” as we have called it above.¹⁹¹ To the right of Lamaštu are first the items of personal care: an oil jar, a comb, and a fibula, which replaces the toggle pin of the older amulets;¹⁹² then, further to the right, the travel necessities: a jug, a bowl, a boot, a shoe, and under that a travel blanket. Lamaštu is standing on a donkey, which has to bring her through the desert, and the donkey is standing on a boat, which has to carry both across the Ulaya and to the

¹⁹¹ The evidence of the incantations can be matched with the miniature objects as depicted on the amulets, see Farber 1987, with full discussions.

¹⁹² Depending on the interpretation of the texts, the oil jar could be the expected spindle. The interpretation of the sack fixed with a nail to Lamaštu’s head is still uncertain, but it may be the purse (*qannu*) given to Lamaštu by the merchant (Wiggermann 1983 note 67, Farber 1989b:230).

netherworld. The waterway is shown in the Vth register, reeds growing along the bank, and fishes swimming in the direction of Lamaštu's travel. Lamaštu's right foot is fixed to a tree on the bank, which is curious because it prevents her from proceeding in the intended direction. The image is covered by the ritual text, however, which occurs in connection with Lamaštu's journey: "I will tie your feet to a solitary tamarisk, and to a single stalk of reed" (Lam. II 47, 146). The contradiction remains unresolved.¹⁹³

The ritual prescribes an amulet to be hung at the head of the bed of the patient. It should show the symbols of certain gods, and be inscribed with the incantation founding the travel theme and adjuring Lamaštu by various deities (Lam. Inc. 7). The symbols of the gods occur on most amulets of groups C and D, and more or less in the position prescribed by the ritual, above the bed or bedroom of the patient, and looking down on Lamaštu's expulsion. The choice of symbols varies, and does never correspond exactly with the ritual or the incantation. On no. 1 the following gods are represented by their symbols (I), from left to right: the feathered and horned crown of Anu, the ram's staff of Ea, the lightning bolt of Adad, the shovel of Marduk, the double stylus of his son and administrator Nabû, the eight-pointed star of Ištar, the winged sun-disc of Šamaš, the crescent moon of Sin, the seven stars of the Seven-God (Pleiades), and the lamp of Nuska, the vizier and messenger of Enlil.

The most decisive innovation of the Iron Age amulets is the introduction of the patient himself, lying in his sick-bed (III). Although the image of the patient gives focus and unity to the composition of the amulets, it is superfluous for the progress of an exorcism performed on a real patient. Possibly the addition of the patient, always bearded, has to do with the widened scope of the Lamaštu ritual, the progressive introduction of beneficiaries other than babies (and their mothers).¹⁹⁴ That the amulets of groups C and D (like those of Group A discussed above) combat other evils besides Lamaštu is made perfectly clear by the inscribed incantations. The most common incantation, sometimes combined with one against Lamaštu (no. 61), is actually spoken by an adult patient from his bed:¹⁹⁵

Incantation: something that comes from under my bed made me shrink for fear, and gave me terrible dreams; on the command of Ninurta, the foremost son, the beloved son, and on the command of Marduk, who lives in the Esangil in Babylon, it must be handed over to Pedu, the chief gate-keeper of the netherworld. You, door and bolt, you must know: I now fall under the protection of (these) two (divine) lords.

In the Lamaštu ritual the entrance to the bedroom is guarded by clay models of watch dogs, and in the accompanying incantation door and bolt are placed under the protection of the gods. The amulets pick up this theme with the two lion-demons and the god at the right of register III, the bedroom. Lion-demons (*ugallu*) execute divine commands, which is here, as shown by their attitude, the protection of the entrance to the bedroom. That it looks as if they are attacking each other is a consequence of the flat world of ancient art; they are supposed to face an intruder, at whom they raise their fists while

¹⁹³ Farber 1987:90, 1989b:228.

¹⁹⁴ In the incantations Lamaštu attacks babies, as well as other people, see note 102. According to the introduction no. 60 is against Lamaštu, Labašu, and Ahhāzu.

¹⁹⁵ See note 28. This incantation is limited to amulets of groups C and D. See note 35 for an amulet showing the evil under the bed (a little dragon).

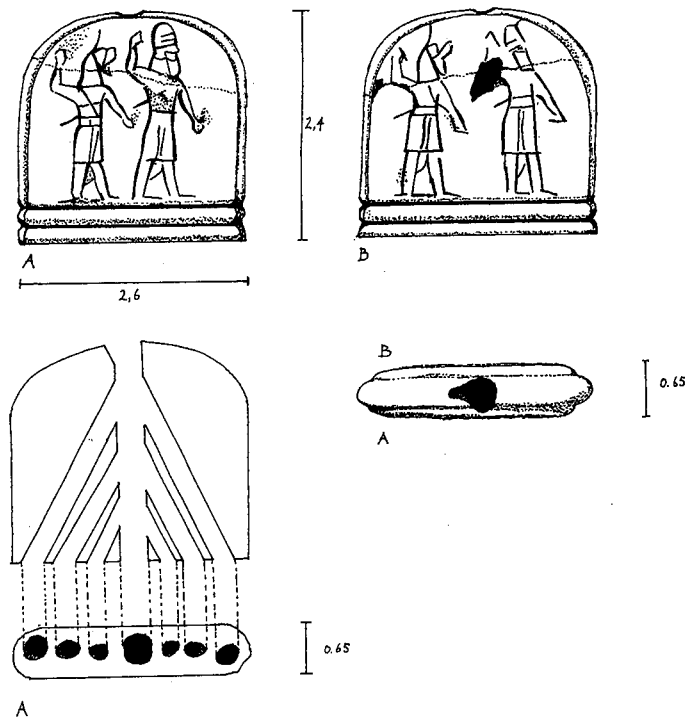


Fig. 8 Neo-Assyrian amulet showing the Ugallu and Lulal, the same apotropaic spirits which guard the bedroom of the patient on contemporary Lamaštu amulets (Fig. 6 III). These spirits operate on divine assignment, according to an incantation found on such amulets "on the command of Ninurta . . . and Marduk . . .". The amulet is bored through to accommodate strings with apotropaic stones. A.R. Green, *BaM* 17 [1986] no. 134 (drawing F. Wiggermann).

barring the passage with their other hands.¹⁹⁶ The god to their right is Lulal, a warrior god with the same assignment as the lion-demon.¹⁹⁷ Protective amulets with just the Ugallu and Lulal may carry the general incantation cited above, and be combined with chains of magical stones such as prescribed for the child threatened by Lamaštu (Fig. 8).¹⁹⁸ The Anzû that adorns some Lamaštu amulets of Group B is probably apotropaic as well (Fig. 4).

The function of the seven (sometimes six) animal-headed figures in II is not completely certain. They all raise their fists, and depending on the object of their aggression

¹⁹⁶ For the *ugallu* see Wiggermann 1992:64, 169ff.

¹⁹⁷ For this god see Wiggermann 1992:64.

¹⁹⁸ This group of amulets was treated above p. 223f.

they could be either evil demons, or protective spirits. Other than Lamaštu not one evil demon has been identified in art, so that the former solution is unlikely, while there is some textual and pictorial support for the latter. The beings, as they are usually shown, with arms and legs, can be viewed as activated versions of the animal-headed staffs that replace them on some other amulets (nos. 19,¹⁹⁹ 61, 77). As potentially active staffs they can be identified with the individually named and apotropaically active "standards" (*urigallu*) that are prescribed for the walls and the corners of the patient's bedroom in other magical texts.²⁰⁰ Such a function fits the attitude and the position of the seven animal-headed figures in II very well.

The patient in his bed makes a gesture of supplication, of prayer. His prayer is directed to the lamp god Nuska, who guards the bedroom during the night, when evil is prone to attack.²⁰¹ On one amulet there is a censer next to the patient's bed (no. 3); it serves the fumigations described in the ritual text.²⁰²

The two figures standing besides the bed of the patient²⁰³ are primeval sages, mythological beings half-fish, half-man, who in the beginning of time came out of the Persian Gulf and taught man everything he needed to know, including magic and medicine. In their left hands they hold buckets containing holy water, in their right a sprig to sprinkle the water over the patient. The holy water will free him from sin, one of the underlying causes of demonic attacks. As a kind of patron saints of the conjuror, they play the part that in the actual exorcism is played by their human successor.²⁰⁴ Thus the presence of the fish-sage legitimizes the manipulations of the conjuror, and fits his magical knowledge into the divinely ordained cosmos.

Conclusion

Lamaštu is firmly rooted in the domestic sphere: she embodies the worries of parents concerning their offspring, and both her image on the amulets and the incantations against her initially show the kind of variation that would be associated with folklore (Farber 1990), rather than with the codified knowledge of official religion.

At the end of the Bronze Age the Lamaštu material changes in character. The visual image of the demoness becomes fixed, and the texts are being reworked and edited to reach their final unchanging form. The Lamaštu of the Iron Age is a product of the more general process of canonization, a scholarly version of the Bronze Age folk demoness.

¹⁹⁹ The staffs on this amulet were seen by H.H. von der Osten, *AfO* 4 [1927] 90 ("vier postamentartige Gegenstände").

²⁰⁰ See Wiggermann 1992:71f.

²⁰¹ See Wiggermann 1992:112 and *SBTU* 2 9:8ff., where the incantation to Nuska appears in association with the Pazuzu incantation *atta dannu* (r. 9ff.).

²⁰² A seal which shows a number of remarkable similarities to the Lamaštu amulets has in its second register seven animal-headed figures approaching a censer. The register above it has divine symbols, the one below it a patient on a bed attacked by a demonic figure with a spear. The lowest register shows a quite deviant Lamaštu, and the object may be a fake, see B. Meissner, *AfO* 10 [1935-36] 160f., B. Buchanan, *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum* [1966] 111f. ad no. 612. The censers are treated by Invernizzi 1997.

²⁰³ That the figures seem to stand at the head and foot of the bed is probably again a consequence of the flatness of Assyrian art.

²⁰⁴ On the fish-sage see Wiggermann 1992:76f. On some amulets an anthropomorphic sage (or the conjuror) appears alone or together with the fish-sage, see Wiggermann 1992:74.

More so than a myth or a ritual in the temple an exorcism ties daily life and theology into an integrated whole: the behaviour of the individual is assessed, his fate clarified, and the role of gods and demons defined. The conjuror makes house calls, and deploys his oral and visual finesse at a moment that his clients are sensitized by worry, and anxious to grasp the hope that is offered. The willingness to accept what is in the conjuror's bag, and the prolonged exposure to his theology, provide an excellent opportunity to confront the public with the products of scholarship.

How much of the public the exorcist could educate in this way remains an open question. The expensive execution of the Iron Age amulets, however, gives the impression that it was only an elite segment that could afford his services. It may be guessed that the population at large clinged to a folk version of the child snatching demoness, the one that resurfaces in the later traditions of the eastern Mediterranean.

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INDICES

WORDS

- Sumerian*
a(/e₄)
water, semen, offspring, 4
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a.dingir.re.ne.k
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a.lá
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a-šu-du₁₁
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a-šu-ti
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urudu₅alal
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AMA.GAN.ŠA.DU
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bala
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^{sai}bar.šu.gál
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dumu.an.na
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dumu.dingir.ra.na
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