

THE STORY OF BGUZAN-LILIT, DAUGHTER OF ZANAY-LILIT*

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A large Mandaic magic bowl from the Yale Babylonian Collection is re-edited here, since the discovery of a parallel Mandaic formula on a lead amulet in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities of the British Museum sheds new light on many passages. The present article offers new readings and interpretations of the inscription with its intriguing story of a demoness of infertility, one Bguzan-Lilit, who not only endangers the life of the children of the house but also wreaks havoc on the whole premises. The most unusual feature of the incantation is that the succubus-Lilit replaces the woman of the house.

THE YALE BABYLONIAN COLLECTION HAS in its possession an earthenware bowl inscribed with an incantation in a fine Mandaic script. The bowl is unusually large, measuring 29.21 x 13.30 cm.¹ Raymond P. Dougherty purchased this bowl in Iraq; its specific provenance remains unknown. Edwin M. Yamauchi published the bowl in 1967 in his revised dissertation, *Mandaic Incantation Texts*, and republished the bowl subsequently in the same year as an article, this time with a commentary.² His readings and interpretation of the inscription were hampered by the many textual difficulties and by the fact that, in several parts of the bowl, the script is faded. Therefore, most of the text remained incomprehensible.

* I wish to thank the Curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection, Ulla Kasten, for her kind permission to publish the photograph of the bowl, YBC 2364. A part of lead roll BM 132948 is published with permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. My work on this bowl was made possible by a Feodor Lynen Fellowship of the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung. I am also indebted to M. J. Geller for his generous help in collating the magic bowl during his stay at Yale in 1993. The readings are the sole responsibility of the author.

The following abbreviations are used: *AIT* = Montgomery 1913; *DC* = Drower Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford; *MD* = Drower and Macuch 1963; *MG* = Nöldeke 1875; *MIT* = Yamauchi 1967.

¹ Specimens of comparable size are known from the magic bowl collection of the British Museum alone. Their provenance is Kutha, and they have not yet been published.

² Yamauchi's transliteration and translation of *MIT*, 33 are identical to those in his article (1967b).

During preparation of a catalogue of the world's largest collection of Mandaic lead rolls, that of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities of the British Museum,³ a text parallel to the Yale bowl was identified by the present author on a lead roll (BM 132948). This second inscription, together with the bowl text, sheds new light on the understanding of most of the context, although the bowl is in many ways textually superior to the lead roll.

Isolated elements and even complete formulae can appear in both magic bowls and lead rolls, as has been shown by Greenfield and Naveh (1985, 102-4): apart from slight variations, one finds a single incantation formula in a Mandaic lead roll and on two Babylonian Jewish Aramaic bowls.⁴ The scribes who produced such objects presumably drew their texts from a specific corpus of incantations.

To show the similarity between the bowl text and that of the lead roll, transliterations of both are juxtaposed. The Yale bowl text is presented here with its corrected reading in the left hand column. The amulet text, which comprises only a third of the 203 lines on the lead sheet, receives full commentary in my forthcoming text editions of the lead rolls in the British Museum.

³ All the text material is unpublished, except a few quotations in the footnotes of Lidzbarski (1915).

⁴ A further unpublished "Syriac" bowl in proto-Manichaean script from the Louvre includes the same formula and clarifies the interpretation of some irregular verbs and doubtful passages. I shall publish the text in a forthcoming article on bowls from the Louvre.

TRANSLITERATION⁵

Yale YBC 2364

(1) bšwm² d-hyy² rby² nwkr²yyh² mn²lmy²
 d-nhwr² y²tyry² (2) d²-lw²y² kwlhwn² wbdy²
²swt² whtmt² wz²rzt² d-kwšt² wnr²r² rb² d-(3)šr²r²
 n²hwylh

lbyth² d²wrh² hyklhwbyn²ynh² whywnth² wqyn²ynh².d-prwkz²d² br² kw²m²y (4) ²n²hwb²bgwn² ²bwgd²n² d²-hlypytc²l b²b² qwbr²y² w²c²l q²r²qp²twnd-gtyly² mynd²m² gtyly² b²cyd²y(5) lgytn² c²tyt w²škt² lbwzn²ypt z²n²y² lylyt² k²d² y²tb²bby[t²] d²-h²rb²t² d²-tgm²r²t² c²hy² wtl²tm²wšytyn² šwr²rb²t² (6) dyl² wdtltm² wšytynh²br²t² h²c²y² d²-tgm²r²t² h²c²y² wtlm² w²šy²l²ty²nšwr²bt² h²c²y² d²-tgm²r²t² lwyhyn² d²-kwlhyn(7) h²br²t²d²-h²c²y² bwzn²yšrtbh² w²zlt² wdymk²t² lwtm²rh² d²-byt² w²whm² šyql²tmynh² h²c²y² wtlm² wšytyn² h²br²t² wytb²t (8)²bdlwn² h²ršy² mn² h²k² twhm² d²-šyql²tmynh² h²ršy² ²bdlwn² myntwl² d²-dmwt² h²lp²tb²wbdy²w²mr² c²p²f²r² gbr² (9) mn² c²t²th² w²n² b²wbdy²c²pk²wb²byd²t² d²-whr²t² ln²sgy² bh²ršy² w²wbdy²wbnh² d²-gbr² c²gtwl² wbn²t² d²-t²t²bhyy² l²šbwq (10) ²lm² d²-t²p²wq²c²t²r²t² mn² by²f²[²] k²d² m²wgr² gzl² mnzy²wkbyn² sdyql² wbyš²r²t² m²gl²yl² w²c²ty²d²t²btilyhyn² c²l rys² m²tnl² c²pwq² ldybr² gbr² c²gtwl(11) bš²h² wp²f²r² c²mylh² typk²r² c²l [bn²t²]wtyt²b² c²l bn² w²c²mlyl² wtyqr² w{t²b}t²šyt²lh²b[h]²d²h² n[.]b{r?}bwn² d²-bn² wdbn²t² wdgbr²d²-mn² dybr² c²tgfyl² w²zlt² lw²t² gbr² (12) hyt²tbbyth² w²skl²t² b²c²[skwpt]²f²h²šy²kb²t² lwt² d²-t²t² wd²y²mk²t² lw²t² gbr² lbnh²d²-gbr² h²ršy² ²bdlwn² lbn²t² d²-t²t² m²bdy² bnh²d²-gbr² gyfl²t² wbn²t² d²-t²t² (13) bh(y)y²lš²ybl²q²t²l² wmswt² w²t²[yg]r².....]hwnmn² hd²dy² w²[²]m(r)tlhwn² pyqt² l²c²t² mn² byt²bhršy² w²wbdy²kd² m²nzy² gyzl² wkbyn² sdyql²

BM 132948 obverse

(1) [bšwm²] d²-h²yy²l²²swt² f[hwylh](2) [lby]th² [. . .] wldwrh² [wlhykl(3)h]wlbny²n²h² w²lzw²h² wlb²nh² wl[bn²th](4) [d]-p²yr² br² ²[b²ndwk]t² ²n² h²l[w](5) b²bg²w²n² ²b²wgd²n² d²-hlpyt(6) c²l b²b² qwbr²y² w²c²l q²rp²t²^(7) d²-gtyly² b² mg²ty² b²c²d²y(8) lgytn² ²tyt w²škt² lbgwz(9)²nlylyt² pt z²n²y² d²-y²tb²(10) bby²t² d²-m²r² d²-tm²ng²r(11) kd² bgwz²n² lylyt² pt z²n²y²(12) d²-š²ry²b² wdm²k²t² lw²t²m(13)²r² d²-byt² w²thwm² šql²t(14) myn² c²d² h²z²k² thwm² d²-šql(15)²tmyn² mntwl² d²-dmwt² hlp(16)²tw²mr² ²n² mn² c²ntt² c²pk²(17) wb²wb²dy² d²-hwr² l² n²sgy(18)hbn² c²gtwl² mynh² wbn²t²b(19)hyy² l² c²šbwq² ²lm² d²-t²p[w](20)qc²ntt² mn² byt² d²-. . . (58) . . . mntwl² d²-h²t²tbby(59)t² d²-p²yr² nwkr²y² br² ²b²nd(60)wktw²skl²t² b²c²skwpt² . . .kd² mnzy² (21) g²zlh² wk²d² kb²n² sdyql²

⁵ Conventions here used: [. . .] = illegible letters; ' . . . ' = partly legible letters; (. . .) = scribal omission; { . . . } = scribal

plus; ^ . . . ^ = letters above the line; (. . .) = additions in the translation; { . . . } = superfluous word in the translation.

wbyš²t² mglyl² w²yd² (14) t²rthn² r²l [ry]²š²
 m²tnl² b²ky² gbr²r²
 [r²l bn²h² w²t²t²] r²l bn²t² {r²l d²-b²n²t²}
 bn²r²yhwn d²-
 r²l g²l²hwn [w]dbn²tyn bhyy² lšbqlwn w²zl²t²
 wnypl²t² qwdm²h d²-bwzn²y ml²k²
 w²mr²(²)lh² hwzy²n wprwq²n mn (15) shry²

wdy[w]²y² whwmry² wlyly²t² d²-šdnhm r²l w²r²y²
 d²-bn²y [gtyl]y² wbn²t²y bh²yy² lšbqy² q²bl²t²
 qwdm²h r²l d²-bwzn²y ml²k² d²-kwllhwn d²-hw
 r²mr²bwn r²m²r² bshry² dywy² whwmry² wlyly²t²
 kwllhwn mn ml²lh² wnpqy² (16) wn²t² wšym²h
 r²l r²t²t² d²-bn² r²l g²tyl wbn²t² bhyy² r²l šbql² [.] r²l h²
 r²l w²m²pqdl²h w²mšdr²lh lgwb²q dyw² [w]gwb²[²]q
 shyr w²mr²lhwn r²l zyl w²pyql² l²r²t² wlgbr²
 d²-bn²yhwn r²l g²tlhwn wbn²tw²n bhyy² lšbqlwn
 d²-g²llwn (17) myn²ywn bwzn²y p²r²l z²n²y lylyt²
 d²-šry² bbt²ywn wmytqr²[y²l²] h²
 qryth² wmsknwt² wgd² š²pl²
 d²-bbt²wn šryl²n

d²-b²bly² wm²ly² wtk²ly² y²tby² btkly²
 (18) d²-bn²ywn myf²wl d²-h²y² r²myf²wl
 d²-bn²ywn wbn²tw²n bbt²ywn r²l [g²tyllwn]
 [.] s²r²k²t² mn²h r²l g²m²r²l [.] r²l g²l w²b²r²q²
 dyw² r²l y²š²yhwn d²-kwllhwn
 w²ty² wmskl² llyt² zn²y pt bglym

br²th² d²-mry² gb²r² kd² y²tb² h²y² wltm² wšytyn
 (19) h²br²t² šwr²b²t² lwt² r²mynt²wl d²-
 mrbk² wb²y² lm². [b².] l] g²fwly² g²l w²b²q²
 dyw² ryš²wn d²-kwllhwn shry² wdywy²
 wrwhy² whwmry² wlyly²t²

w²ty² myg²fyly² gb²q dyw² r²wz
 bn² d²-bwzn²y ml²k² d²-kwllhwn lgyll² b²dqy²
 (20) d²-gydwly²t² w²l r²np² shypl²
 w²dq² mn mwh² š²lypl² w²l
 pwm² m²hytl² wb² r²l gmb²r²l rgyll² wn[. . .] r²l r²l
 pwm² wrgyll²n bkwlhyn k²k² bpwm² wš²dy² r²yd²
 r²l m²(rt²) w²l kbd² w²l kwly²t² hlyn d²-m²pyqy
 myn² gw²b²q dyw² r²wz bn²h² d²-bwzn²y ml²k² d²-
 d²yn (21) llyn lkwlhyn hwmry² wshry²
 wdywy² wlyly²t²

d²-myn² np²q wm²zyg
 wms²r²q²[y² mn] r²l bw²kr² d²-npš² d²-mn dm²
 d²-npš² wšwlyt² d²-npš² r²l
 r²np² pryql² wmn šwd² d²-br²
 bwkr² bšwr² gfyrl²
 wmn tyrb² r²l nwr² rmyl²
 wdywy² r²l g²tyl wsylqt gtr²h (22) w²zl²t²

(22) wyd² r²l ryš² mtn²lh²
 b²k(23)y² r²l gbr² wmy²ll² {wqh²}
 (24) wqh²d² r²l bn² wbn²t²

d²-b(25)byt² r²l g²t²l w²{zly}zl²t²
 wnp(26)l²t² qwd²m² d²-bwzn²y ml²k²
 (27) w²mr²l² {dw²} dyw² gw²b²q
 r²hw(28)k
 l² np²q²

d²-mskynwt² wlq(29)ryt²
 d²-b²by²t²y r²ry²ly² ln[.](30)
 p²yr nwr²y² br² r²b²ndw(31)kt
 wb²bly² wm²ly² wtk²ly(32)² wtnht² ytb²n²

(35) w²t² w²šk(36)² llyt² p²r² z²n²y pt
 b²lg²(37)m
 br²t² d²-m²ry² gb²r² d²-kd

(38) mrbk² bbyt² {bbyt²} d²-p²yr

(39) br² r²(b²)ndwkt w²l dwl bgw²
 (40) {wld²} w²t² m²ty² gw²b²q dyw(41)²
 br² dmwt² lgt² b²{qb}{dqy²}
 d²-(42)gdwly²t² w²l r²nph² shyp²
 (43) w²dq² mn mwh² šl²plh² w²l
 (44) pwm² r²tn²lh² rhyt² w²py[q]

(45) mynh² gw²b²q dwy² (br) dmwt²

sny[w](46)t² wdhyll² wpswqt² w²kl² mn
 (47) h²k bwkr² d²-myn²r²l np²q wm²(48)z²g
 w²šq²y² m²n h²k bwkr² d²-npš² r²l
 (49) d²-npš² wšwlyt² d²-npš² r²l
 (50) r²nph² prqlh² wmn šwd² d²-b(51)r²
 bwkr² bšwr² gyt²rlh²
 (52) wmn trb² r²l nwr² rm²lh²
 (53) w²l s²q gtr²t² w²l z²l

qwdm^h d-bwzn²y mlkyhwn d-kwlhwn

shry² wdywy² wlyly²t² d-myn² [n]p²[q]
wm²sq[yl²] wm² d-²wkl² nypq²t m[ynh] hyk[lh]
wbyth

wmn mwknyh (w)byny²nh

d-prwkz²d br kwm²y gbr² d-bnh² cytgtyl wbn²th
c²tnkslh

(22) wbt²ywn h²rb²t wdwr{q}²ywn

(23) ²sdq²t wpwr²t pyr²t bbt²ywn d-
gwby² wd²nšy²

w²zl²t lw²t gbr²[²] ršykb²t

[wdym]k²t lw²t c²t² }²bdlwn

bn²ywn gyfl²t wbn²twm

bhyy² l² šbq²tlwn wbh²ršy² w²wbdy²

m²sgy² h²ršy² ²bdlwn wmswt²

l²c²t² mn gbr² d-

r²myl²

²myntwl d-h²y² ²bdlwn hršy² wb²y²

lprw{l}(f)y² c²t² mn

(24) gbr² wmgrr² f²rymlwn twm h²ršy² ²bdlwn

wby² d-c²t² mn gbr² t²prš² [.] h²ršy²

[.]nt² wbh²ršy² w²wbdy² mn hdt² r²my²

wb²ty² mhrb² mn h²ršy² w²wbdy²

p²s²t wmgrr² c²skwpt²

wmynd²m bby²t lšybq²t

k²d c²tyt c²l² ²n² gw²b²q (25) ryš ml²k² c²wz bnh

d-bwzn²y ml²kywn d-kwlhyn h²[l]yn c²byd²t

²bdl² h²ršy² [.]y² [.] w²m²bdy²

pwm[. . .] k²d ²pyqtynwn mn byth d-prwkz²d

br kwm²y ²swt² wh²tmth² lbyth² wdwrh² whyklh

wbyny²nh d-prwkz²d br kwm²y d-hwmry²

wdywy² wshry² wlyly²t² whwmry² (26) d-šry²

c²l pryky² wmytqyry² c²kwry² wm²hrby² b²ty²

d-[. . .] t²[²r]y² wmytqyry² twtt² w²qryt²

wmqry² byt² k²d hl²yn c²byd²t² kwlhyn ²bdyl²

bh²nth² šyt² šhb²t

wnypq²t mn byth d-prwkz²d br kwm²y k²d bzy²

bšwr² wk²d mgyl² bšt²

wlyš²n² (27) rmyl² c²l h²dy²

twm lbyth d-prwkz²d br kwm²y [.]

[.] twm

[.]

byth d-prwkz²d br kwm²y whyy² z²kyn c²l

kwlhwn c²wbdy²

exterior: b[.]b²gn hw [c²syr]

(54) lqwd²m² d-bwzn²y ml²k²
wm²c²n(55)h²

²wklh² w²pq² mn byt² d-

(56) nwkr²y² br ²b²ndwkt wmn m(57)kn²

d-bnh² d-p²yr br ²b²nd(58)wkt

²mn²wl d-h²t²t bby(59)t²

d-p²yr nwkr²y² br ²b²nd(60)wkt

w²skl²t b²skwpt²

(61) wby²t d-nwkr²y² hrb²t ldw(62)kt²

²sd(q)²t wpwr(t)t² bby²t pr(63)t²

w²zl²t c²l gbr² škb(64)t²

w²l c²ntt² dmk²t

(65) wbn² d-c²nt² c²ntt² gtl²t wbn²t(66)²

bhyy² l² šbq²t c²l gbr² mšwt(67)²

wmn c²ntt² [.] mn²wl d-

(68) d² [.] c²ntt² mn gbr(69)²

wmn d[.] wrmy² lh²

(70) wmn²wl hy w²c²n[tt² mn] gbr²

ly(71)pdwry² c²wb²d(72)h²

wd²hylt² w²mngr{²t}wt² r²(73)z²

hrb²t l²by²t wk²d npq²t

(74) myn² wp²s²t wmgrr²t c²skwpt(75)²

wmn²m bby²t l² šbq²t

(76) wn²cpq²t mynh² d-byth d-p²yr k²d

bzylh²

b(77)šwr² wk²d mgly²lh² b²c²š²t(78)²

wlyš²n² c²l hdy² rmylh² . . .

TRANSLATION OF YBC 2364

1. In the name of the great, alien Life from the out-standing Worlds of Light,
2. which is above all deeds. Healing and sealing and arming of the Truth and the great Guardian of
3. Reality will be for the house, the dwelling-place, the residence and the building and the animals and the possessions of Farrukzād, son of Kumay.
4. I am Bābgun Abugdānā who slipped over the door of the graves and over the skulls of the killed ones (and) I am holding in my hands
5. something of the killed ones. I came and found Buznay, daughter of Zanay-Lilit,⁶ when she was staying in the house which she demolished, which she destroyed, she and the three hundred sixty tribes
6. belonging to her. And of the three hundred sixty female companions, she is the one who destroyed, she and her three hundred sixty tribes, she is the one who destroyed . . . of all
7. her female companions, because she, Buznay(-Lilit), dwelled in there. And she went and slept with the master of the house and took the semen from him, she and her three hundred sixty female companions. And she sat
8. performing sorceries against them; she took {that} semen from him by performing sorceries against them because she had changed her appearance with the help of magic acts, and she said: "I shall separate the man
9. from his woman, and I, with the help of magic acts, shall bind her, and he, with 'evil' machinations of the 'ways,' will not be prolific. With the help of sorceries and magic acts, {and} I shall kill the sons of the man and not keep alive the daughters of the woman
10. until the woman will leave the hous[e, whi]le MWGR is shaving her hair and tearing her garment and revealing her evil and putting her hands by their hooks(?) to her head. I shall go out into the wilderness, I shall kill the man
11. with lust and zeal, I shall swear to him: "You will tie her to her [daughters] and you will bewitch her sons and you will speak and shout and listen to him with the . . . of the sons and of the daughters and of the man who were killed from the wilderness." And she (Buznay-Lilit) went to the man,
12. sinned against his house and did wrong against his th[reshold]; she lay with the woman and slept with the man, performing sorceries against the sons of the man, evil deeds against the daughters of the woman; she killed the sons of the man, and she did not keep alive the daughters of the woman.
13. And strife and contenti[on . . .] from one another and she said to them: "You drove the woman out of the house by the help of sorceries and evil deeds while she shaved her hair and tore her garment and revealed her evil and put
14. both her hands to her [he]ad." The man weeps [over his sons and the woman . . .] over her daughters because their sons were killed [and] their daughters were not kept alive. And she went and fell before Buznay, the king, and said to him: "Look at me and save me from
15. Sahirs and Dēws and Humartas and Lilits who became a menace to me because my sons [were kill]ed and my daughters were not kept alive." She was received in front of Buznay, the king of all, commanding all Sahirs (and) Dēws and Humartas and Lilits. With his word and utterances
16. and . . . and his listening to the woman whose sons were killed and whose daughters were not kept alive. [. . .] him and got him out and sent Gubaq-Dēw, Sahir . . . and said to them: "Go and get her out on account of the woman and the man whose sons were killed and whose daughters were not kept alive, as they were killed
17. by them." Buznay(-Lilit), daughter of Zanay-Lilit, who dwells in their house and call[s herself . . .] his [. . .], his mishap and poverty and bad luck that inhabit their house as they sit mourning and wailing and moaning, with wailing about
18. their children because of her (and) because their sons and their daughters we[re killed] in their houses [. . .] was destroyed. Gubaq-Dēw, the head of all, [. . .] and he came and found Zanay-Lilit, daughter of Baglim, daughter of the mighty lord, when she and her three hundred
19. sixty female companions, her tribes, sat with her, because she knelt and sought to [. . .] and to kill Gubaq-Dēw, the head of all Sahirs and Dēws and Ruhas and Humartas and Lilits. And Gubaq-Dēw (and) ʿUz, sons of Buznay, the king of all, are coming to kill. She is grasped by the bunches

⁶ Names of demons are transcribed, not translated. In late antiquity they are to be considered proper names, having presumably lost their actual meaning in the magic texts where they are still used.

20. of her locks and thrown on her face and tufts of hair are plucked from the top of her head, and she is hit on her mouth and bound on her back and [...] on her mouth and she is bound by all the molars in her mouth, and her hand is put on her ga[ll bladder] and on her liver and on her kidneys. Those who are brought out from her, Gubaq-Dēw (and) ʿUz, sons of Buznay, the king who judges
21. all Humartas and Sahirs and Dēws and Lilits who emerged from her and bawled (like babies). And she drinks [of] her own first-born who is of her own blood, and she delivers her own fetus on her face, and, as bribery, she ties the first-born to her neck and throws some of his fat into the fire. And (so) Dēw was killed and his smoke rose up
22. and reached Buznay, the king of all Sahirs and Dēws and Lilits who emerged from her, . . . and she is given something to drink and something to eat. She left the residence and the house and the lodgings and the building of Farrukzād, son of Kumay, the man, whose sons were killed and whose daughters were slaughtered, and she demolished their houses and tore
23. their dwellings apart and wreaked havoc in the houses of the men and of the women, and she went and slept with the man and lay with the woman and she killed their sons and did not keep alive the daughters, and with many sorceries and magic acts she performs evil practices against them; and because she performs sorceries against them, she brings strife between woman and man, {and} (as) she wishes to separate woman
24. from man and will bring destruction to them. Then by performing sorceries against them and seeking to separate woman from man [...] she renews the sorceries and magic acts and lays waste in the houses by sorceries and magic acts. She demolished and destroyed the threshold and left nothing behind in the house. When I, Gubaq-Dēw,
25. the chief angel (and) ʿUz, sons of Buznay, the king of all, came against her, she committed these evil deeds, sorceries . . . and misdeeds . . . when I drove them out of the house of Farrukzād, son of Kumay, there was healing and sealing for the house, the dwelling and the residence and the building of Farrukzād, son of Kumay. Regarding Humartas and Dēws and Sahirs and Lilits and Humartas
26. who dwell on the shrines—which are called Ekurs—and the destroyers of the houses who . . . who are called “curse” and “invocation,” and “cursers of the house.” When all evil deeds had been done with her agreement, she boasted with her talk but went out from the house of Farrukzād, son of Kumay, after her throat had been slit, {and} her evil had been revealed and her tongue
27. had been tossed onto her breast. Then to the house of Farrukzād, son of Kumay, [. . .]. Then [. . .] the house of Farrukzād, son of Kumay. And Life is victorious over all deeds.
- exterior: Bābgun is [bound]

NOTES TO THE TEXT YBC⁷

1. *nwkr²yyh* is spelled here with the expected *w* after the *n* and with *h* at the end, in contrast to *MIT*, 33:1, which has *nkr²yy²*. The writing of words like *nwkr²yyh* and *q²dm²yyh* with *h* is quite common in such texts, as can be seen from other bowls (Fitzwilliam II. 1, 45 [collated]⁸; BM 117880:11, unpublished) or examples from lead rolls, and similar spellings in the words *gw²yyh* “inner” and *br²yyh* “exterior” (Caquot 1972, 74, ll. 16’, 18’). The spelling *-yyh* represents the plural **-ayyē* of the noun ending with suffix *-āy*. The standard grammars do not discuss this phonetic writing, as only the early written material

(magical bowls and amulets) seems to indicate this ending with the letter *h*.

2. In this line, the reading of the preposition as *ʿly²y²* (*MIT*, 33:2) is to be corrected to *ʿlw²y²*. The introduction, *bšwm² q²-hyy² rby² nwkr²yyh mn² lmy² q²-nhwr² y²tyry² q²-lw²y² kwlhwn ʿwbdy²*, is used as a frequent doxological formula in Mandaic texts. The plural adjective *y²tyry²* refers to the plural noun *lmy²*, not to *nhwr²* (*MIT*, 33:2).
- 2, 3. In keeping with the classic Mandaic texts, one would expect *n²t²rt² r²bty² q²-šr²r²*, “the great safeguard of stability” (*MD*, 282) rather than *n²tr² rb² q²-šr²r²*, “the great guardian of reality,” but the introductory formulas in early magic texts tend to have *n²tr²* (Lidzbarski 1909, 352:2); cf. *n²tr² rb² q²-šr²r²* (BM 91708: exterior 1, unpublished).
3. *n²hwy* is spelled with *ʿ* instead of *y*. *ʿ* sometimes replaces *y* to indicate the vowel *i* in Mandaic.

⁷ These notes deal only with some of the readings which differ from those of Yamauchi’s two editions.

⁸ Gordon 1941, 344–45 = *MIT*, 29.

The writer of this bowl made frequent use of this vowel indicator.

The spelling, *byn²ynh* (not *byny²nh* [MIT, 33:2]), like *qyn²ynh*, seems to be a scribal error.

After *byn²ynh* comes *whywnth* "his animals," a corrupted spelling of *hywny²th*, not *bynth* (MIT, 33:2). Animals are mentioned quite frequently in the sequence of the client's dwelling places and possessions.

The personal name *kwm²y* is attested here for the second time. From Pognon (1894, II, 18, 21) *kwm²y* is known as the name of a client's mother: *dwkt²nwbh² pt kwm²y*. In only one other instance on a Mandaic bowl does *kwm²y* appear as a female client's name: *kwm²y pt z²dn²hwg* (BM 91779:1 [unpublished]).

4. The clearly legible *b²bgwn*, "Bäbgun," not *r²b-gwn* (MIT, 33:4), is the epithet of the storyteller, *²bwgd²n²*. Bābgun itself is not yet known from the late incantation literature of Mesopotamia. Only the term *²bwgd²n²* is encountered in Mandaic bowls (e.g., Lidzbarski 1902, bowl 5:1) and in the Babylonian Jewish Aramaic variant *bgdn²* (Ellis 1853, bowl 1:4).⁹

The root HLP in the *pe^cal* is closer in meaning to Akkadian *halāpu*, "to slip under, over" than to Mandaic "to pass by."

5. *^ctyt* and *²tyt* (lead roll, l. 8) are well known variant spellings of the verb *^cTY* "to come." The expression *^ctyt w²škt²*, "I came and found her," is a typical phrase in Mandaic magic texts to introduce a story about demons. Cf. *²tyt w²škt²th* (Lidzbarski 1909, 352:8/9); *^ctyt w²škt²y¹nwn*, "I came and found them" (Naveh 1975, 48). In contrast to the text here, the storyteller in most other cases remains anonymous.

Calling the demoness of infertility *bwzn²y lylyt²* instead of *bgwz²n lylyt²* as in its parallel (lead roll, ll. 8–9) seems to be a scribal error, as *bwzn²y* is employed as an epithet for her master *bwzn²y ml²k²* (e.g., ll. 14, 19). Moreover a Nippur bowl mentions *bwzn²y lylyt²* and *bwzn²y ml²k²* (AIT, 40:17, 18) in the same phrase. The bowl BM 91724 (= Budge 1908, 113 = MIT, 28) has a male demon *bwzn²y ml²k²* (l. 6), but two unpublished British Museum bowls from Kutha have *bwzn²y* as a female demon, *^csyr² bwzn²y* "bound is Buznay" (BM 91775:10, exterior l. 3; BM 91779:6).

The demon name, *z²n²y lylyt²*, also occurs in a Nippur bowl (AIT, 38:5, emended reading).

Although the story in the bowl is told in the perfect tense, the durative state in the subclauses *lgytn²* and *y²tb²* is correctly expressed by an active participle or present participle.¹⁰

The text reads *bby[t]² d-h^crb²t*, not . . . *d-grb²* (MIT, 33:5).

Instead of *^ctgmr²t*, the parallel text has *^ctm²ng²r* (lead roll, l. 10). The verbal root MNGR is new to the Mandaic lexicon, but well attested as MGR "to destroy" in Babylonian Jewish Aramaic and Syriac. MNGR, the dissimilated form of MGR, can be compared to other dissimilated verbs in Mandaic such as HMBL, HNGR, SNDR, and RNDD. *^ctm²ng²r* is a third person masculine singular perfect *ipa^cal*. In line 24 and in the lead roll lines 72, 74, *mng²r²t*, a third person feminine singular perfect *pa^cel* of the same verb is used. The bowl text has a clear *g*, not *t* (MIT, 33:6). An active participle *pa^cel* of the verb NTR makes no sense in this context. The meaning of *mng²r²t*, "she destroyed," parallels *p²s²t*, "she demolished."

7. The bowl text makes use of the perfect instead of the active participle which is the usual form in the lead roll, e.g., *šrtbh²* and *d-š²ry²b²* (lead roll l. 12). Note that the scribe of the bowl added a *²zl²t* before *wdymk²t*.

8. *twhm²* here means "semen," as is clear from another similar text on a lead roll: *z²yr²ywn p²syq²l² mn²ywn* "she removes their semen from them" (BM 135800I obv. ll. 19/20' [unpublished]).

In connection with this line, compare the passage, *w^csyr² ^cstr² d-y²tyb² bqbry² d-^csyqry² mn²wl d-dmwt² hlp²t*, "and bound is 'Astara, who stays in the graves of 'Isiqriya while(?) changing her appearance" (lead roll BM 132954 rev. ll. 12–14 [unpublished]).

Instead of *^cklyp* (MIT, 33:8), read *^cp^rt²r*, "I shall separate." The right curved half of the *t* is visible, and the original bowl shows traces of a full *t* (collated).

9. The expression *^cbyd²t² d-^cwhr²t²*, "the machinations of the ways" is obscure.

There can be no doubt about the reading, *bhyy² l^cšbwq*, "I shall not keep alive." Cf. the meaningless *^chyy² l^cšdwm* (MIT, 33:9). So a demon, *^cšdwm*, suggested by Macuch¹¹ and later discussed by Fauth,¹² does not exist in this text. The same expression is repeated later in different tenses

⁹ See also below, note 16.

¹⁰ MG, 374.

¹¹ *Apud* Yamauchi 1967b, 59.

¹² Fauth 1986, 82.

- and persons corresponding to the parallel, ^cgtwl, "I shall kill," in the following lines: bh(y)y² lš^cyb¹q²t¹, "she did not keep alive" (l. 13); bhyy² t¹šbql², "she does not keep alive," bhyy² lš-bqlwn, "they were not kept alive" (l. 16); bhyy² t¹šbq²tlwn, "she did not keep them alive" (l. 23).
10. This line was misread by Yamauchi (*MIT*, 33:10) although it is quite legible. sdyql² from the root SDQ, "to tear garments etc." is common in Mandaic. A plural variant, kybn²t², is attested in Mandaic, but the masculine singular form, kb²n² or kb²n² (lead roll, l. 21) "belt," "garment" is new for the dialect.¹³ The *g* in mglyl² is smudged. There is some difficulty in the interpretation of the following passage (the same phrase is repeated in line 13). It is still not quite clear in which way the hands are put to the head, since we have no illustration in the bowls of this precise gesture. In the parallel passage, the word, btlyhyn, is replaced by t²rthn.
11. For the occurrence of š^ch² wp^ct¹r² and the meaning "lust and passion," see Naveh 1975, 48; and further in the late version of the incantation, Shafta q-Pishra q-Ainia (DC 21), šyh² wpytr² (Drower 1937–38, 5). The writing t²bt²šyt²lh² must be a scribal error: such a root does not exist in Mandaic. Only t²šyt²lh² from šwt "to listen," "to hear" makes sense in this connection. The following two words cannot be made out clearly, which makes understanding of the rest of the line difficult.
12. The beginning of line 12 is parallel to lines 58–60 in the lead roll.
13. For the attestation of the word pair mšwt² w^ct¹[yg]r², cf. the incantation Shafta q-Pishra q-Ainia (DC 21), (Drower 1937–38, 6) line 708 tygr² wmšwt².
14. ml²k² is translated here, "king," rather than "angel," despite the orthography, since bwzn²y must in this context be a higher demon; see above the description of Abugdānā presiding over all the demons. In line 22, Buznay is called mlkyhwn, "their king." hwzy²n and pwrq²n are good examples of pe^cal imperatives with the object suffix of the first person singular. The reading, q-bn^ct¹yhwn q-c^ct¹gt¹hwn [w]dbn²tyh bhyy² lšbqlwn, corresponds to line 16.
15. ^cšlhm (*MIT*, 33:15) is to be read ^cšdnhm, although the verb derives from šLHM "to fight"; the interchange of *l* and *n* is a frequent phenomenon in Mandaic.
16. This line reads gwb²q dyw² [w]gwb²q shyr in contrast to the following lines 19 and 20 which have gwb²q dyw² ^cwz.
18. w²ty² wmsky² are two parallel active participles comparable to line 19, ²ty² wmygyly². It is likely that the scribe omitted here the expected bwzn²y lylyt pt as in the parallel text which has llyt² pt z²n²y (l. 36). Otherwise one is forced to assume that another Lilit arrives on the scene. bglym, or as written in the lead roll (ll. 36–37) b^cgl²m, might be connected with the disease b²lg²m, coming from the Greek word, φλέγμα. It is quite usual for a demon to be given the name of a disease.
19. Seizing an underworld god or demon by its hair is an old idea. In the Mesopotamian myth of Nergal and Ereškigal, Ereškigal, the Lady of the Netherworld, is torn by her hair from the throne.¹⁴ This image persists and is found in several late incantation formulas. Gordon published a Mandaic bowl with the following phrase: shyfynyn nsybynyn b^cdqy² q-m²nzy²yhyn q-ryš²yhyn wqwrqly² q-mwh²yn, "they are seized, taken by the tufts of hair of their heads and the tresses of their pates" (Gordon 1937, 96). It also appears in a similar text: msryynyn b^cdqy² q-gydwly²tyhyn, "they are bound by the tresses of their plaits" (Lidzbarski 1902, bowl 2:7).¹⁵ Another example comes from a Babylonian Jewish Aramaic bowl: bšb^c šb^c nqlyt bšys-wthwn wbtmny tmny bgdylthwn, "seven times seven I grasped them by their tresses and eight times by their plaits" (Smelik 1978, 176). Similar expressions appear in the Mandaic bowls in *MIT*, but Yamauchi did not understand this line.
20. No singulare tantum is known for k²k² "molar." The singular must be a mistake for k²ky².
21. m²zyg (lead roll, ll. 47–48, reads m²z²g), an af^cel active participle from a root ZGG, is not yet attested in Mandaic. In Syriac it means either "to ring, sound" or "to shout, bawl." One has to assume in this context that Dēw is crying like a newborn baby. According to the lead roll text (ll. 46–48) Buznay-Lilit eats and drinks from her first-born

¹³ MD, 211b.

¹⁴ Cf. Gurney 1960, 126, col. vi ll. 31, 33 i²-bat-si-ma i-na up-ri-ši . . . i²-ba-si-ma [i-na ab]-bu-ut-ti-šā', "he seized her by her coiffure . . . he seized her [by] her tresses."

¹⁵ Note that the reprinted text in Yamauchi 1967a, 222–24 does not indicate the actual line numbering of this bowl.

(Dēw) before she gives birth to him. It is unclear what is meant by "she delivers her own embryo on her face" and why "as bribery, she ties her first born to her neck."

The noun, *gtrth*, with the third person masculine singular suffix, must be a feminine noun *gtrt*² derived from the root GTR "to smoke," "to light incense." A feminine variant occurs only in the Western Aramaic dialect of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic: קטרטה (Sokoloff 1990, 489a).

22. Read *mwknyh*, not *mkny*² (MIT, 33:22). The usual form would be the defectively spelled *mkn*², which occurs rarely in the sequence of the client's dwelling-places and possessions. There are only a few attestations from magic texts, one from a bowl (Pognon 1898, bowl 10:2) and others from lead rolls (Lidzbarski 1909, 364:189): *mknh*. Two further examples come from unpublished amulets (BM 135848 obv., ll. 56–57) *mkn*² and (BM 132949 rev. l. 43) *mknh*.

dwr{q}ywn must be a scribal slip for *dwr²ywn*, "their dwellings," since the parallel text has *dwkt*² at this point.

In this line the scribe uses the verb NKS, "to slaughter," instead of the usual *bhyy*² + ŠBQ for the killing of the daughters.

23. *lprwly*² might be emended to *lprwlyy*², "to separate," since a root with the sequence RL is not possible in Semitic languages. The parallel text (lead roll, ll. 70–71) has a verb with a similar meaning, *lyprwdy*² "to tear apart."

It is striking that three possible examples of *t* in this bowl have a peculiar shape. They always occur in roots like ^c*p^rt^r* (l. 8), *p^rt^r* (l. 11), and *lprw{t}{t}y*² (see plate), and in all cases only the right half of the *t* is visible.

24. One must read *mngrt*² (MIT, 33:24), meaning "destruction", not *mnrtr*² "protection." The noun derives from MNGR < MGR, "to destroy" (see note to line 5).

COMMENTARY

The text under discussion here tells a magic story which focuses on four major demon figures. The first figure is the storyteller, one Bābgun Abugdānā, who is either a kind of higher being or a demon leader, slipping over the door of graves, over skulls, and having a hold over the bodies of the dead. Abugdānā himself is a well-known figure in the magic literature of late antiquity and represents a high-ranking demon.¹⁶ Bābgun Abugdānā speaks about himself in the first person singular and then tells about the misdeeds of Buznay (/Bguzan)-Lilit and her helpers, her tribes, and her female friends.

¹⁶ That he presides over other demons is clear from the contents of several incantations on bowls in Mandaic, Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, and Syriac where he is called ²*bwgdⁿ* *lmlkywn d-dywy² wšlyt² rb² d-kwlhyn lylyt²* (Mandaic, Lidzbarski 1902, 5:1); ²*bwgdⁿ mlk² d-šydy² wšlyt² rb² d-lylyt²* (Mandaic, BM 103358:3–4 [unpublished]); ²*bwgdⁿ . . . ml²k²wn d-dywy² wšl²t² rb² d-lylyt²* (Mandaic, BM 91769:1–3 [unpublished]), *bgdn² mlkyhwn dšydy wdywy wšlyt² rbh dlylyth* (Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, BM 91710:4, revised reading of the original = Ellis 1855, 514; the readings given by Levy 1855, 514 are also incorrect); and *bgdn² mlk² rb² . . . wšyd²* (Syriac, Gignoux 1986, 155). The Iranian meaning of *abugdānā/bgdn²* was recently analyzed by Shaked in an article on various demon names of Iranian origin occurring in Aramaic magic texts (1985, 514–20).

From the end of line 8 until the middle of line 11 another main figure, the "heroine" Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit, speaks. She is a demoness who, by changing her image, dwelling in the house of the client, sleeping with him, and lying with his wife, endangers their fecundity. She takes away semen, kills their male and female children, and gives no peace until she has driven out the bereaved wife as an adulteress. The head of the adulteress is shaven, her garment torn, her evil revealed, and her hands put on her head. The succubus Lilit replaces the woman of the house. From the end of the line until line 13, the misdeeds of Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit are repeated in the third person feminine singular.

Then the bereaved and betrayed woman seeks the help of Buznay the king, who commands the demons, and she is received by him. She begs him to save her from various demons. Buznay, the king of all demons, decides to help her and sends out his helpers, Gubaq-Dēw and ^cUz, to drive Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit from the house of the man and the woman who lost their children. Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit is also responsible for the poverty, bad luck, and mourning which plague the house. Then she tries in vain to avert her fate of having to abandon the house, by kneeling and begging that the helpers of Buznay-Mlaka should be killed. In the end she cannot change the mind of Buznay, the king, who has already decided to send out his helpers. Finally Gubaq-Dēw takes hold of Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit by

grasping her hair, flinging her on her face, plucking out tufts of hair, hitting her on the mouth, binding her by her molars (and other body-parts presumably), and putting her hand on her gall bladder, liver, and kidneys. In line 21, a variety of demons emerges from her. Then follows a change in the setting as Buznay-Lilit feeds on her first-born son, an unspecified Dēw, before he is born. To bribe Buznay, the king, again, she ties her first born to her neck and takes some of his fat, throwing it on the fire. The smoke of the killed and burning Dēw (i.e., his fat) curls up and reaches Buznay, the king. In the end Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit is provided with drink and food, and thereafter she abandons the house of the client. Once again there follows a detailed description

of what Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit has done to the house and its inhabitants.

The magic story of Buznay(/Bguzan)-Lilit is unique in the corpus of magic texts of late antiquity. It has no fore-runners in ancient Mesopotamia or Iran. The idea of a succubus demoness is of course known from many other cultures, as is the conception of the driving out of a demon by another demon.¹⁷ The philological source of the epithet "Buznay" or "Bguzan" might be Iranian, although the evidence that the story originally comes from Iran, and was later adopted by the Mandaeans, remains unclear.

¹⁷ Cf. Fauth 1986, 94.

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