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Cuneiformes

**‘You write (this incantation) on a cylindrical amulet, place (it) around his neck
and he will get well!’
Clay Cylindrical Amulets Inscribed with Incantations, Tools for Medical-Magical Rituals.**

András Bácskay and Zoltán Niederreiter*

ABSTRACT

Our study discusses a specific group of Mesopotamian medical-magical amulets. These are cylindrical clay objects inscribed with incantations that often mention the names of their owners. Our paper aims to collect all such objects to classify and analyse them based on their origins and archaeological contexts and the texts written on them; furthermore, we discuss medical-magical rituals mentioning the use of these amulets. These texts can be divided into three groups: Ḫulbazizi incantations, Lamaštu and Ḫulbazizi incantations, and incantations against fever.

Keywords: amulet, cylinder seal, Ḫulbazizi, Incantation, Kalḫu (Nimrud), Lamaštu, Nineveh, Ninurta, Nippur, ritual, Sirius, Ugarit.

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the cuneiform texts describing Mesopotamian medical-magical rituals, we can identify the use of three different types of amulets with similar functions.¹ The first group consists of chain amulets (*takṣīru* or *ṭurru*) containing strings of beads made of various stones and metals, while the second group includes leather bags (*mēlu*) hung round the neck, whose contents are mainly plants, and in smaller quantities animal and inorganic materials. The third group consists of cylindrical amulets made of clay (^{na4}KIŠIB), which are the focus of this paper.² The preparation and application of the three types of amulets were part of the activity

* The present paper was developed within the framework of the MTA–ELTE Momentum Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Cylinder Seals and Divine World Research Group, Budapest (LP2020-6) research project. Among the objects included here, A. Bácskay directly studied six cylindrical clay amulets (**Nimrud 1 and 3, Nineveh 1 and 3–4**) (Table 1, Figure 1) and the flask-shaped chalcedony amulet pendant BM 89904 (Table 2: 4), as well as ritual tablets (BM 43359+ and BM 49141+ see subsection 3.3.3, BM 35512 see subsection 3.3.2, BM 55516+ see subsection 3.3.1) in the British Museum (April 2022). Z. Niederreiter examined cylinder seal BLMJ 2844 – LBAF 428 (Table 2: 6 and Figure 3) in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem (August 2022). In connection with the present study, A. Bácskay gave a lecture entitled ‘Medical-magical cylinder amulets’ at the 66th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (July 2022). Abbreviations are those of the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Irving L. Finkel (British Museum), Markham J. Geller (University College London), Cale Johnson (Freie Universität Berlin) and Ulrike Steinert (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz) for their suggestions on this paper. Needless to say, we bear responsibility for any remaining errors.

¹ Besides the three groups mentioned above, further amulets inscribed with incantations can be connected to medical-magical rituals. These are amulet-shaped clay tablets (Heeßel 2014; Panayotov 2018) as well as inscribed stone amulets (Bácskay/Niederreiter 2023); the most significant group are Lamaštu amulets, on the inscribed versions of which incantations were usually written to ward off the demon’s attack or to protect against the diseases caused by it (Wiggermann 2000a; Götting 2011; Götting 2018).

² For the amulet stones, see Schuster-Brandis 2008.

The leather bags and the cylindrical clay amulets have not yet been published comprehensively but two recent papers mention them (Berlejung 2015: 108-110 and Steinert 2020: 51-52). Certain diseases addressed in rituals that mention the use of amulets are discussed in the following publications:

- Fincke 2000, p. 304-306 (amulets against eye diseases);
- Scurlock 2006, p. 59-62 (amulets against diseases caused by the ghosts of dead);
- Bácskay 2018a, p. 115-141 (amulets against fever);
- Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 129-133 (amulets against harmful spells).

of the incantation priests performing healing and apotropaic rituals.³ During the procedures, incantations selected by these specialists reinforced the healing effect of the amulets. In the rituals treating the same disease, the three types of procedures associated with the respective amulets can be mentioned consecutively. We can observe obvious similarities between the three groups of objects (chain amulets, poultices, and cylindrical clay amulets), and due to their shared function, these objects could have complemented each other. However, it is important to emphasize that only the cylindrical clay amulets were inscribed with incantations.⁴

2.1. CYLINDRICAL AMULETS MADE OF CLAY

The amulets studied here are of primary importance because the incantations written on them can be linked to the medical-magical rituals, and in this way we can gain insight into the context in which these objects were used.

Incantation formula. ‘If a man has been seized by heat.’ You write (this incantation) on a cylindrical amulet, place (it) around his neck and [he will get well].

Healing ritual against fever from a Late Babylonian medical tablet (BM 35512 rev. 18).⁵

Similar to the procedure mentioned above, amulets made of clay containing healing incantations were used as medical-magical tools. The rituals describing the making of amulets usually contain instructions written with logograms supplemented by phonetic complements: ^{na4}KIŠIB DÜ-*uš* ÉN *annīta* SAR-*ar* (‘You make a cylindrical amulet, write this incantation on it’). When choosing the raw material, amulet makers may specify the clay types (‘potter’s clay’, ‘canal clay’ or ‘clay from the river bank’) and the source of water (‘river water’ or ‘canal water’) to work with.⁶ The rite descriptions also sometimes mention the baking (*šarāpu*) of the clay amulets, and from them we can also learn that the patients usually wore the amulet around their neck.

Since no comprehensive study has been published on the cylindrical clay amulets,⁷ our primary goal is to collect all these objects (Table 1) and classify and analyse them based on their inscriptions. In addition, we aim to identify rituals that mention the use of these amulets. We examine diseases and incantations based on the medical-magical rituals and the incantations written on cylindrical clay amulets. In addition to the collection and philological analysis of spells, we would like to analyse the functions of the selected object group in medical-magical rituals and to shed light on hitherto unexplored aspects of Mesopotamian amulets.

³ In relation to the making of chain amulets, line 26 of the Exorcist’s Manual mentions ‘strings and pendants(?)’ (*takšīri u mālali*); edited by Geller 2018, p. 300.

⁴ Regarding amulets whose inscriptions name the diseases they protected against, see for example, neck stones used to cure migraine (*sagkidabbû* disease) that were found in the sarcophagus hiding the body of Atalia, consort of Sargon II (721–705 BCE), which was placed in Tomb II in the Northwest Palace at Kalḫu (Al-Rawi 2008, p. 131-134 no. 9-12 and figs. 151n-q; Niederreiter 2018, p. 69-70; Bácskay 2019). Another amulet, an inscribed chalcedony neck stone (MS 2880) from the Schøyen Collection, was used to ward off the personified ban or curse (*māmītu*) that causes physical suffering to the patient (George 2016, p. 18, 53 no. 68 and pl. CXLI; Stadhouders 2016).

⁵ For edition of the text, see Bácskay 2018b, p. 105 and 109.

⁶ Finkel 2018, p. 261-262; Stadhouders 2018, p. 164-166.

⁷ In his study published in 1976 about two Old Babylonian amulets containing incantations, Lambert already pointed out the importance of a comprehensive study of them (Lambert 1976, p. 60-61).

In the following subsections, we first review the research history on cylindrical amulets made of clay, starting with their first occurrence in Assyriological research; then, we collect data on the origin of the objects, their archaeological context, and their owners (if known). After that, we analyse the characteristics of their form and manufacture, and examine their relationship with cylinder seals and other amulets. Finally, we present the rituals that mention the making and use of the cylindrical clay amulets in subsection 3, which collects the incantations written on the amulets and the rituals mentioning these objects. We present the stone amulets with Ḫulbazizi incantations, which are relevant to our topic, in our Appendix, where we focus on the differences and similarities between the two groups.

The table below lists in alphabetical order the cylindrical clay amulets examined here:

Table 1: Cylindrical amulets made of clay.⁸

	Museum number	Origin (reg. number)	Dimensions length/width (mm)	N.L. ⁹	Incantation	Owner's name
Ligabue 1 ¹⁰	–	unknown	19 / 10	9	Ḫulbazizi 18	... (for a man without name)
Nimrud 1 ¹¹	BM 131981 – 1954-11-15, 30	Governor's Palace (room K) (ND 280)	25 / 11 [12]	9	<i>idem</i>	So-and-so, son of So-and-so
Nimrud 2 ¹²	IM –	Fort Shalmaneser (room S10) (ND 7096)	24 / 8	9	<i>idem</i>	So-and-so, son of <i>ditto</i> (=So-and-so)
Nimrud 3 ¹³	BM 131980 – 1954-11-15, 29	Governor's Palace (ND 1103)	16 / 10 [7]	8	Ḫulbazizi 19	–
Nineveh 1 ¹⁴	1885-04-08, 1	Kuyunjik	30 / 9	10	Ḫulbazizi 18	Šamaš-killanni, son of his god
Nineveh 2 ¹⁵	IM –	'Sennacherib's building', Kuyunjik (TM –) ¹⁶	32 / 11	10	<i>idem</i>	... (for a man without name)

⁸ In addition to the 18 items listed in Table 1, we are aware of five more inscribed cylindrical clay amulets, which have different properties:

– TA 1800 (Tell Taya), barrel-shaped amulet dated to the Akkadian period (height: 35 mm, width: unknown), originates from the floor of a building; the 7-line inscription contains an invocation of deities (Reade 1971, p. 87-100);

– A.30103 (Nippur) (Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago), barrel-shaped amulet originating from Kassite layer, pierced in the middle (height: 32 mm, width: 18 mm); the object and its inscription are unpublished (<https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/3acc54da-6b79-4a51-9a50-3fcad67800a2>);

– CBS 4559 (Nippur) (Pennsylvania Museum), object mentioned by Finkel with reference to Hilprecht: 'A small clay cylinder, half-baked, repaired; Neo-Babylonian period; Exorcism: 9 lines of inscription': Finkel 2018, p. 238, the object is currently not identifiable in the museum's collection.

For the two amulets from Assur, see footnote 54.

⁹ N.L.: number of lines

¹⁰ Collezione Ligabue – Fales 1989, p. 251 no. 84 (photo, transliteration and translation); Fales/Del Fabbro 2017, p. 178 no. 128 (photo).

¹¹ Wiseman 1950, p. 197 (transliteration and translation); Finkel 1976, p. 162 (transliteration).

¹² We are indebted to S. Dalley and J. Taylor, who made available to us the catalogue entry of ND 7096 discovered during the Nimrud excavation. The catalogue entry, kept in the British Museum, includes the transcription of the inscription, presumably made by D. Wiseman.

¹³ Wiseman 1952, p. 63 (transliteration and translation) and pl. XXII (copy); Finkel 1976, pl. 44 (copy, ms. G).

¹⁴ Finkel 1976, pl. 42 (copy, ms. F).

¹⁵ Campbell Thompson 1940, p. 109-110 no. 38 and fig. 5: 38 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹⁶ According to Finkel, the object originates from Nimrud: Finkel 2018, p. 235 no. 4; but George identifies it as an object from Nineveh: George 2016, p. 92.

Nineveh 3 ¹⁷	BM 134604 – 1932-12-12, 599	‘Sennacherib’s building’, Kuyunjik (TM 1931-32, 27)	31 / 11.4	10	<i>idem</i>	ᵐPAP-ERIM, son of his god
Nineveh 4 ¹⁸	BM 103058 – 1910-04-12, 2	acquired in 1910	7 / 8	12	<i>idem</i>	Šušannu, daughter of his gods
Nippur 1 ¹⁹	CBS 5559	second excavation (1889–1890)	18 [19] / 11	9	Fever text	Bābu-ētirat, daughter of Bānâtâ
Nippur 2 ²⁰	CBS 3992	third excavation (1893–1896)	17.5 [19] / 11	7	<i>idem</i>	<i>idem</i>
Nippur 3 ²¹	CBS 3993	<i>idem</i>	18 - 10	6	<i>idem</i>	owner’s name is broken
Nippur 4 ²²	CBS 3994+3996	<i>idem</i>	17.8 / 7	9	<i>idem</i>	Bābu-ētirat, daughter of Bānâtâ
Nippur 5 ²³	CBS 3995	<i>idem</i>	18 / 7	2+	<i>idem</i>	owner’s name is broken
Scheil 1 ²⁴	–	unknown	15 / 8	12	Ḫulbazizi 18	Itti-Nabû-balātu, son of Nabû-bāni-aḫi
Scheil 2 ²⁵	–	<i>idem</i>	smaller than Scheil 1	12	<i>idem</i>	Šūbītum, daughter of my wife
Schøyen 1 ²⁶	MS 3272/1	<i>idem</i>	20 / 10	8	<i>idem</i>	So-and-so, son of So-and-so
Schøyen 2 ²⁷	MS 3272/2	<i>idem</i>	10 / 7	12	<i>idem</i>	So-and-so
Ugarit 1 ²⁸	R.S. 25457	Old Persian tomb	36 / 21	6	Fever text	–

¹⁷ Campbell Thompson 1940, p. 109-110 no. 38a and fig. 5: 38a (the copy provides only those cuneiform signs that differ from the **Nineveh 2** copy).

¹⁸ Finkel 1976, pl. 43 (copy, ms. HH).

¹⁹ Legrain 1925, p. 365 no. 1088 (copy, transliteration and translation); Finkel 2018, p. 237, 239-241 (photo, copy, transliteration, and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 133 (transliteration and translation).

²⁰ Legrain 1925, p. 366 no. 1089 (copy, transliteration and translation); Finkel 2018, p. 237, 245 (photo, copy, transliteration, and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 133 (transliteration and translation).

²¹ Legrain 1925, p. 366 no. 1091 (copy, description); Finkel 2018, p. 237, 244-245 (copy, transliteration and translation).

²² Legrain 1925, p. 366 no. 1093+1090 (copy, description); Finkel 2018, p. 237, 242-243 (photo, copy, transliteration, and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 133 (transliteration and translation).

²³ Legrain 1925, p. 366 no. 1092 (copy, description); Finkel 2018, p. 246-247 (copy, transliteration and translation).

²⁴ Scheil 1898, p. 201 no. 39.1 (copy without the lines 2-4).

²⁵ Scheil 1898, p. 201 no. 39.2 (copy provides only those signs that differ from the **Scheil 1** copy).

²⁶ George 2016, p. 92-93 no. 69 and pl. CXLI (copy, transliteration and translation).

²⁷ George 2016, p. 92-93 no. 70 and pl. CXLI (copy, transliteration and translation).

²⁸ Nougayrol 1969, p. 404 (transliteration and translation); Arnaud 2007, p. 207, no. 69 and pl. 30 (copy, transliteration and translation); Farber 2014, p. 273, 300-301 (transliteration and translation); Bácskay 2018a, p. 155 (mention).

2.2. RESEARCH ON CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS

King first mentions a cylindrical clay amulet (**Nineveh 1**) in the British Museum's catalogue (1896) dealing with the ancient Near Eastern objects. He identifies the find from Nineveh as a personal amulet inscribed with an incantation, which he categorizes as a 'cylinder of clay'.²⁹ Scheil published two additional clay cylinder amulets (**Scheil 1–2**) in 1898. He introduces the subsection presenting the two objects with the title 'La plus petite inscription cunéiforme connue' and identifies them as 'cylindres-talismans' that he mentions are made of clay; one (**Scheil 1**) is 15 mm long and 8 mm in diameter, while the other (**Scheil 2**) is even smaller. These objects contain a longitudinal perforation suitable for inserting a string for attaching them to the body, and each of them has a different version of a 12-line inscription written on it. Scheil provides a partial copy, transcription, and translation of one (**Scheil 1**), but in the case of the other (**Scheil 2**) he only mentions the differences compared to the first. According to his interpretation, this incantation invokes Sirius against evil forces. We do not have any more information about the two objects; their present whereabouts are unknown.

The cylindrical clay amulets appear again in text editions related to incantations published in the 1920s, as well as in publications that report objects from excavations or objects kept in museums. Among the inscriptions inscribed on cylindrical clay amulets, research identified first the incantations invoking Sirius (**Scheil 1–2**), which were later also detected on clay tablets preserving rituals.³⁰ Weidner (1922) first connected the incantations written on amulets to those on cuneiform tablets, pointing out that the two amulets reported by Scheil prove the practical application of the incantations known from cuneiform tablets.³¹ Legrain (1923 and 1925) published copies of five objects (**Nippur 1–5**) from the excavations at Nippur, but provides his transcription and translation of only two (**Nippur 1–2**).³² In the following period, Campbell Thompson (1940) reported two findings from the excavation of Nineveh (**Nineveh 2–3**); then, Wiseman (1950 and 1952) described two objects (**Nimrud 1** and **Nimrud 3**) found during the excavations of Nimrud;³³ both authors called these pieces 'cylinder(s) of clay' or 'clay cylinder(s)'. In addition to them, Nougayrol published a copy of a cylindrical clay amulet (**Ugarit 1**) discovered during the excavation of Ugarit in a sarcophagus dated to the Old Persian period.³⁴

Incantations identical or similar to those of our amulets were also written on other amulets and on cylinder seals that were also used as amulets. In his work published in 1873, Lenormant made a copy of a flask-shaped chalcedony amulet pendant (Table 2: 4), without a transcription of its inscription.³⁵ The monographs dealing with cylinder seals have already made it clear that some of these objects were also carried by their owners as amulets,³⁶ but these works do not mention the cylindrical clay amulets studied here. Due to the difficulty and

²⁹ King 1896, p. xxiv footnote 1. The same object, under the name 'clay amulet in the form of cylinder seal', is reported again by Budge in the catalogue of the ancient Mesopotamian material in the British Museum (Budge 1908, p. 81 and no. 3).

³⁰ Ebeling first published the copy of the tablet (KAR 76), then the edition of the text (Ebeling 1920, p. 179–180). The part in question is mentioned in lines 14–19.

³¹ Weidner 1922, p. 295–296.

³² The most recent work dealing with these objects is Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 133. The authors raise the possibility that the fragment (**Nippur 5**) which preserves only the closing formula of the incantation and was interpreted as a separate object by Legrain and Finkel, actually belongs to **Nippur 4**. These data are included in the CDLI online database (CDLI P260310).

³³ For the hitherto unpublished **Nimrud 2**, see subsection 3.1.1.

³⁴ Nougayrol 1969, p. 404.

³⁵ Lenormant 1873, p. 90 no. 27.

³⁶ Menant 1883, p. 196–200; Ward 1910, p. 14, 216 and 227.

often fragmentary state of the seal legends, written usually in Sumerian, the researchers of that period were unable to read them. The early research on the incantations dealing with Sirius (Hulbazizi 18 and Hulbazizi 19) or with fever illustrates all of this, but these researchers already recognized the importance of these objects. The first monumental catalogue of cylinder seals was made of the De Clercq collection (1888), in which an object relevant to us (Table 2: 7) is included in the chapter dealing with the seal legends called ‘Les invocations’, the pieces of which deserve special attention due to their inscriptions. According to De Clercq and Menant, ‘ce sont de véritables invocations ou des formules talismaniques; la rédaction en est dès lors très obscure’; at the same time they remind us of the difficulties encountered in deciphering the paleographic and Sumerian inscriptions, and then add: ‘il faut attendre que nous ayons rencontré des traductions assyriennes^{sic} de formules analogues dans les nombreuses inscriptions bilingues [Akkadian-Sumerian], encore inédites, du Musée Britannique’ (De Clercq/Menant 1888, vol. 1, 148).³⁷

In 1948, Porada published the cylinder and stamp seals housed in the Morgan Library & Museum. Among the Middle Babylonian cylinder seals, there are three inscribed objects (Table 2: 1, 8-9),³⁸ the legends of which were examined by Oppenheim, who published only transcriptions of them, without translation.³⁹ In his commentary, Oppenheim only draws attention to their connection with the above-mentioned flask-shaped chalcedony amulet pendant and the De Clercq seal cylinder, and also mentions that inscriptions written on them are quoted from literary texts, based on the Sumerian formula ÉN.É.NU.RU, which often introduces incantations.

Publications dealing with cylinder seals⁴⁰ and amulets⁴¹ made of stone do not mention their clay cylindrical counterparts. However, Reiner mentions the object group studied here in her 1960 paper dealing with amulets against diseases and pestilence caused by epidemics (so-called ‘Plague Amulets’ or ‘House Blessings’), although she only devotes a footnote to it; she discusses the KAR 76 tablet⁴² summarizing the inscriptions to be written on cylinder seals used as amulets. Concerning this tablet, she lists the clay amulets (**Nimrud 1**, **Nimrud 3** and **Nineveh 1–4**) linked to the incantations on it, and also mentions the cylinder seal invoking Sirius (Hulbazizi 19) kept in the Louvre (Table 2: 5).⁴³ In addition, Reiner made it clear in a later study that Mesopotamian magical objects are amulets, and cannot be interpreted as talismans.⁴⁴ Referring to the KAR 76 tablet, containing incantations, Limet (1971) mentions the Louvre seal, which he identifies as an amulet, in his catalogue collecting Middle Babylonian inscribed cylinder seals.⁴⁵

Finkel’s doctoral dissertation (1976) on the collection of Hulbazizi incantations is an important milestone in the research on the objects examined in our study. In this work, besides the relevant cuneiform tablets, Finkel also collects cylinder seals and amulets made of stone and clay containing Hulbazizi incantations. Among the latter, Finkel already lists eight

³⁷ Oppert, the most important Sumerian philologist of the period, who attempted to transliterate and translate the piece 253 above-mentioned, only states the following: ‘Cette traduction n’est, bien entendu, qu’un essai qui pourra mettre sur la voie de l’interprétation exacte de tous les détails du texte.’ (De Clercq/Menant 1888, p. 148 no. 253).

³⁸ Porada 1948, p. 65, 178 nos. 581, 583, 587 and pls. LXXX-LXXXI.

³⁹ Porada 1948, p. 178.

⁴⁰ Frankfort 1939.

⁴¹ Van Buren 1945; Goff 1956, p. 23-37; Goff 1963, p. 195-211.

⁴² See footnote 30.

⁴³ Reiner 1960, p. 154-155 and footnote 11.

⁴⁴ Reiner 1987, p. 27-28.

⁴⁵ Limet 1971, p. 112 no. 10.1.

pieces (**Nimrud 1**, **Nimrud 3**, **Nineveh 1–4**, **Scheil 1–2**),⁴⁶ for which he provides the transcription and translation and also identifies their place in the Hulbazizi incantation series. The doctoral dissertation remains unpublished, which may certainly be one of the main reasons why cylindrical clay amulets and their inscriptions have been little known to researchers ever since. The role of cylindrical clay amulets in research and their relationship with stone amulets and seal cylinders is well demonstrated in Gelb's paper (1977), in which he makes a classification of Mesopotamian cylinder seal inscriptions. Based on his classification, the cylindrical clay amulets (he mentions two of them: **Nippur 1–2**) belong to the group of 'Amulets'. This group contains only seven objects, which can be related, based on the incantations written on them. The diversity of the objects is shown by the fact that, in addition to **Nippur 1–2**, there are four-cylinder seals (plate 2: 2, 7-9), as well as a flask-shaped chalcedony amulet pendant (plate 2: 4) included.⁴⁷

Since Gelb's publication (1977), three further cylindrical clay amulets (**Ligabue 1**⁴⁸ and **Schøyen 1–2**⁴⁹) have appeared in the catalogues of the Ligabue and the Schøyen collections, in 1989 and 2016, respectively. Furthermore, the investigated object type is mentioned in the publications dealing with incantation series. In addition to the aforementioned Hulbazizi texts examined by Finkel, Farber's 1989 monograph deals with these amulets when publishing texts describing magical and healing rituals protecting children. These ritual descriptions also mention the making of these objects and the incantations to be written on them.⁵⁰ Besides this, in the Lamaštu incantation series published in 2014, Farber examines the incantation on a cylindrical clay amulet from Ugarit (**Ugarit 1**), pointing out that a part of it is related to rituals protecting children.⁵¹ After Legrain's *editio princeps* on the pieces (**Nippur 1–5**) kept in the Pennsylvania Museum, Finkel published (2018) these objects again, together with philological commentaries. Here, Finkel also provides the most up-to-date list of cylindrical clay amulets containing Hulbazizi incantations, which already includes objects from the Schøyen collection (**Schøyen 1–2**). In addition to the 10 pieces mentioned here (**Nimrud 1**, **Nimrud 3**, **Nineveh 1–4**, **Scheil 1–2**, and **Schøyen 1–2**),⁵² two more are known (**Ligabue 1** and **Nimrud 2**), making a total of 12 cylindrical clay amulets with Hulbazizi incantations. Beside them, six cylindrical clay amulets (**Nippur 1–5** and **Ugarit 1**) contain a text related to fever.⁵³ Recent research therefore examines these together with the rituals describing their making and use, the number of which, according to our current knowledge, is 18 (Table 1). Prior research made it clear that we can consider these objects as magical tools used during rituals against individual diseases or specific harmful demonic forces.

2.3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS

Of the 18 cylindrical clay amulets collected in our paper (Table 1), 12 originate from excavations. Despite their relatively large number, due to the lack of adequate documentation we unfortunately do not have enough information about the archaeological context of the finds, of which three are from Kalḫu (**Nimrud 1–3**), three from Nineveh (**Nineveh 1–3**), five

⁴⁶ Finkel 1976, p. 79.

⁴⁷ Gelb 1977, p. 109-110 nos. 1-7.

⁴⁸ Fales 1989, p. 251 no. 84.

⁴⁹ George 2016, p. 32 nos. 69-70 and pl. CXLI.

⁵⁰ Farber 1989, p. 116-117 § 41.

⁵¹ Farber 2014, p. 199.

⁵² Finkel 2018, p. 234-235.

⁵³ For a recent publication dealing with the incantations written on these objects from Nippur, see Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 130-133.

from Nippur (**Nippur 1–5**) and one from Ugarit (**Ugarit 1**).⁵⁴ Based on these sites, the examined amulet type is known from the Assyrian core area and from Nippur, and one find comes from the Levant region. We have the following archaeological data on these finds:

– **Nimrud 1–3**: Of the three objects, **Nimrud 1** and **Nimrud 3** come from the Governor's Palace.⁵⁵ The former was found during the first excavation season (1949) of M.E.L. Mallowan and the latter during Mallowan's third (1951) excavation season.⁵⁶ **Nimrud 1** was found in room K together with numerous cuneiform tablets containing legal-administrative texts from the 8th century BCE.⁵⁷ Although most of the administrative texts stored here are associated with Bēl-issēya,⁵⁸ the village chief and eunuch of Bēl-tarši-ilumma, governor of Kalḫu, it cannot be said with certainty that the amulet belonged to them.⁵⁹ **Nimrud 3** was found in a trench in the south courtyard of the Governor's Palace.⁶⁰ **Nimrud 2** is presumably from room S10 or the corridor leading to that room in Fort Shalmaneser. In the room, mostly legal-administrative texts were discovered; they can be linked to members connected to the queen(s) household.⁶¹

– **Nineveh 1–3** (and **Nineveh 4**): According to the catalogue of the British Museum, **Nineveh 1** (1885-04-08, 1) was found on the Kuyunjik, but no further information is known about its origin.⁶² **Nineveh 2** and **Nineveh 3** were discovered during the 1931–1932 excavations by Campbell-Thompson and Mallowan in the so-called 'Sennacherib's House' (Kuyunjik).⁶³ According to Finkel, **Nineveh 4** also comes from Nineveh,⁶⁴ and the catalogue of the British Museum informs us that **Nineveh 4** was purchased by the British Museum presumably from M. Garakian, an Armenian antiquities dealer in 1910.

– **Nippur 1–5**: These five objects were found during the excavations of the University of Pennsylvania at Nippur, in the second, 1889–1890 (**Nippur 1**), and third, 1893–1896 (**Nippur 2–5**), excavation seasons.⁶⁵ The finds can be linked to Late Babylonian layers.

– **Ugarit 1**: RS 25.457 was found in a sarcophagus dated to the Old Persian period excavated at Ugarit, which contained the remains of a woman and a child, but neither the text written on

⁵⁴ Regarding the origin of the cylindrical clay amulets, Fales also mentions Assur (Fales 1989, p. 251 no. 84; Fales/Del Fabbro 2017, p. 178-179 no. 128), but does not provide a single example. We know of a cylindrical amulet (VA 5920) made of clay containing an incantation from Assur; however, based on its dimensions (height: 154 mm, diameter: 72 mm), this object, which originally contained an 18-line inscription and has no longitudinal perforation, cannot be classified as one of the cylindrical clay amulets studied in this paper. For the publication of the object, see Freydank 1983; Pedersén 1997, p. 208. Pedersén also mentions another inscribed clay cylinder (Ass 10921), each line of which has the cuneiform signs DIŠ and BAD repeating one after the other: Pedersén 1997, p. 207. These signs can perhaps be interpreted as pseudo-inscriptions replacing the incantations, similar to those appearing on Bronze Age Lamaštu amulets: Wiggermann 2000a, p. 222.

⁵⁵ Postgate 1973, p. 258 and 263.

⁵⁶ Postgate 1973, p. 254.

⁵⁷ Wiseman 1950, p. 184 (according to Wiseman the collection contains 76 clay tablets).

⁵⁸ Postgate 1973, p. 12; Perroudon 1999, p. 317: Bēl-issēya 2.

⁵⁹ For this archive, see Postgate 1973, p. 12-13.

⁶⁰ Square E.3, 'on the surface' (Wiseman 1952, p. 63); '0.30 m below surface' (Postgate 1973, p. 263).

⁶¹ Dalley/Postgate 1984, p. 9-10 and 263. It is questionable whether the tablets were originally kept in this room, or whether they fell from the upstairs room above room S10 during the burning of the building.

⁶² Budge 1908, p. 81 no. 3; Budge 1922, p. 209 no. 3. J. Taylor informed us that he did not find any record mentioning the arrival of this object in the collection's archives at that time; it is the only Mesopotamian item in the collection 1895-04-08.

⁶³ Campbell Thompson 1940, p. 85; Lambert/Millard 1968, p. 80; George 2016, p. 92.

⁶⁴ Finkel 2018, p. 235 no. 6.

⁶⁵ According to Legrain, the finds were discovered in the second excavation season (Legrain 1925, p. 75), however, according to the online catalogue of the Pennsylvania Museum, **Nippur 1** was found in the second excavation season (1889–1890), while **Nippur 2–5** were found in the third (1893–1896).

the amulet nor the archaeological context can determine which of them the object belonged to.⁶⁶

In addition to the above pieces originating from excavations, the following objects are known from private collections:

- **Scheil 1–2**: The provenance of the two amulets reported in 1898 are unknown.
- **Ligabue 1**: This object kept in the Venetian collection first appears in Fales's 1989 publication (we have no information on the object's provenance).
- **Schøyen 1–2**: We do not have information about the provenance of the two objects, published in 2016 and kept in a Norwegian private collection.

Although we do not have any record of their origin, it is important to mention that among them **Scheil 1–2** and **Schøyen 1–2** can be verified as having belonged together based on their inscriptions, similarly to **Nippur 2–5** (for the interpretation of the inscriptions, see subsection 2.5).

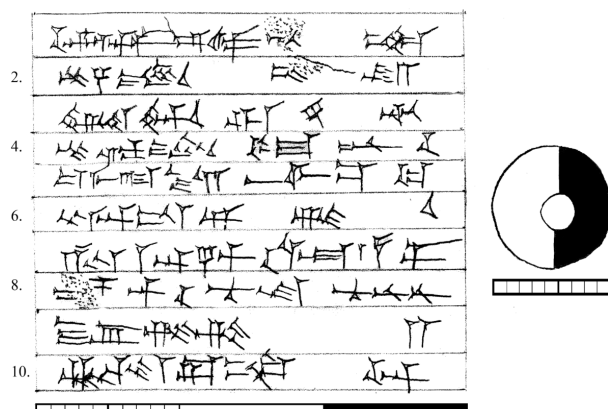
2.4. NAME OF THE CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS IN VIEW OF THEIR MANUFACTURE AND SHAPES

None of the legends written on cylindrical clay amulets identify the object itself, but some rituals belonging to medical-magical texts not only contain incantations written on the amulets but also report on the making of them. These rituals refer to the amulets as ^{na4}KIŠIB, and we can learn that they are made of clay. The designation ^{na4}KIŠIB (Akkadian *kunukku*) was primarily used for cylinder seals, which, with a few exceptions, were made of various types of stone.⁶⁷ In contrast to these, the cylindrical clay amulets were not used for sealing, there is no pictorial representation or motif on them, and the handwritten text on them can be read directly from the object. Despite all this, their connection with the cylinder seals is clear, since the objects are also roughly cylindrical in shape and there is a perforation on their longitudinal axis, which made them suitable for their owner to wear on a string or hang around their neck. The same type of incantation can be found engraved on both stone cylinder seals and cylindrical clay amulets (Subsection 3.1). In this case, the former were primarily worn by their owners as amulets.⁶⁸ It is important to emphasize that the cylinder seals also had magical significance for their bearers due to their raw material, colour, and the images engraved on them. In addition to the shape and the way of wearing them, the objects belonging to the two groups can be compared primarily based on their role as amulets. Figure 1 contains copies of the cylindrical clay amulets that we examined directly.

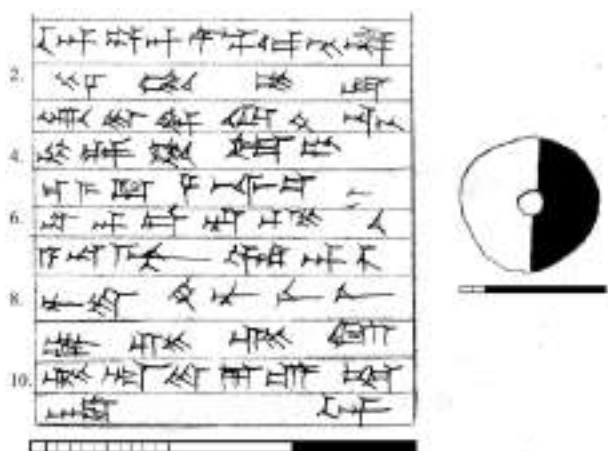
⁶⁶ Olmo Lete 2014, p. 37-37.

⁶⁷ No relationship can be assumed between the little-studied cylinder seals made of clay (Al-Gailani Werr 1988) and the cylindrical clay amulets discussed in our work.

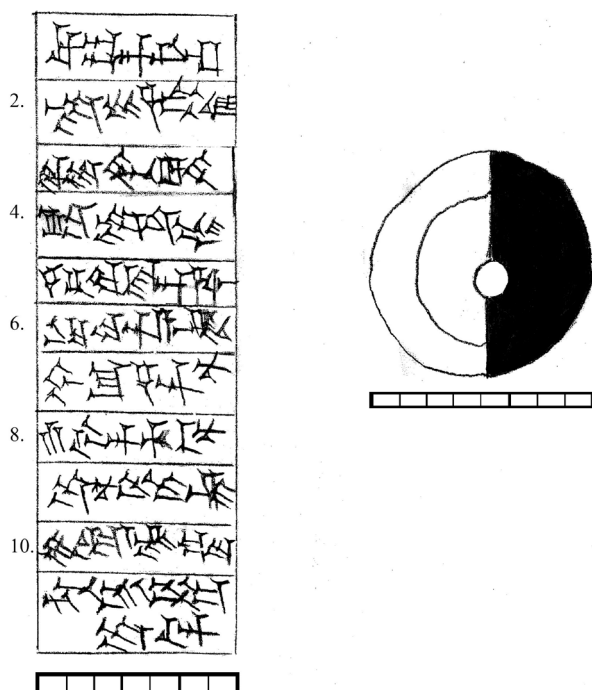
⁶⁸ Finkel 2018, p. 261-262; Stadhouders 2018, p. 164-166.



Nineveh 1

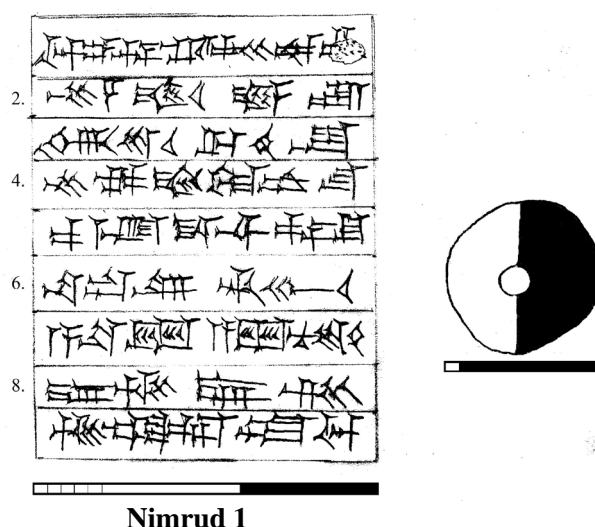


Nineveh 3



Nineveh 4

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Figure 1: Cylindrical clay amulets bearing Hulbazizi 18 (**Nineveh 1, 3, 4** and **Nimrud 1**) and Hulbazizi 19 incantations (**Nimrud 3**) (the copies of the cylindrical clay amulets are published here by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).

Regarding the physical properties of the cylindrical clay amulets, the following can be mentioned based on the data in the descriptions and the directly examined pieces (Table 1, Figure 1). To make the objects, the makers probably formed and rolled the leather-hard clay in their palms. Some of the cylindrical object widen in the middle (barrel-shaped), but some of them are prism-like, which presumably helped the scribe to prepare the texts (since in this case the lines were written on the flat sides of the prism-like object). In some cases, however, the object was made shorter than usual, so they have a rather squat shape, such as **Nineveh 4** and **Schøyen 2**, which look more like roundish stone beads. Regarding the size of the pieces – taking length and width (diameter) into account – we can state that the largest of them is **Ugarit 1**, which is 36 mm long and 21 mm in width, while the smallest is **Nineveh 4**, which is 7 mm long and 8 mm in width. In the cases of several pieces, the colour of the clay is strikingly dark grey (e.g. **Nimrud 1** and **Nineveh 1**) or reddish-brown (e.g. **Nineveh 3–4**).

The cuneiform texts were written on the leather-hard clay before firing. The lines run horizontally on the mantle of the cylindrical body, one below the other (Figure 1). The texts contain an average of 9-10 lines, the shortest with 6 lines (**Nippur 3** and **Ugarit 1**), the longest with 12 (**Nineveh 4**, **Scheil 1–2** and **Schøyen 2**). Considering the small size of the objects, the large number of lines that make up the incantations is striking. The extremely small size of the cuneiform signs attests to the competence of the scribes. The texts can be classified into different groups based on their content (Table 1, subsections 2.6 and 3). The pieces from the Neo-Assyrian sites were written with Neo-Assyrian signs (hereafter **Schøyen 1–2**), while the objects from Nippur (**Nippur 1–5**), **Scheil 1–2**, **Ligabue 1**, and **Ugarit 1** were written with Neo-Babylonian signs. The rulings between the lines observed on some objects follow the practice of the texts on clay tablets. In some cases, however, due to a lack of space, the syllables of the words at the end of the lines continue at the beginning of the next line.⁶⁹ Being made of clay, these objects are probably the work of *āšipu* or scribe (in contrast to the legends on stone cylinder seals and amulets, which were mostly copies made by engravers based on patterns).

In accordance with the rituals mentioning the making of amulets,⁷⁰ these objects were made of clay and carried around the neck, and according to some ritual descriptions, they were hung at the head of a patient's bed. All of this is supported by the longitudinal perforation found on all of our items. Amulets were the personal property of their wearers, which is why they often include the owner's name (see subsection 2.5), providing an opportunity to identify the bearers of the objects. At the same time, in some cases, these were single-use objects made by the incantation priest for the purpose of some specific ritual (for example, amulets against the attack of harmful demons). Presumably, in most cases, the cylindrical clay amulets lost their importance over time, so their owners no longer used them. The amulets used against fever may be examples of this, as the patient no longer needed them after recovery, but there is also an amulet (**Ugarit 1**) that was found in a grave containing two corpses.

2.5. PERSONAL NAMES ON CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS

The personal character of these amulets is reflected in the fact that the inscriptions on several amulets (**Nineveh 1**, **Nineveh 3–4**, **Nippur 1–2**, **Nippur 4** and **Scheil 1–2**) include personal names referring to the owners of the objects. However, inscriptions on two further amulets leave a blank place instead of the personal name, writing only a male or female determinative as a reference to the owner's gender (**Ligabue 1** and **Nineveh 2**). Instead of personal names, three amulets mention the formula 'to So-and-so, son of So-and-so' (**Nimrud 1–2** and **Schøyen 1**) or simply 'to So-and-so' (**Schøyen 2**). The inscriptions on two amulets (**Nimrud 3** and **Ugarit 1**) do not refer to the owner. Due to the lack of precise archaeological context or any further information about the persons mentioned in the inscriptions, exact identification of the owners of the amulets is not possible. On the other hand, the content of the incantation written on these objects, or their provenance, provides important information about the connections among specific amulets. For instance, the inscription of **Scheil 1** and **Scheil 2** mentioned a male and a female name, and the two amulets were seemingly produced for members of the same family, more precisely for a man (probably the male head of household) and his wife's daughter. According to their inscription, the owner of **Scheil 1** is 'Itti-Nabû-balātu, son of Nabû-bāni-aḫi' and the owner of **Scheil 2** is 'Šūbītum (or Šūpītum), my

⁶⁹ For example, in lines 3-4, 9-10, and 10-11 in **Nineveh 4** and lines 4-5 in **Ligabue 1**.

⁷⁰ For example, see 'Healing ritual against fever from a Late Babylonian medical tablet' (footnote 5).

spouse's daughter' (biological or adoptive). The personal name Itti-Nabû-balātu, son of Nabû-bāni-aḫi on **Scheil 1** is of Babylonian origin, and its Babylonian provenience is confirmed by the use of Neo-Babylonian ductus on the amulet.⁷¹ With this name and filiation, only one person can be identified from the corpus of Neo-Babylonian personal names known to us: 'Itti-Nabû-balātu, son of Nabû-bāni-aḫi, a descendant of Dabibi', who was mentioned in an administrative text excavated in a private archive from Borsippa.⁷² The inscription of the amulet with a female name (**Scheil 2**) is also written in Neo-Babylonian ductus but the owner's name Šūbītum (or Šūpītum) is known to us from only a single administrative document.⁷³

Three amulets from Nineveh (**Nineveh 1** and **3–4**) also mention owners' names; among them, the owner of **Nineveh 4** was a woman. The name of the owner is not followed by his or her filiation in any of the three inscriptions, but rather the term 'son/daughter of the god' (*i.e.*, patron deity). Of the five amulets (**Nippur 1–5**) containing incantations against fever found in Nippur, three (**Nippur 1–2** and **Nippur 4**) bear the name of the owner—the owner of all three pieces being Bābu-ēṭirat, daughter of Bānâtâ (possibly Bānītâ). In the Babylonian prosopographical database, the female personal name Bābu-ēṭirat can be linked to several different persons, however, in the absence of an affiliation, none of these occurrences can be linked with absolute certainty to the owner of the amulet. The owner of **Nineveh 1** is Šamaš-killanni, whose name can be identified in the corpus of personal names of the Neo-Assyrian period; six people are known with this name in the Neo-Assyrian text corpus, four of them linked to the reign of Ashurbanipal.⁷⁴ According to the catalogue of the British Museum, this amulet originates from Kuyunjik; therefore, it might have belonged to one of these four persons. The reading of the personal name preserved on **Nineveh 3** is uncertain. This male personal name consists of two signs after the determinative for gender: ^mPAP-ERIM;⁷⁵ but their correct reading remains obscure to us. The female name Šušannu on **Nineveh 4** means 'from the city of Susa', and it is identifiable among personal names from the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods, however, we do not know of any references from the Neo-Assyrian period.⁷⁶

Among five amulets (**Nippur 1–5**) inscribed with incantations against fever discovered in Nippur, three (**Nippur 1–2** and **Nippur 4**) bear the name of the owner, who is 'Bābu-ēṭirat',⁷⁷

⁷¹ In his publication, Scheil copied the text in Neo-Assyrian lapidary script but mentioned that the text was inscribed originally in Babylonian cursive script ('ordinaire babylonienne'). Weidner also remarked that the script on these objects is Babylonian (Weidner 1922, p. 296).

⁷² The date of BM 103574 has not been preserved, but it originates from the archive of the Ilia family, known from Borsippa, and dates back to the second half of the 6th century BCE. For the tablet, see <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/tablet/t5877> (suggested to us by M. Jursa).

⁷³ McEwan 1984, p. 123 no. 400 line 14.: ^fšū(SU¹)-bit-tu₄ AL.TI ^mTUKU-ši-DINGIR = Šūbītum, consort of Rāšili (courtesy of C. Wunsch). M. Jursa raised the possibility that Scheil had misinterpreted the signs of the personal name in line 7: ^fšū-u-pi-tu₄ = 'Sūpītum' (Scheil 1898, p. 201), and he suggested an alternate reading: ^fbar¹-síp¹-pi-tu₄ = Barsipītū; this personal name can be found in the Neo-Babylonian prosopographical database (<https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/individual.php?pid=8845>).

⁷⁴ Gentili 2011, p. 1204.

⁷⁵ The reading of the name as ^mKur-šab suggested by Campbell Thompson seems implausible, but we do not have any alternate suggestions (Campbell Thompson, 1940, p. 110 footnote 15).

⁷⁶ This personal name cannot be found in the Neo-Assyrian sources, but it can be attested in the Neo- and Late Babylonian cuneiform texts; for the references, see <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/individual.php?pid=27430>.

⁷⁷ Finkel uses the form Bāba-ēṭerat in his text edition: Finkel 2018, p. 238; in our translation we followed the Babylonian form of the name, which is also attested in the latest publication of this text (Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 130).

daughter of Bānâtâ (or Bānītâ)'.⁷⁸ The female name Bābu-ēṭirat can be linked to several different persons in the Neo-Babylonian prosopographical database; however, due to the lack of her patronym, none of them can be securely suggested as an owner of this amulet. In these inscriptions, the filiation of Bānâtâ includes her matronym, which differs from the praxis of administrative texts. Irving Finkel, the publisher of these amulets, explained the use of the matronym: the effective functioning of the amulet required an exact identification of the owner (Roman law: *Mater certa, pater incertus*); and he parallels the maternal lineage on the amulet with the cases known from administrative texts when the identity of the father could not be determined with certainty (for example in the case of adopted children, children from an illicit relationship, or children born as a result of sexual violence).⁷⁹ In this context, T. Abusch and D. Schwemer draw attention to the fact that the matronym is also mentioned in a ritual for protecting a pregnant woman.⁸⁰

2.6. CLASSIFICATION OF CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS BASED ON THEIR INSCRIPTIONS

The inscriptions on the collected cylindrical amulets made of clay can be divided into three main topics.⁸¹

- Group I: Ḫulbazizi incantations addressed to Sirius (subsection 3.1). The incantations Ḫulbazizi 18 (**Ligabue 1, Nimrud 1–2, Nineveh 1–4, Scheil 1–2 and Schøyen 1–2**) and Ḫulbazizi 19 (**Nimrud 3**), from the Ḫulbazizi incantation series, occur on most amulets. This group is complemented with further small amulets (Table 2 in the Appendix) also inscribed with a Ḫulbazizi incantation, but they are made of different materials and have a different shape. It must be noted that the cuneiform tablets belonging to the Ḫulbazizi incantation series do not include any rituals which describe producing and applying cylindrical clay amulets.
- Group II: Lamaštu and Ḫulbazizi incantations protecting children (subsection 3.2). The second group consists of rituals protecting infants, which describe producing and applying cylindrical clay amulets inscribed with Lamaštu incantations or Ḫulbazizi incantations. The first tablet of the canonical Lamaštu incantation series includes a ritual producing a cylindrical clay amulet inscribed with the first incantation of the series.⁸² Among medical-magical tablets containing rituals for protecting children against diseases or harmful demons, two procedures are known to us which describe making such an amulet; one of them is inscribed with a Lamaštu incantation, another with two Ḫulbazizi incantations; however, no amulets inscribed with these Lamaštu or Ḫulbazizi incantations are known in the archaeological material.
- Group III: Incantations against fever (subsection 3.3). In the third group, we collected cylindrical amulets against fever, made of clay, as well as rituals describing the use of these amulets. Based on rituals preserved on cuneiform tablets, these cylindrical amulets made of clay were inscribed with Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantations. The description of these rituals is preserved on several Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian medical tablets; however, only a single amulet (**Ugarit 1**) carrying this incantation is known to us. Further cylindrical clay amulets against fever bear incantations addressed to the underworld deities (Nergal,

⁷⁸ Finkel gives the form Bānitay (Finkel 2018, p. 238), but our work follows the nomenclature presented in the recent publication of this text in Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 130.

⁷⁹ It should be noted that in the relevant part of the ritual texts we can find the usual filiation formula: 'So-and-so, son of So-and-so' (NENNI A NENNI). This information was earlier mentioned in Finkel 2018, p. 238.

⁸⁰ Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 130 Text 5.9 line 7.

⁸¹ Cylindrical clay amulets inscribed with incantations different from the above-mentioned three groups are also known. Some of them are certainly dated earlier than our amulets, while other pieces may be contemporary with them. With our current knowledge, the incantations preserved on these objects cannot be linked to any known incantation series. (Cf. footnotes 8 and 54.)

⁸² Farber 2014, p. 145-146.

Ereškigal and Namtar) as well as to Ea (**Nippur 1–5**). In addition, we know of a fragmentary ritual that mentions producing a cylindrical amulet made of clay, but the incantation is not preserved.

The next part of our work provides transliteration and translation of all incantations inscribed on amulets, and we also publish relevant rituals preserved on medical tablets.

3. MEDICAL-MAGICAL RITUALS WITH CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS

3.1. RITUALS AND AMULETS WITH 𒄩ULBAZIZI INCANTATIONS

The first Sumerian and Akkadian 𒄩ulbazizi-incantations are known from the second half of the second millennium, and the incantation series against 𒄩ulbazizi dated to the first millennium consists of at least 65 incantations.⁸³ 𒄩ulbazizi incantations were grouped into another incantation series like Muššu'u or Lamaštu.⁸⁴ Specific 𒄩ulbazizi incantations are preserved on different types of amulets (Table 2) which testify to the popularity of the 𒄩ulbazizi incantations among Mesopotamians. Below, we present cylindrical clay amulets inscribed with 𒄩ulbazizi incantations, as well as rituals describing procedures for preparing these amulets.

The vast majority of the investigated amulets (12 in total) were inscribed with spells belonging to the 𒄩ulbazizi series. The incantation 𒄩ulbazizi 18 is preserved on eleven amulets (Table 1: **Scheil 1–2, Nineveh 1–4, Nimrud 1–2, Schøyen 1–2, Ligabue 1**); its text focuses on Sirius, an astral representation of Ninurta. The incantation 𒄩ulbazizi 19 is attested in a further cylindrical clay amulet (Table 1: **Nimrud 3**), mentioning not only Sirius but also members of the Mesopotamian triad of deities (Anu, Enlil and Ea) as well as gods of the personified rivers (Euphrates and Tigris).

3.1.1. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH THE INCANTATION 𒄩ULBAZIZI 18

Manuscripts: **Scheil 1–2, Nineveh 1–4** (Figure 1), **Nimrud 1–2** (Figure 1), **Schøyen 1–2, Ligabue 1**

Transliteration and translation

Nineveh 1₁	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ M[U].NA
Nineveh 2₁	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ MU.NE
Nineveh 3₁	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ MU.NE
Nineveh 4_{1-2a}	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ / MU-šú
Nimrud 1₁	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ MU.E.NE ¹ (text: MU.NE.E)
Nimrud 2₁	ÉN ^{niš} ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ MU
Ligabue 1_{1-2a}	ÉN ⁸⁵ ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ / MU.NE
Scheil 1₁	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ [šumšu]
Scheil 2₁	idem of Scheil 1₁
Schøyen 1₁	ÉN ^{mul} KAK.SI.SÁ MU.E.[NE]
Schøyen 2₁₋₂	ÉN ^{mul} x / x x x

⁸³ For the 𒄩ulbazizi incantations from the second millennium, see Zomer 2018, p. 186-190; for the edition of the 𒄩ulbazizi incantation series from the first millennium, see Finkel 1976, p. 74-137.

⁸⁴ Finkel 1991, p. 97; Böck 2007, p. 24; Farber 2014, p. 54, 58, 61.

⁸⁵ In the *editio princeps* of the object, Fales transliterated this as EN₆ but on the image made of the object the sign is clearly ÉN. The EN₆ (the cuneiform sign IN) as a logogram for 'incantation' appears only in the rubric of Middle Babylonian incantations from Hattuša. For the discussion of this rubric, see Zomer 2018, p. 28.

Nineveh 1₂ *mu-šá-lil qab-li*
Nineveh 2₂ *mu-šá-lil qab-li*
Nineveh 3₂ *mu-šá-lil qab-li*
Nineveh 4_{2b} *mu-šá-lil <qab>-li*
Nimrud 1₂ *mu-šá-lil qab-li*
Nimrud 2₂ *mu-šá-lil [qab]-‘li’*
Ligabue 1_{2b-3a} *mu-šá-lil / ^{giš}MURUB₄*
Scheil 1₂ unknown
Scheil 2₂ idem of **Scheil 1₂**
Schøyen 1_{2a} *[m]u-šá-lil EDIN*
Schøyen 2₃ *mu-šá-lil*

Nineveh 1₃ *muš-‘te’-’-u ur-ḫi-ti*
Nineveh 2₃ *muš-te-’-u ur-ḫi-tú*
Nineveh 3₃ *muš-te-’-u ur-ḫi-tú*
Nineveh 4_{3-4a} *‘muš-te-’-u ur-ḫe/-e-tú*
Nimrud 1₃ *muš-te-u ur-ḫi-tu*
Nimrud 2₃ *muš-te-’-u ur-ḫi-‘tu’*
Ligabue 1_{3b-4a} *mu-uš-te-u / ur-ḫi-tu’*
Scheil 1₃ unknown
Scheil 2₃ idem of **Scheil 1₃**
Schøyen 1_{2b-3} *muš-te-’ / ur-ḫe-e-ti*
Schøyen 2₄₋₅ *kin x x / ur-‘ḫi-tú’*

Nineveh 1₄ *mu-šak-lil mim-ma šum-šú*
Nineveh 2₄ *mu-šak-lil mim-ma šum-šú*
Nineveh 3₄ *mu-šak-lil mim-ma šum-šú*
Nineveh 4_{4b-5a} *mu-šak-lil / NÍG.NAM⁸⁶*
Nimrud 1₄ *mu-šak-lil mim-ma šum-šu*
Nimrud 2 —
Ligabue 1_{4b-5a} *mu-š[ak²]- / -‘li’² mim-ma šum-šú*
Scheil 1₄ unknown
Scheil 2₄ idem of **Scheil 1₄**
Schøyen 1₄ *mu-šak-lil mim-ma šum-šú*
Schøyen 2_{6-7a} *mu-x x x x / šum-šú*

Nineveh 1₅ *^{giš}me-tu ša ina IGI ^{giš}TUKUL*
Nineveh 2₅ *^{giš}me-tu šá ina IGI ^{giš}TUKUL*
Nineveh 3₅ *^{giš}me-tu šá ina IGI ^{giš}TUKUL*
Nineveh 4_{5b-6a} *^{giš}TUKUL.DINGIR šá IGI / ‘kak²-ki’²*
Nimrud 1₅ *^{giš}me-tu ša ina IGI ^{giš}kak-ki*
Nimrud 2₄ *^{giš}‘TUKUL’.DINGIR šá IGI ^{giš}‘TUKUL’*
Ligabue 1₆ *^{giš}me-tu ša ina IGI ‘^{giš}TUKUL’*
Scheil 1₅ *^{giš}TUKUL.DINGIR šá ina IGI ^{giš}TUKUL(text MAŠ)*
Scheil 2₅ idem of **Scheil 1₅**
Schøyen 1₅ *^{giš}TUKUL.DINGIR šá ina IGI ^{giš}TUKUL*
Schøyen 2_{7b-8a} *^{giš}me-tu šá / ana ^{giš}TUKUL¹*

⁸⁶ NÍG.NAM = *mimma šumšu* (see lexical part in CAD M/2 p. 73 *mimma* in this text).

Nineveh 1₆ *na-an-du-ru ZI-u*
Nineveh 2₆ *na-an-dúr ZI-u*
Nineveh 3₆ *na-an-du-ru ZI-u*
Nineveh 4_{6b} *na-an-duru₅ ZI-u*
Nimrud 1₆ *na-du-ru ti-bu-u*
Nimrud 2₅ *na-an-du-ru ZI-u*
Ligabue 1₇ *na-an-^rdúr²?^r ^rZI^r*
Scheil 1₆ *na-an-du-ru ZI-ú*
Scheil 2₆ idem of **Scheil 1₆**
Schøyen 1₆ *[n]a-an-du-ru te-bu-^rú^r*⁸⁷
Schøyen 2_{8b-9a} *na-an-du-ru / ZI-u*

Nineveh 1₇ *a-na ^{Id}šá-maš-kil-la-a-ni*
Nineveh 2_{7a} *a-na ^lblank DIŠ*
Nineveh 3_{7a} *a-na ^lPAP(or KÚR)-ERIM*
Nineveh 4₇ *^{f?}šu-šá-an-nu*
Nimrud 1_{7a} *a-na NENNI*
Nimrud 2_{6a} *a-na NENNI*
Ligabue 1_{8a} *a-na ^lblank⁸⁸*
Scheil 1₇ *ana ^mKI^l-^dAG-DIN*
Scheil 2₇ *ana ^fbar-sip-pi-tu₄*
Schøyen 1_{7a} *a-na NENNI*
Schøyen 2_{9b} *a-na NENNI*

Nineveh 1_{8a} DUMU DINGIR-šú
Nineveh 2_{7b} A DINGIR-šú
Nineveh 3_{7b} DUMU DINGIR-šú
Nineveh 4_{8a} DUMU.MUNUS[?] DINGIR.MEŠ-šú
Nimrud 1_{7b} A NENNI
Nimrud 2_{6b} A MIN GAR-šú GAR.GAR⁸⁹
Ligabue 1_{8b} ^rDUMU DINGIR^r-šú
Scheil 1₈ A-šú šá ^{md}AG-DŪ-ŠEŠ
Scheil 2₈ DUMU.MUNUS šá MUNUS-ia
Schøyen 1_{7b} A NENNI
Schøyen 2 –

Nineveh 1_{8b} NU TE NU DIM₄
Nineveh 2₈ NU TE-*hi* NU DIM₄
Nineveh 3₈ NU TE-*hi* NU DIM₄
Nineveh 4_{8b-9a} NU / TE NU DIM₄
Nimrud 1_{7c} *la TE-u*
Nimrud 2₇ NU TE-*a* NU DIM₄.MÀ⁹⁰

⁸⁷ George also identifies the remains of a possibly erased sign before the last sign of the line (*te-bu-{x}-ú*).

⁸⁸ Fales probably transliterated the signs in this line correctly (*‘a-na ^lDUMU il^r-šú^r’*); however, the content of the line makes sense if there is a blank place between the personal identifier and the sign DUMU. This line is not visible on the published photo; therefore, our suggestion is hypothetical. In our edition we reconstruct the transcription of this line based on the relevant part of **Nineveh 1**.

⁸⁹ Based on the transcription available to us (see footnote 11) ‘NÍG-šú GAR.GAR’ was written in this line after ‘A MIN (= A NENNI)’. We would suggest that ‘NÍG-šú’ can be read as ‘šakin(GAR)-šú’ (= its bearer) which refers to the owner of the amulet. However, the meaning of ‘GAR.GAR’ after *šakinšu* remains obscure to us.

Ligabue 1₉ *la TE-hi la* ¹DIM₄¹
Scheil 1₉ NU TE NU DIM₄
Scheil 2₉ idem of **Scheil 1₉**
Schøyen 1 *scribe omitted this line*
Schøyen 2_{10a} NU TE-*a*?

Nineveh 1₉ lú-zi-zi MIN
Nineveh 2_{9a} lú-zi-zi KIMIN
Nineveh 3_{9a} lú-zi-zi KIMIN
Nineveh 4_{9b-10a} lú-z[i- /z]i ¹KIMIN¹
Nimrud 1₈ lú-zi lú-zi
Nimrud 2₈ lú-zi-zi MIN
Scheil 1₁₀ lú-zi lú-zi
Scheil 2₁₀ lú-zi MIN
Schøyen 1_{7c} l[ú-zi]-¹zi¹
Schøyen 2_{10b} lú[?]-zi[?]-a

Nineveh 1_{10a} nam-ba-te-gá-dè
Nineveh 2_{9b} nam-ba-te-gá-dè
Nineveh 3_{9b} nam-ba-te-gá-e-dè
Nineveh 4_{10b-11} ¹nam[?]-ba-t[e] / -gá-e-dè
Nimrud 1_{9a} nam-ba-te-gá
Nimrud 2_{9a} nam-ba-te-gá-dè
Scheil 1₁₁ nam-ba-te-gá-e-dè
Scheil 2₁₁ idem of **Scheil 1₁₁**
Schøyen 1₈ nam-ba-te-gá-e-d[è]
Schøyen 2₁₁ *a-a x x-a*?

Nineveh 1_{10b} ÉN
Nineveh 2₁₀ TU₆ ÉN
Nineveh 3₁₀ TU₆ ÉN
Nineveh 4₁₂ *te* ÉN
Nimrud 1_{9b} TU₆ ÉN
Nimrud 2_{9b} ÉN
Scheil 1₁₂ TU₆ ÉN
Scheil 2₁₂ idem of **Scheil 1₁₂**
Schøyen 1 *closing formula is omitted*
Schøyen 2₁₂ en[?]-nu-ru(text: e)

Incantation: Sirius is his name,
who utters the battle cry in battle,
who shows the way,
who brings everything to perfection.
He is the divine mace,
that is raised from the furious weapons.
(O, Evil One) do not approach, do not come near
Šamaš-killanni,

⁹⁰ The form DIM₄.MÀ is not attested in the corpus of similar texts known to us.

son of his god!
 Attacker, attacker,
 do not come near! *Incantation-formula.*

(The translation follows the text of **Nineveh 1.**)

3.1.2. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH THE INCANTATION HULBAZIZI 19
 Manuscripts: **Nimrud 3** (Figure 1), AO 1167 (A.602)⁹¹

Transliteration and translation

Nimrud 3₁ $\acute{\text{E}}\text{N } \textit{niš}^{\text{mul}} \text{KAK.SI.SÁ-}e$
Louvre 1 $\acute{\text{E}}\text{N } \textit{niš}^{\text{mul}} \text{KAK.}[\text{SI.SÁ}]$

Nimrud 3₂ $\textit{niš}^{\text{d}} a\text{-nim}^{\text{d}} \text{BAD}$
Louvre 2_a $\textit{niš}^{\text{d}} a\text{-nim}^{\text{d}} \text{BAD}$

Nimrud 3₃ $u^{\text{d}} \acute{\text{e}}\text{-a}$
Louvre 2_b $[\text{Ea}]$

Nimrud 3₄ $\textit{niš} \textit{réme-né-e}^{\text{d}} \text{ŠÚ}$
Louvre 3 $\textit{niš} \textit{réme-né}^{\text{d}} [\text{Marduk}]$

Nimrud 3₅ $\textit{niš}^{\text{id}} \text{HAL.HAL}$
Louvre 4 $\textit{niš}^{\text{id}} \text{HAL.HAL}$

Nimrud 3₆ $u^{\text{id}} \textit{pu-rat}$
Louvre 4_a $u \textit{p}[u\text{-rat}^? \text{-tú}^?]$

Nimrud 3₇ $\textit{pu-tu}[\textit{r lem}]\text{-nu}^!$
Louvre 5_a $\textit{mim-ma lem-nu}$

Nimrud 3₈ $\text{NU}^! \text{TE-}a \acute{\text{E}}\text{N}$
Louvre 5_{b-6} $[\dots] / \acute{\text{E}}\text{N } \acute{\text{š}}\acute{a}^{\text{r}} \text{MAŠ}^{\text{r}} [\dots]$

Nimrud 3₉ $\text{DILI DILI DILI}^{92}$
Louvre 6 $[\dots]$

Incantation: by Sirius,
 by Anu, Enlil,
 and Ea
 by merciful Marduk,
 by the river of Tigris and Euphrates
 clear off outside! O, Any Evil
 do not approach (him)!⁹³ *Incantation-formula.*

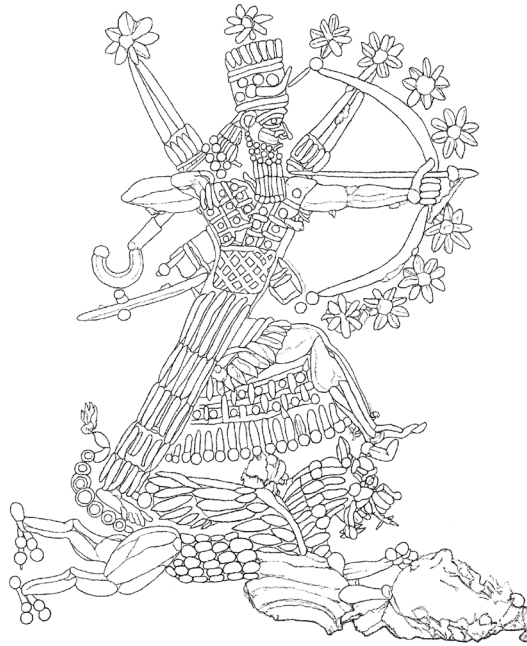
⁹¹ For the data of this object, see Table 2: 5.

⁹² These signs were intended to fill the uninscribed space at the end of the text. No similar use of three horizontal signs written on amulets is known to us.

⁹³ The translation of lines 5b-6a in AO 1167 (A.602) is as follows: ‘No evil shall approach him!’

Commentary

The incipits of the incantations discussed above mention Sirius, an astral representation of Ninurta which can be identified with the brightest star in the constellation Canis Maior. The Sumerian and Akkadian sources refer to Sirius representing Ninurta with the term ‘Arrow’ (Sumerian ^{mul}kak-si-sá Akkadian *šukūdu* or *šiltāhu*) and the depiction of this object as a representation of the deity, often appears on the *kudurrus* from the Kassite period. Among the mythological scenes depicted on cylinder seals, we find the image of Ninurta as an archer, chasing Anzû. We suppose that the bow and the arrow held in Ninurta’s hand refer to the astral role of these weapons, since the bow bordered by a row of stars forms a constellation with the arrow (Figure 2).



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Figure 2: Armed Ninurta riding the deluge monster (*abūbu*).
Detail from a seal image depicting Ninurta pursuing Anzû.⁹⁴

Ninurta, who triumphs over harmful demons, also plays an important role in Mesopotamian medical-magical rituals. This tradition is based on the defeat of the demon Asakku (Sumerian Azag), whose character is closely connected to certain diseases affecting people. Ninurta as a healing god is also manifested in the Gula hymn written by Bulussa-rabi, mentioning Ninurta as Gula’s consort. The Arrow, an astral representation of Ninurta, is not only the name of a star representing the god but also the name of the divine weapon of the warrior god who confronts the harmful demon; moreover, Ninurta is invoked as a weapon in one of his hymns.⁹⁵ The close relationship of Sirius and Ninurta with healing is confirmed by a ritual against *zikurrudû*-witchcraft, which was accompanied by an offering and praying for Ninurta before the star Sirius.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ For the publication of cylinder seal BM WA 129560, see Collon 2001, p. 152 no. 292, pls. XXIV and XXXV.

⁹⁵ For the edition of the relevant line 8 of the hymn, see Mayer 2005, p. 52 and 54. For discussion of this topic, see Annus 2002, p. 134.

⁹⁶ For the edition of the text ‘Prayer and ritual before Sirius’ (esp. lines 1-36), see Reiner 1995, p. 102-103, Abusch/Schwemer 2016, p. 371-384.

A ritual text describing the production and use of a cylindrical clay amulet inscribed with a Ḫulbazizi incantation can be identified without doubt on a single clay tablet (subsection 3.2). However, two further rituals preserved on fragmentary tablets also describe a similar procedure.

According to the ritual preserved on a Late Babylonian tablet from Uruk, the amulet was inscribed with two Ḫulbazizi incantations (Ḫulbazizi 50 and 51). Although the description of the production of the amulet is broken in this text, the context suggests that a cylindrical clay amulet could have been the object bearing the incantations. This suggestion is confirmed by the fact that we can read a similar procedure in another ritual, for protecting young children (subsection 3.2). The text of that ritual is as follows.

Incantation. Ninazu, Ninazu, mighty Ninazu! Ninazu, [the foremost one, Ninazu, the leader deity,⁹⁷]! Ninazu, the rising one! Ninazu, the firstborn of Sîn! Ninazu's clay, which belongs to the temple of Ninazu! Ninazu's cylinder seal that has no equal. *Incantation.* I am the king of the poplar, I am the king of the Euphrates river! Let him (= the Evil One) disappear! The Evil One, do not approach (him)!

Incantation that the evil that keeps rising (against the patient) does not approach (him)!

Its ritual. You take clay from canal, mix (it) with ash of *elpetu*-plant. [You make a cylindrical amulet and] write [this incantation] on it (and) hang (it) at the head of (his) bed!

Ḫulbazizi incantation and ritual (SpTU 3, 83 obv. 19-25).⁹⁸

Ninazu, invoked in this incantation, is a chthonic deity invoked in spells against snakebites⁹⁹ and in incantations against diseases caused by ghost as well as in spells against fever.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the ritual mentioned above, a further fragmentary text originating from Assurbanipal's library which also describes the making of a cylindrical clay amulet was presumably inscribed with the incantation Ḫulbazizi 18. Unfortunately, only the end of the incantation is preserved on this fragment, though the formula that appears here can also be attested in another incantation. The text of the fragmented ritual is as follows.

1' [...] 'x x'

2' [...] nam-ba-te-g]á-dè TU₆.ÉN

3' [...] 'x'-tu *mu-tu* TU.RA

4' [...] *ana* LU₂ NU TE-*e*

5' [DÙ.DÙ.BI ...IM?] TI-'qé' ^{na4}KIŠIB DÙ-*uš*

6' [...] *šipta annīta lū*] *ina* UGU ^{na4}KIŠIB *lu ina* UGU

7' [...] *tašatṭar* ...] 'x x x' 'di'-*'i-i*

8' [...] ^{na4}KIŠIB

9' [...] x NA₄.MEŠ

10' [...] *mu-tu*

11' [TU.RA *ana* L]U₂ NU TE

⁹⁷ The translation of the alternate reading of the cuneiform signs here is ^dPALIL = the god Palil, Finkel 1976, p. 118-119; but we prefer the reading *ilu*(DINGIR) *ālik pāni*(IGI.DU), following Weiher's edition (Weiher 1983, p. 110 and 113). It is important to note that Krebernik's recent study on Palil does not mention this text among cuneiform sources invoking the deity (Krebernik 2003–2005).

⁹⁸ For the edition of this text, see von Weiher 1983, p. 110-115.

⁹⁹ Scurlock 2006, p. 431-433 no. 169.

¹⁰⁰ Bácskay 2018a, p. 151 and 154 no. 51 lines 59-61. For the goddess Ninazu, see Wiggermann 2000b.

[... do not co]me near! *Incantation-formula.*

[(*list of diseases and demons*)] death, disease, [...] do not approach the man!

[Its ritual]: You take [clay, (*the broken part of this line probably lists additional materials needed to make an amulet*)], make a cylindrical clay amulet (and) [write this incantation] on the cylindrical amulet or on the [...], ... *di'u*-disease, [...] cylindrical amulet, [...] x (pcs.) of stone, [(*the broken part supposedly lists further diseases or demons' names*)], death, [diseases? ...] do not approach the man!

Incantation and ritual against various diseases and death (AMT 71, 2+ i' lines 1'-11').¹⁰¹

3.2. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH INCANTATIONS FOR PROTECTING YOUNG CHILDREN

Cylindrical amulets made of clay for the protection of children are only known from ritual texts preserved on clay tablets. We suggest that the amulet **Ugarit 1**, previously classified by Farber as a part of this group of amulets, actually belongs to the group of amulets against fever, because parallels of the incantation preserved on **Ugarit 1** are identifiable among the Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantations against fever (subsection 3.1).

3.2.1. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH A LAMAŠTU INCANTATION FOR PROTECTING YOUNG CHILDREN

Manuscript: BM 134780 obv. 6'-7'¹⁰²

Transliteration and translation

6' [^dLamaštu *ana*] LÚ.TUR NU TE-*e* ^{na4}KIŠIB I[M *teppuš*]

7' [ÉN ^dkamad-me dum]u an-na MU šá 1-*en ana* UGU S[AR-*ma ina* GÚ-šú GAR]

In order that Lamaštu does not approach a small child: [you make] a cylindrical clay amulet, write the [incantation 'Lamaštu, daugh]ter of Anu is her first name' on it and place it around his neck!

3.2.2. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH HULBAZIZI INCANTATION FOR PROTECTING YOUNG CHILDREN

Manuscript: K 3628 + 4009 + Sm 1315 obv. 27 - rev. 12¹⁰³

Transliteration and translation

obv. 27 [ÉN é ba-an-ge]-e ba-an-šú

28 [i-bi-za-<la>-a]ḫ i-bi-za-<la>-aḫ¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ For the transcription of the text, see BabMed Amulettsteinlisten K 13573 + K 13343 (+) K 5176 + Sm 1107: https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/Amulettsteinlisten/K_13573___K_13343___K_5176___Sm_1107/index.html

¹⁰² Farber 1989, p. 116-117 §41 sigla j and pl. 10 (transliteration and translation); Farber 2014, p. 144 and notes to line 10. on p. 199 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹⁰³ Finkel 1976, pls. 25-26 (copy, ms.P) rev. 3-12 (Hulbazizi 18), obv. 27'-rev. 2 (Hulbazizi 59) (transliteration and translation); Farber 1989, p. 128-129 §46, sigla u (transliteration and translation); Scurlock 2014, p. 623 (transliteration and translation).

¹⁰⁴ [bi.za.aḫ a]n-né bi.za.aḫ (Farber 1989, 128; Scurlock follows the same transliteration, Scurlock 2014, 623). Our suggestion for reconstruction of this line is based on variants of the incipit of the incantation: ÉN za-la-aḫ za-la-[aḫ ...] (AMT 66, 4 i' 10 – the ritual related to this incantation too broken but it seems more likely an ointment), ÉN za-la-aḫ iz-za-la-aḫ za-la-aḫ AL.TILA TU₆ ÉN (BAM 248 iv 10 // AMT 67 iv 3 – an incantation used in rituals aimed to remove childbirth complications). Farber transliterated the first fragmentary sign in this line as AN but based on the photo of the tablet (CDLI – P395132), this sign can also be interpreted as the end of the sign Aḫ (only the end of the last horizontal wedge is visible on the tablet). All these texts will be published

29. [dingir-re-e-ne-ke₄ a-šà]-ga ba-an-ú[s]?
- rev. 1 ^da-nu ina AN-e i[g-ru-uš]
2. u er-še-tu₄ ina ra-ma-ni-^ʿšá-^ʿma ig-ru-uš [TU₆.ÉN]
3. ÉN ^{mul}KAK.SI.SÁ mu-ne mu-šá-lil [qabli]
4. muš-te-^ʿu ur-^{he}-^ʿti^ʿ mu-šak-lil m[im-ma šumšu]
5. ^{giš}TUKUL.DINGIR šá ina pa-an ^{giš}ʿTUKUL^ʿ na-an-du-ru t[e-^{hu}-u]
6. ana NENNI A NENNI NU TE-^{he} NU [...]
7. lú-zi-zi lú zi-zi nam-ba-te-gá-e-è[d-e TU₆.ÉN]
8. 2 KA.INIM.MA LÚ.TUR A.LÁ ĦUL ŠÚ.[ŠÚ-šú]
9. DÙ.DÙ.BI ^{na4}KIŠIB [I]M kul-la-ti [teppušma]
10. ÉN an-ni-tú ina U[GU] SA[R...]
11. ina IN.BUBBU ta-^ʿšar^ʿ-rap šum₄-ma ina GÚ-šú^ʿ GAR-an^ʿ?
12. šum₄-ma ina SAG ^{giš}NÁ tal-lal-ma mim-ma lem-nu^ʿ NU TE^ʿ

[Incantation: the house is fi]xed (and) covered,
[ibizala]h ibizalaḥ (gibberish Sumerian-like words).

The gods were driven overland.¹⁰⁵

Anu moved forward to the Heaven,

The Earth moved forward by itself. [Incantation formula].

Incantation. Sirius is its name, who utters the battle cry in battle,
who shows the way, who brings everything to perfection.

He is the divine mace, that is raised from the furious weapons.

(The Evil One), do not approach, do not come near!

Attacker, attacker, do not come near! [Incantation-formula].

Two incantations against evil Alû-demon overwhelming a small child.

Its ritual. [You make] cylindrical seal of potter's clay and write this incantation on it, [then]
bake (it) in straw fire. If you (either) place (it) around his neck (or) hang (it) at the head of
(his) bed, no evil (demon) can approach (him).

Commentary

The cylindrical amulet made of clay mentioned in the first ritual (subsection 3.2.1) may refer to a specific procedure preserved in the text of the canonical Lamaštu series (Tablet I. lines 1-10). According to this ritual, the nine names of Lamaštu must be written on a cylindrical clay amulet that is then hung around the neck of the patient.¹⁰⁶ The second ritual text (3.2.2) mentions two Ħulbazizi incantations (Ħulbazizi 18 and 59), however, it is questionable whether both incantations were inscribed on the same amulet, as cylindrical clay amulets known to us always bear only a single incantation. However, it should be noted that the above-mentioned flask-shaped chalcedony amulet pendant (Table 2: 4) has the incantation Ħulbazizi 9 on the one side and Ħulbazizi 38 on the other side. Moreover, the incantations Ħulbazizi 33 and 38 were inscribed on a cylinder seal dated to the Middle Babylonian period (Table 2: 6).

in Steinert's book on women's health care. Steinert interprets zalaḥ as "to slip (through and opening)" addressing the baby in the womb.

¹⁰⁵ Our translation follows Scurlock's edition, but the exact meaning of this line remains obscure to us.

¹⁰⁶ Farber 2014, p. 68-70 and 144-145.

3.3. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH INCANTATIONS AGAINST FEVER

The medical-magical rituals against fever mention the use of cylindrical clay amulets, and this type of amulet can also be identified in the archaeological record. Amulets used against fever bear different incantations. Some ritual descriptions preserved on clay tablets as well as the legend of a single amulet (**Ugarit 1**) contain Lamaštu incantations. Currently, two ritual texts are known to us that describe producing cylindrical clay amulets inscribed with Lamaštu incantations. Both incantations in these rituals belong to the group of Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantations. The association between Lamaštu and fever can be attested not only in these rituals; canonical and Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantations were also recited in some therapeutic procedures (ointments) and phylacteries against fever.¹⁰⁷ Other cylindrical clay amulets against fever (**Nippur 1–5**) were inscribed with incantations invoking various underworld deities (like Nergal, Ereshkigal, or Namtar) and the god Ea.¹⁰⁸

3.3.1. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH LAMAŠTU INCANTATIONS AGAINST FEVER
Manuscripts: **Ugarit 1**; BAM 148 obv. 34-40,¹⁰⁹ STT 144 rev. 19'-22',¹¹⁰ CTN 4, 150 rev. 1-6;¹¹¹ BM 55516+ obv. 4'-8'¹¹²

Transliteration and translation

BM 55516+obv. 4'	'DIŠ' NA KÚM U ₄ 1-KAM DAB-su U ₄ 1-KAM BAR-š[ú IM PA ₅ TI-qí ina A.PA ₅ 𐎠.𐎠]
BAM 148obv. 34-35	[...] U ₄ -1-'KÁM DAB-su' MIN U ₄ -1-KÁM BAR-šú IM P[A ₅] / [ina]'A.PA ₅ ' 𐎠.𐎠
CTN 4, 150rev. 1	[DIŠ] NA' KÚM U ₄ 1-KAM DAB-su-ma U ₄ 1-KAM BAR-šu 'IM' PA ₅ TI-'qí' ina A.P[A ₅ 𐎠.𐎠]
BM 55516+obv. 5'	SU LÚ.'GIG' tu-kap-par záp-pi ANŠE šá [15 záp-pi ANŠE šá šumēlu]
BAM 148obv. 35	záp-pi MUNUS.ANŠE šá '15' záp-pi MUNUS.ANŠE šá šumēlu
CTN 4, 150rev. 2	'záp'-pi ANŠE 15 záp-pi ANŠE.MUNUS GÚB šá 150
BM 55516+obv. 6'	'KI' IM šú-a-tú 𐎠.𐎠 na ⁴ KIŠIB DÙ-uš ÍB.T[AK ₄] záp-p[i ...]
BAM 148obv. 36-37	[... š]u-a-tu ₄ 𐎠.𐎠 na ⁴ KIŠIB 'DÙ'-uš ÍB.T[AK ₄ ...] / [... ana] UGU na ⁴ KIŠIB MÚNŠ[UB ...]
CTN 4, 150rev. 2-3	KI IM šu-a-tu ₄ 𐎠.𐎠 / [n]a ⁴ KIŠIB 'DÙ'-uš ÍB.TAK ₄ záp-p[i š]u-a-tum ana] UGU na ⁴ KIŠIB MÚN[ŠUB ...]
BM 55516+obv. 7'	ÉN ^d kamad-me dumu an-na mu pà-da dingir-re-e-n[e-ke ₄ ki-sikil líl-lá dumu]
BAM 148obv. 38-39	[ÉN ^d kam]ad-me dumu 'd'an'-na mu pà-da dingir-'re'-[ne-ke ₄] / [ki-sikil líl-lá dumu a-r]á du ₁₀ -ga dumu
CTN 4, 150rev. 4-6	'ÉN ^d kamad'-me dumu an-na 'mu' pà-da dingir-re-'e-ne'-[ke ₄ ...] / 'nin?' ki-sikil' ^d en-líl-le nam-tar ša du ₁₀ -ga / dumu

¹⁰⁷ For Lamaštu as a demon causing fever, see Farber 2007, p. 139-142.

¹⁰⁸ The *editio princeps* of these amulets was published recently by Finkel in 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Bácskay 2018a, p. 148-149 and 153 (transliteration and translation).

¹¹⁰ Farber 2014, p. 273 and 300-301 (transliteration and translation); Bácskay 2018a, p. 155 (mention); Bácskay 2018b (transliteration and translation).

¹¹¹ Bácskay 2023, p. 155-158 (transliteration and translation).

¹¹² Bácskay 2023 (copy, photo, transliteration, and translation).

CTN 4, 119 _{rev. 19-21}	ÉN ^d kamad-me 'dumu' an-na / mu pà-da dingir-re-e-ne-ke ₄ / ki-sikil líl-lá dumu
STT 144 _{rev. 19-21}	ÉN ^d kamad-me 'dumu' an-na / mu pà-da dingir-re-e-ne-ke ₄ / ki-sikil líl-lá dumu mu pà-da
Ugarit 1 ₁₋₄	ÉN ^d kamad'-me' dumu ^d a-nim / mu pad-da dingir-ra-ne-ke ₄ / nin ki-sikil ^d en-lil-le / dumu
BM 55516 _{+obv. 8'}	a-rá du ₁₀ -ga MIN <i>te</i> ÉN ÉN <i>an-ni-ta ina muḫ-ḫi</i> ^{na4} KIŠ[IB <i>tašaṭṭar...</i>]
BAM 148 _{obv. 39-40}	'a'-r[á du ₁₀ -ga ...] / [... ÉN] É.[NU.RU ...]
CTN 4 150 _{rev. 6}	a-ra du ₁₀ -ga TU ₆ É.NU.RU
STT 144 _{rev. 21-22}	a-rá du ₁₀ -ga / dumu a-rá du ₁₀ -ga ÉN É.'NU.RU'
Ugarit 1 ₄₋₆	a-rá du ₁₀ -ga / dumu a-rá du ₁₀ -ga / <i>te'</i> ÉN

If one day the fever seized him (and) on another day left him. You mix canal clay in canal water, (and) wipe the ill man's body. (Take) hair from the right (part) of a donkey (var. a female donkey), hair from the left (leg) of a donkey (var. a female donkey), mix (them) in that clay (and) make a cylindrical amulet. [You put?] the remaining animal hair on the amulet. The hair [...].

Incantation. Lamaštu, daughter of Anu, who was named (her) name by the gods, Ardat-Lilî,¹¹³ child of good behaviour, ditto (= children of good behaviour).¹¹⁴ *Incantation formula.* [You write] this incantation on it [and place it around his neck?].

Commentary

This Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantation inscribed on the amulet against fever is also attested in a ritual text describing the use of a cylindrical clay amulet for protecting small children (for the edition of these texts, see subsection 3.2); however, the ritual text gives only the incipit of the incantation, and does not contain the whole text. Only a single amulet (**Ugarit 1**) inscribed with this incantation is known to us, and our suggestion that this amulet belongs to the fever amulets is justified by its legend which is parallel with the incantation text preserved on clay tablets, containing incantations and rituals against Lamaštu.¹¹⁵ In the ritual presented above, a hair from the leg of a donkey had to be added to the clay, an action supposedly based on the association of Lamaštu with a male donkey. The iconographic equivalent of this idea is the figure of Lamaštu standing on a donkey's back, alongside paraphernalia depicting a donkey's leg, on the Lamaštu plaques.

¹¹³ One of the manuscripts provides an alternate version: 'Ardat-lili, servant of Enlil'. The text variant 'Mistress, servant of Enlil' preserved on a cylindrical clay amulet does not appear elsewhere among the Lamaštu incantations; however, in one incantation from the canonical series of Lamaštu incantations Enlil was characterized as 'her father' (Tablet 2, lines 92-93 Farber 2014, p. 108-109).

¹¹⁴ The text variant in CTN 4, 150 is as follows: Lamaštu, daughter of Anu, who was named (by her) name by the gods, the mistress, whose fate (was declared) good by Enlil.

¹¹⁵ The ritual is preserved on the following medical tablets, two Neo-Assyrian (BAM 148 and CTN 4, 150) and one Neo- or Late Babylonian (BM 55516+); all of them contain prescriptions against fever. The Neo-Assyrian tablet STT 144 includes a collection of Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantations without rituals.

3.3.2. CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS INSCRIBED WITH A LAMAŠTU INCANTATIONS AGAINST FEVER MENTIONING ẖENDURSAG

Manuscripts: BM 35512 rev. 16-18;¹¹⁶ BAM 149 3'-9';¹¹⁷ STT 144 rev. 23'-29'.¹¹⁸

Transliteration and translation

BM 35512 _{rev.16}	én ¹ kamad-me dumu an-na ẖendur-sag-gá <nam> tar-tar-dir-e ¹¹⁹ : dingir gíd-gíd-a-ni sa ² -ùr-ra ³ [ẖendur-sag-gá tar-tar nam-zu]
BAM 149 _{3'-4'}	[én kamad-me dumu an-na]a : ẖendur-sag-gá [...] / [dingir gíd-gíd-a-ni sa-ù]r-ra ẖendur-sag-g[á tar-tar nam-zu]
STT 144 _{rev. 23'-26'}	én kamad-me [du]mu an-na / ẖendur-sag-gá <nam> tar-tar-e-d[è] / [dingir g]íd-gíd-a-ni sa-ùr-ra / [ẖendur-s]ag-gá tar-tar nam ⁴ -zu
BM 35512 _{rev. 17}	a ze-eb ẖuš nam ẖé-éb-bé ẖendur-sag-gá den-líl den-me-šár-ra ku ⁴ x x ⁵ [...]
BAM 149 _{5'-7'}	[a ze-eb ẖuš] nam ẖ[é-éb-bé] / [ẖendur-sag-gá de]n-líl-lá de[n-me-šár-ra] / [...] x ⁶ ti x x ⁷ [...]
STT 144 _{rev. 27'-29'}	[a ze-eb ẖu]š nam ẖ[é-éb]-bé / [ẖendur-sag-g]á de ⁸ n-líl [den-m]e-šár-ra / [...] x ⁹ tu-x ¹⁰ [x] x ¹¹ tu ¹² -én
BM 35512 _{rev. 18}	KA.INIM.MA DIŠ NA KÚM DAB-su ina ^{na4} KIŠIB SAR-ár ina GÚ-šú GAR-an-ma [...]
BAM 149 _{8'-9'}	[... K]ÚM DAB-su ina ^{na4} [...] / [...]-ma [...]

Incantation. Lamaštu, daughter of Anu, ẖendursag, who determines (the fate), the god who drags the šēšū-net, [ẖendursag who determined wisdom]. ... indeed, you determine (lit. say) the fate. ẖendursag, Enlil (and) Enmešarra ... [...].

^{18'}*Incantation formula.* 'If a man has been seized by heat.' You write (this incantation) on a cylindrical amulet, place (it) around his neck and [he will get well].

Commentary

The incantation belongs to the group of Non-Canonical Lamaštu incantations and is known only from the three clay tablets mentioned above. ẖendursag is the divine night watchman, who is the 'supervisor of the roads' and who keeps harmful demons away from the night travellers. In our sources, his figure often appears together with fire, which provides light and magical protection for people during the night, and with the god Išum, who is identified with the torch.¹²⁰ His figure or his battle-net are invoked against harmful demons by Asalluḫi in the canonical series *Utukkū lemnūtu* (tablet 11. lines 108-109).¹²¹ The figures of ẖendursag and Lamaštu are not mentioned together in our sources, nor do other sources related to ẖendursag refer to any relationship between the god and fever. The appearance of the god in the context of fever might be, on the one hand, due to his general exorcistic character and, on the other, due to the association of Išum with the fire illuminating the night, likely because the term 'fire' (Sumerian *izi*, Akkadian *išātu*) is a metaphor for 'fever'.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Bácskay 2018b, p. 18-19 and 108-109 sigla a (copy, photo, transliteration and translation).

¹¹⁷ Bácskay 2018b, p. 18-19 and 108-109 sigla E (transliteration and translation).

¹¹⁸ Farber 2014, p. 273 and 300-301 (transliteration and translation); Bácskay 2018b, p. 18-19 and 108-109 sigla K (transliteration and translation).

¹¹⁹ We interpreted tar-tar-dir-e as a corrupted form of tar-rat-re-dè.

¹²⁰ For the recent discussion of ẖendursag and Išum, see George 2015.

¹²¹ For the edition of this text, see Geller 2016, p. 387.

¹²² Bácskay 2018b, p. 110 and footnote no. 27. For discussion of the correlation between fire and fever, see Stol 2007, p. 1-3; Bácskay 2018a, p. 7-8.

3.3.3 CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULETS (NIPPUR 1–5) INSCRIBED WITH INCANTATIONS INVOKING UNDERWORLD DEITIES AND THE GOD EA

Manuscripts: **Nippur 1**; BM 43359+ rev. 9'-11'.¹²³

Transliteration and translation

Nippur 1₁ ÉN ^dMAŠ SAG.KAL DINGIR.MEŠ
BM 43359+_{rev.9'} ÉN ^d[MAŠ SA]G.KAL DINGIR.MEŠ

Nippur 1₂ ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šú ^{fd}KÁ-*e-tè-rat*
BM 43359+_{rev.9'} ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šú NENNI

Nippur 1₃ [DU]MU.MUNUS šá ^fDÙ-*ta-a*
BM 43359+_{rev.9'} A NENNI

Nippur 1₄ šá KÚM *šab-tu-ši-ma*
BM 43359+_{rev.10'} šá KÚM [*šab*]-*tu-ši-ma*

Nippur 1₅ NINDA.ĦI.A ú-*maṭ-tu-ú*
BM 43359+_{rev.10'} NINDA.ĦI.A ú-^r*maṭ-tu-ú*

Nippur 1₆ KÚM *u lu-ba-tu*
BM 43359+_{rev.10'} KÚM ù *lu-ba-tu*

Nippur 1₇ *ina* SU-šú ú-*suḥ-ma*
BM 43359+_{rev.11'} ^r*ina* SU-šú [^u-*s*]*uḥ-ma*

Nippur 1₈ *i-lik-ku lil-lik*
BM 43359+_{rev.11'} *i-lik-ki lil-lik*

Nippur 1₉ *te* ÉN
BM 43359+_{rev.11'} *te* ÉN

Incantation. Ninurta, foremost of the gods, his brothers! (Regarding) Bābu-ēṭirat, daughter of Bānâtâ (var. So-and-so, son of So-and-so), whom fever has attacked, and reduced her (appetite for) food, drive out fever and *lubāṭu*-disease from her body! May it be on its way!
*Incantation formula.*¹²⁴

Manuscripts: **Nippur 2**; BM 43359+ rev. 2'-8';¹²⁵ BM 49141+ obv. 17-18¹²⁶

Transliteration and translation

Nippur 2₁₋₄ ÉN ^dé-*a* LUGAL ABZU EN NUN.KI
BM 43359+_{rev. 2'-} [...] ^r
BM 49141+_{obv. 17} [ÉN ^dé]-^r*a* LUGAL ABZU EN *eri*₄-*du*₁₀

Nippur 2₂ ^{fd}KÁ-*e-tè-rat* DUMU.MUNUS šá
BM 43359+_{rev. 2'} [...]

¹²³ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹²⁴ We followed the translation of I. Finkel.

¹²⁵ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹²⁶ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 131-132 Text 6.2 (transliteration and translation).

BM 49141+obv. 17 [KI NENNI]

Nippur 2₃ ^fDÙ-ta-a šá KÚM šab-tu-ši-ma

BM 43359+rev. 2'-3' [...] KÚM / šab-t[u ...]

BM 49141+obv. 17 šá KÚM šab-tu-ši-ma

Nippur 2₄ ú-šam-sa-qú zu-mur-šú

BM 43359+rev. 3' [...]

BM 49141+obv. 17 ú-šam-za-qí SU-šú

Nippur 2₅ ina te-e-ku KÙ lip-pa-ṭir-ma

BM 43359+rev. 3'-4' [ina te-e-k]u KÙ-tim / lip-[pa]-ṭir'-[ma]

BM 49141+obv. 18 [ina te-e-ku KÙ-ti]m ṭir'-pa-ṭir-ma

Nippur 2₆ a-ḫi-tam-ma lil-lik¹

BM 43359+rev. 4' [...]

BM 49141+obv. 18 a-ḫ[i-tam-m]a lil-lik rasur

Nippur 2₇ [t]e ÉN¹

BM 43359+rev. 4' te ÉN

BM 49141+obv. 18 te ÉN

BM 43359+rev. 5' DÙ.DÙ.[BI I]M ka-a-ṭir² IM² [...] TI-qí^{im}KIŠ]IB DÙ-uš

BM 43359+rev. 6' ÉN a[n-ni]ta ina muḫ-ḫi ta-ša[t-ṭar ina DUR GADA t]a-šak-kak

BM 43359+rev. 7' ú³x³ [x³] ú³el-kul-la ṭ³IGI-lim ú³ [AŠ].ṬÁL.ṬÁL³

BM 43359+rev. 8' ina [...]] 5-šú ta-rak-kas-ma KÚM ina SU-šú DU₈-ṭir³

Incantation. Ea, king of the Apsû, lord of Eridu! (Regarding) Bābu-ēṭirat, daughter of Bānâtâ (var. So-and-so, son of So-and-so) whom fever has seized, and whose body (the fever) is tormenting, (by the command of) your pure spell let it be removed, let it go elsewhere! *Incantation formula.*

Its ritual. Take clay from a quay, clay [from ...] (and) make a cylindrical amulet, write this incantation on it. You string it on thread of flax [(together with stone beads)]; (Take) [...]-plant, *elkulla*-plant, *imhur-līm*-plant; you knot it on [his body¹²⁷] five times and fever be driven from her body.¹²⁸

Manuscripts: **Nippur 3**; BM 43359+ obv. 18-rev. 1';¹²⁹ BM 49141+ obv. 14-16¹³⁰

Transliteration and translation

Nippur 3₁₋₃ ÉN ṭ^dereš'-k[i-gal ...] / [...] KÚM? ú-kal / ina IGI-ki [...] ṭ^x ID²

BM 43359+obv. 18-19 ÉN ṭ^dereš-ki-gal ṭ³GAŠAN³ KI-t[im ... MUNUS.U]Š₁₁.ZU /

[ina I]GI-ka ṭ³ip'-q[ṭ-du]

BM 49141+obv. 14 [É]N ṭ^dereš-ki-gal ṭ³GAŠAN KI-tim DAGAL-tim NENNI šá MUNUS.UŠ₁₁.ZU

ina IGI-ka ip-qí-du-ma KÚM šab-tuš

¹²⁷ Finkel suggests that the amulet must be tied onto the patient's right hand (Finkel 2018, p. 253 and 255).

¹²⁸ We followed the translation of Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 132 with minimal correction.

¹²⁹ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹³⁰ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 131-132 Text 6.2 (transliteration and translation).

Nippur 34-6 'x x x' [...] 'x' / [...] 'x' / TU₆ ÉN
 BM 43359⁺obv. 19-20 [muḥḥi ma]ḥ-ṣu / [x x] 'x' [...]
 BM 49141⁺obv. 15 [mu]ḥ-ḥi maḥ-ṣu ṣer-ri GIG lib-luṭ N[ENNI?] 'bal'-tu lit-ta-'-id
 DINGIR-ut-ka te ÉN

BM 43359⁺ rev. 1' [... GAR]- 'an'
 BM 49141⁺obv. 16 [DÙ.DÙ.BI ⁱ]^mKIŠIB DÙ-uš ÉN an-nita ina UG[U] S[AR GI]Š? 'BÚR'?
 [Z]Ú AM.SI MUN eme-sal-lim ^úIGI-lim ina 'KUŠ DÙ.DÙ' ina 'GÚ-šú
 GAR-an'

Incantation. Ereškigal, mistress of the wide netherworld, may So-and-so, whom a witch entrusted (to the netherworld) in your presence, and (whom) then fever seized, (whose) [he]ad was struck (and whose) back is sick, live! May So-and-[so], alive, praise your divinity!
Incantation formula.

Its ritual. You make a cylindrical clay amulet (and) write this incantation on (it). You wrap ['wo]od-of-release', [iv]ory, emesallu-salt, imhur-līm-plant in (a) leather (pouch); you place (it) around his neck.¹³¹

Manuscripts: **Nippur 4**; BM 43359⁺ obv. 10-17;¹³² BM 49141⁺ obv. 10-13.¹³³

Transliteration and translation

Nippur 41-3 ÉN ^dnam-[tar ...] / ^{fd}KÁ-e-ṭè-[-rat ...] / ip-qí-du-ma KÚM ṣa[b-tu-ši (...)]
 BM 43359⁺obv. 10-11 ÉN ^d'[...]KI]-tim 'NENNI' šá MUNUS.UŠ₁₁.ZU ina IGI-ka /
 ip-qí-[du-ma li]-'?'-ba KUR-i im-'qu'-tú UGU-šú
 BM 49141⁺obv. 10 [ÉN] ^dnam-tar SUKKAL KI-tim NENNI šá MUNUS.UŠ₁₁.ZU ina IGI-ka
 ip-qí-du-ma li-['-bi šadî im]-qu-tú U[GU-šú]

Nippur 44-7 'x x x' / 'tu-šá'-an-nu-ú DIMMA-šú KÚM / tu-šá-aš-bit-su-ma
 tu-šah-ḥa-ḥa UZU.MEŠ-šú
 BM 43359⁺obv. 12-13 muḥ-[ḥi-tam]-ma 'tu-šá'-an-nu-ú ṭè-en-šú / KÚM tu-[šá-aš-bit-s]u-ma
 'tu-šá'-ḥa-ḥa UZU.MEŠ-šú
 BM 49141⁺obv. 11 muḥ-ḥi-tam ḥa-as-su-ma tu-šá-an-nu-ú ṭè-en-šú KÚM tu-šá-aš-bit-s[u]-
 m[a tu-šá-ḥ]a-ḥa UZU.MEŠ-šú

Nippur 47-gap tu-kàs-su-ú SA.MEŠ-šú / [...]
 BM 43359⁺obv. 14-15 tu-kà[s-su-ú S]A.MEŠ-šú NINDA [ḤI].A u A.MEŠ te-ki-mu TA KA-šú /
 ina qí-bit ^dasal'-lú-ḥi EN a-ši-p[u]-tu pu-ṭur 'at'-lak te 'ÉN'
 BM 49141⁺obv. 12 tu-kàs-su-ú SA.MEŠ-šú NINDA.ḤI.A u A.MEŠ te-ki-mu TA KA-šú
 ina qí-'bit' ^dasal'-lú-ḥi EN ÉN-ú-tu pu-ṭur at-lak te ÉN

BM 43359⁺obv. 16-17 DÙ.DÙ.BI ^{im}KIŠIB DÙ-uš ÉN a[n-nit]a ina muḥ-ḥi 'ta'-šaṭ-ṭar / ina DUR
 GADA ^{na4}ZA.GÌN ^{na4}GUG [Á ana] 'Á' UD.DU [ina G]Ú-šú GAR-an
 BM 49141⁺obv. 13 DÙ.DÙ.BI ^{im}KIŠIB DÙ-uš ÉN an-nita ina UGU SAR ina DUR GADA
^{na4}ZA.GÌN ^{na4}GUG Á ana Á UD.DU-ak ina GÚ-šú GAR-an

¹³¹ We followed the translation of Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere.

¹³² Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹³³ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 131-132 Text 6.2 (transliteration and translation).

Incantation. Namtar, vizier of the netherworld! Bābu-ēṭirat, [daughter of Bānâtâ] (var. So-and-so), whom a witch handed over (to the netherworld) in your presence, and (who) then was seized by fever (var. [was aff]licted by li['bu-fever]), 'whom you hit on the head and whose mind you disturbed, whom you had seized by fever, [making] his body waste away, whose sinews you bound, whose food and drink you took away from his mouth — at the com[ma]nd of Asalluḫi, lord of exorcism, release (her), go away! *Incantation formula.*

Its ritual. You make a cylindrical clay amulet (and) write this incantation on (it). You string lapis lazuli and carnelian on a cord of flax on both sides (of the cylinder seal). You place (it) around his neck.¹³⁴

Manuscripts: **Nippur 5**; BM 43359+ obv. 5-9;¹³⁵ BM 49141+ obv. 7-9¹³⁶

Transliteration and translation

Nippur 5 broken

BM 43359+obv. 5-6a [...] / [...]

BM 49141+obv. 7 [ÉN] 'dU.GUR' *kaš-kaš* DINGIR.MEŠ *la-biš* ^{sí}gĤÉ.ME.DA SAG.K[AL DINGIR.MEŠ ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šú (...)]

Nippur 51.3' [...] / 'nar'-bi-ku 'lu'-šá-pi dà-lí-lí-<ku> / 'lu'-ud'(text: lid)-lul

BM 43359+obv. 6b-7 [...] / [...li]b-luṭ na[r-bi'-ka' ...]

BM 49141+obv. 8 [NENNI] šá KÚM *šab-tu-uš ú-suḫ* KÚM u lu-ba-tu ina SU-šú 'lib-luṭ' [...]

BM 43359+obv. 8-9 [...] ĤI.ĤI ^{im}KIŠIB DÙ [...] / [...] UD.DU-ak ina GÚ-'šú GAR'

BM 49141+obv. 9 [DÚ.D]Ū.BI IM PA₅ TI-qí ina A.MEŠ PA₅ ĤI.ĤI ^{im}KIŠIB DÙ-uš ÉN *an-nita* ina UG[U SAR...]

Incantation. Nergal, most powerful of the gods, clad in red wool, fore[most of the gods, his brothers, ...]! [So-and-so], whom fever has seized — remove the fever and the *lubātu*-disease from his body, (then) [he will proclaim] yo[ur] greatness, (and) praise your glory! [*Incantation formula*].

Its ritual. You take clay from a canal, mix (it) with canal water. You make a cylinder seal (and) w[rite]

this incantation on (it). You string (it) [(...) on a cord of flax?]. You place (it) around his neck.¹³⁷

Commentary

These five incantations discussed above are currently known only from Late Babylonian tablets; however, healing procedures for fever and *lubātu*-disease (**Nippur 1** and **Nippur 5**) can already be identified in medical texts from the Neo-Assyrian period.¹³⁸ Based on ritual texts preserved on clay tablets, the amulet **Nippur 4** was strung next to magical stones (lapis

¹³⁴ We followed the translation of Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 132 with minimal corrections.

¹³⁵ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation).

¹³⁶ Finkel 2018, p. 249-256 (copy, transliteration and translation); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 131-132 Text 6.2 (transliteration and translation).

¹³⁷ We followed the translation of Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 132 with minimal corrections.

¹³⁸ Procedures known to us are as follows: BAM 151 obv. 33'- rev. 3 and rev. 12-16; Labat/Tournay 1945-1946 pl. 116 obv. 1-3; Scurlock 2006, p. 339-347 no. 115; BAM 578 ii 9-10 and 13 (edited by Scurlock 2014, p. 510 and 521); Abusch/Schwemer/Luukko/van Buylaere 2020, p. 11-14 Text 3.11.

lazuli and carnelian), and the amulets **Nippur 2** and **Nippur 3** had to be used together with other healing substances, like herbs, salt, and ivory. The incantation **Nippur 5** invokes Nergal. Although the terms ‘hand of Nergal’ or ‘wrath of Nergal’ appear as causers of diseases in diagnostic and medical texts, the invocation of Nergal cannot be detected in further medical incantations or medical-magical rituals.¹³⁹ However, it is important to emphasize that Nergal is often invoked in other types of amulets and Nergal is also listed many times among the addressed deities in the canonical incantation series *Utukkū lemnūtu*.¹⁴⁰

The frequent occurrence of Nergal in exorcistic incantations can be explained by recalling that Nergal (together with Ninurta, Šamaš, and Sîn) was considered a patron deity of the incantation priests performing exorcisms or apotropaic rituals.¹⁴¹ The incantation on **Nippur 3** invokes Ereškigal, Nergal’s consort, and **Nippur 4** is addressed to Namtar, Nergal’s vizier. It is noteworthy to mention that Namtar, who usually represents one of the disease-causer demons in medical texts, is invoked together with Nergal, Ereškigal, and Namtar’s wife, Hušbiša, in an incantation preserved on a tablet-shaped stone amulet.¹⁴² Furthermore, the figure of Namtar appears together with the demon Asakku in an incantation preserved in a healing ritual against fever; this ritual describes the making and use of a substitute figure of Namtar.¹⁴³ One fever amulet (**Nippur 2**) is addressed to ‘Ea, king of Abzu, lord of Eridu’; as is known, Ea is the god of wisdom, a master of the exorcist’s ritual knowledge, including medical incantations. The god is also the patron deity of incantation priests; his figure is often mentioned in medical incantations (often together with Asalluḫi).¹⁴⁴

3.3.4 CYLINDRICAL CLAY AMULET AGAINST FEVER INSCRIBED WITH UNIDENTIFIED INCANTATION

Manuscript: BM 55516+ rev. 1’-2’¹⁴⁵

Transliteration and translation

1’ [...] ‘x’ [...] ‘x’ [...]

2’ [...] ⁿ]^{a4}KIŠIB *i-ba-’áš-ši’ ana UGU* ^{na4}KIŠIB S[AR? ...]

[...] cylindrical amulet ... You write (this incantation) on the amulet [...]

Commentary

The discussion of this text among the amulets against fever can be explained by noting that all preserved procedures on this tablet contain medical-magical prescriptions against fever.

¹³⁹ The logogram ^dGIR mentioned in a healing procedure against eye problems (Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia, series Eyes, first tablet, line 93’) was interpreted to mean Nergal in an earlier publication (Collins 1999, p. 204); however, in the recent edition of the same text the logogram is identified with the god Šakkan (Geller/Panayotov 2020, p. 81-82).

¹⁴⁰ For example, Nergal appears together with Šamaš and Ninurta in the canonical incantation series *Utukkū lemnūtu*, tablet 3 line 109 (Geller 2016, p. 111).

¹⁴¹ Geller 2016, p. 9.

¹⁴² Lambert 1976, p. 58-61; Bácskay/Niederreiter 2023.

¹⁴³ KUB 29, 58+59 + KUB 37, 84 col. i lines 1- col. ii. 8 (the text is edited in Bácskay 2018a, no. 55 lines 1-45).

¹⁴⁴ For example, in an incantation against bile preserved in the third tablet of the therapeutic series ‘Stomach’ (BAM 578 ii 29-38, edited in Scurlock 2014, p. 511 and 522).

¹⁴⁵ Bácskay 2018b (copy, photo, transliteration, and translation).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The cylindrical clay amulets discussed in our work are among the standard tools of Mesopotamian healing rituals. These amulets were mentioned in ritual texts and can also be identified in the archaeological materials. We can reconstruct the practice of making and applying these amulets from the perspective of the healing rituals; thereby, we can gain insight into the professional activities of the incantation priests. Furthermore, we can examine the cylindrical clay amulets together with cylinder seals made of stones and other stone amulets containing the same or similar type of incantations. Our work primarily aims to collect all cylindrical clay amulets known from previous publications and all information related to them, including unpublished objects. In addition, we identified an unpublished Late Babylonian tablet which contains rituals describing the use of cylindrical clay amulets against fever.

The present paper has summarized the research history and archaeological context of the cylindrical clay amulets; furthermore, we discussed the formal characteristics of their production as well as personal names mentioned in their inscriptions. After the classification of these amulets and analysis of data related to them, incantations written on them were discussed according to their content.

Based on the analysis of the research history, we can testify that references to these objects and their inscriptions appear in the literature from the 1880s. After that, the philological examination of their inscriptions began, and the first comparisons of their inscriptions with the contemporary incantation texts were published. However, decades have passed since their relationship with incantations preserved on amulets made of stone or on cylinder seals was identified. The detailed comparison of incantations and their carriers as well as the typology of the amulets were not carried out in early works focusing on Mesopotamian glyptic or magic amulets; instead, the early publications related to the incantations, in the fields of philology and history of religion, focused primarily on the reconstruction of the texts of incantation series or rituals (like the *Hulbazizi* series or the collection of incantations for protecting children), and only some of these amulets were mentioned, merely as parallels to the texts preserved on clay tablets. The comprehensive analysis of these amulets has not been carried out, due to the lack of systematic investigations of medical-magical rituals related to these objects; in addition, the difficulties with the transliteration and translation of the incantation texts inscribed on the amulets, as well as the fragmentary condition of their texts, hindered the interpretation of these texts and of their role during the healing rituals.

Based on the examination of the archaeological context of the cylindrical clay amulets, it can be established that some of them come from documented archaeological excavations from Assyrian (Nineveh and Nimrud) or Babylonian (Nippur) cities, as well as from Ugarit. In general, we have limited information about their exact archaeological context, but we can conclude that certain objects can be associated with the Assyrian elites, while the amulet from Ugarit comes from a tomb. Based on the examination of their production and their formal characteristics, three types of cylindrical clay amulets with different shapes can be distinguished: amulets shaped like stone beads, barrel-shaped amulets, and prism-like amulets. The different forms of the amulets do not signify a difference in content or functionality. The important role of the amulets is indicated by the fact that the incantation priest who made each object wrote the inscription on the amulet himself, whereas inscriptions on stone amulets and cylinder seals were made by seal-cutters. In this regard, it is worth noting that the clay amulets examined here are not only unusually small in size compared to

other amulets, their inscriptions are also relatively long, while their cuneiform signs are the smallest among the cuneiform texts written on clay.

The inscriptions on some cylindrical clay amulets also contain the names of their owners. However, these male and female names cannot yet be clearly identified with the personal names attested in other cuneiform texts. On some amulets, instead of the owner's name, the general formula ('So-and-so, son/successor of So-and-so') known in ritual texts is written. In addition, on two amulets the place for the owner's name is left blank, with only a male determinative referring to the owner's gender written on them. The presence of the general formula in place of the owner's name or the use of a blank place may indicate that these amulets were made in large numbers by the incantation priests. Furthermore, one owner may have used multiple amulets (**Nippur 1–2** and **Nippur 4**). There are even examples of 'amulet pairs' whose owners were relatives (**Scheil 1–2** and **Schøyen 1–2**).

Based on the types of incantations written on them, we classified the amulets into three groups: amulets inscribed with Hulbazizi incantations, amulets with incantations for protecting children, amulets with incantations against fever, and there are amulets with unidentifiable incantations. We presented the inscriptions of the amulets together with the relevant ritual texts preserved on clay tablets. In addition, in the commentaries of the inscriptions, we analysed the connections between the individual incantations and the related rituals.

The essence of our interpretation is the study of the role of the chosen objects in the medical-magical ritual context. In our work, the role of the discussed amulets and the incantations inscribed on them was examined within the context of the medical-magical rituals and as a specific medical-magical tool prepared by a specialist – the incantation priest – for specific healing rituals and for unique patients.

5. Appendix: Ḫulbazizi amulets made of stone

In addition to the 12 cylindrical clay amulets (subsection 3.1), the stone amulets collected below (Table 2) also contain Ḫulbazizi incantations.

incantation no.	museum no.	object type	material	date	lines
1. Ḫulbazizi 2	Morgan 581 ¹⁴⁶	cylinder seal	flint	Middle Babylonian	7
2. <i>ibid.</i>	unknown ¹⁴⁷	<i>ibid.</i>	unknown	<i>ibid.</i>	6
3. <i>ibid.</i>	MS 3001 ¹⁴⁸	bead (neck stone)	chalcedony	Neo-Assyrian	6 and 2
4. Ḫulbazizi 9 and 38	BM 89904 ¹⁴⁹ (83-01-01, 14)	flask-shaped amulet pendant	<i>ibid.</i>	Late Babylonian?	6 and 7
5. Ḫulbazizi 19	AO 1167 (A.602) ¹⁵⁰	cylinder seal	agate	Middle Babylonian	6
6. Ḫulbazizi 33 and 38	BLMJ 2844 ¹⁵¹ and BLMJ Seal 428	<i>ibid.</i>	obsidian or glass	<i>ibid.</i>	5
7. Ḫulbazizi 38	AO 22328 ¹⁵² De Clercq 253	<i>ibid.</i>	jasper	<i>ibid.</i>	8
8. <i>ibid.</i>	Morgan 583 ¹⁵³	<i>ibid.</i>	pink marble	<i>ibid.</i>	4

¹⁴⁶ Morgan 581 (Morgan Library & Museum; preserved height: 20 mm [lower third is broken off], diameter: 15 mm); Porada 1948, p. 65, 178 no. 581 and pl. LXXX; Finkel 1976, p. 82-83 ms. V and pl. 57; Matthews 1990, p. 138 no. 143; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, p. 214 no. 268 and pl. XXIX. Next to the 7-line inscription there is a fish-man (*apkallu*) who holds the crook of Ea in one raised hand.

¹⁴⁷ In his dissertation, Finkel provides only a description of the cylinder seal, from which we can learn that he only knows its modern impression, owned by Lambert. The description includes a copy of the 6-line seal inscription and also mentions that a fish-man (*apkallu*) is depicted on it: Finkel 1976, p. 140 ms. W.

¹⁴⁸ MS 3001 (Schøyen Collection): George 2016, p. 53 and 91-92 no. 67 and pl. CXL; Niederreiter 2018, p. 72-73. The 8-line inscription is on the upper, rounded side of the object.

¹⁴⁹ BM 89904 – 83-01-01, 14 (British Museum; height: 45 mm, width: 32 mm, thickness: 11 mm): Lenormant 1873, p. 90, no. 27 (copy); Langdon 1908, p. 11-12; Budge 1922, p. 167: II.29; Finkel 1976, p. 86-89 and 112-113 ms. R and pl. 56 (copy); Gelb 1977, p. 110: Type XXVIII: 6. The first 6 lines of the 13-line inscription are on the one side of the flask-shaped object, and the next 7 lines are on its back.

¹⁵⁰ AO 1167 – A.602 (Louvre; acquired in 1884, height: 31 mm [lower quart is broken off], diameter: 22 mm): Delaporte 1923, p. 157 no. A.602 and pl. 85: 3 (photo, transliteration and translation); Weidner 1927, p. 80; Van Buren 1954, p. 18 and 34; Goff 1956, p. 34; Reiner 1960, p. 154-155 no. 11; Limet 1971, p. 112 no. 10.1 (transliteration and translation); Lambert 1975, p. 223: 10.1 (for the correction of line 3); Finkel 1976, p. 94-95 no. X and pl. 59; Gelb 1977, p. 110: Type XXVIII: 3; Matthews 1990, p. 87 no. O4; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, p. 225 no. 357 and pl. XL. Next to the 6-line inscription, in the preserved seal image, there is a stylus (symbol of Nabû) in the upper field, and below it the upper body of a kneeling prayer figure appears. The part behind them is also missing.

¹⁵¹ BLMJ 2844 – BLMJ Seal 428 (Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem; preserved height: 31,9 mm [lower third is broken off], diameter: 15,2 mm): Finkel 1976, p. 110-113 ms. Y and pl. 59 (copy); Matthews 1990, p. 138 no. 144; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, p. 214 no. 266 and pl. XXIX; Goodnick Westenholz 2004, p. 58 no. 12. This cylinder seal will be published by Yigal Bloch: “Three Kassite Seals in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem,” in: B. Sass and L. Battini (eds.), *Mortals, Deities and Divine Symbols: Rethinking Ancient Imagery from Levant to Mesopotamia*, Studies Offered to Tallay Ornan (Oxford: Archaeopress, fc.). Next to the 5-line inscription, a fish-man (*apkallu*) facing a taller, larger divine figure holds a situla used for rituals. Above them in the middle is a Kassite cross, and furthermore two rhombs appear above the fish-man.

¹⁵² AO 22328 (Musée du Louvre; formerly kept in the De Clercq Collection; acquired in Baghdad in 1863, height: 36 mm, diameter: 13 mm): Menant 1883, p. vol. 1, 196-197 fig. 129; De Clercq/Menant 1888, p. 148 no. 253 and pl. 25; Langdon 1908, p. 112 (transliteration and translation); Frank 1941, p. 8; Finkel 1976, p. 112-113 and 199 (commentary to the incantation no. 38) ms.Z and pl. 57; Gelb 1977, p. 110: Type XXVIII: 7; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, p. 209 no. 239 and pl. XXVI; Matthews 1990, p. 137 no. 70. Below the 8-line inscription, there is a rhomb between two Kassite crosses.

<https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010147057?fbclid=IwAR11bwmZg-oUSWbbJVu-dK6y2UQcSsdc4-qpuQbGzwGRaPKGDRByDp92E> (accessed 11/01/2023).

9. <i>ibid.</i>	Morgan 587 ¹⁵⁴	<i>ibid.</i>	black-and-red jasper	<i>ibid.</i>	4
10. <i>ibid.</i>	unknown ¹⁵⁵	bead (neck stone)	unknown	unknown	4

Table 2: Various shaped stone objects and cylinder seals used as amulets, inscribed with Ḫulbazizi incantations.



Figure 3: Modern impression of the BLMJ 2844 cylinder seal (Table 2: 6). Courtesy of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem

In the case of the Ḫulbazizi incantations, stone amulets of various shapes and cylinder seals show similar features with cylindrical clay amulets (subsection 3.1.2). These objects provide new data for us based on their dates, materials, shapes, and the depictions on them. Ḫulbazizi incantations are already attested on Middle Babylonian cylinder seals, centuries earlier than the cylindrical clay amulets we know from the 1st millennium BCE.¹⁵⁶ Ḫulbazizi 2 is preserved on two Middle Babylonian cylinder seals (Plate 2: 1-2). In addition to these, this incantation is known from a Neo-Assyrian chalcedony bead (Plate 2: 3), which is significant for us because the inscription in Akkadian (lines 7-8) after the Ḫulbazizi incantation (lines 1-6) reveals the owner of the object and the purpose of its making:

¹⁵³ Morgan 583 (Morgan Library & Museum; height: 20 mm. diameter: 12 mm): Frank 1941, p. 8-9; Porada, 1948, p. 65 no. 583 and pl. LXXX (the transliteration was made by Oppenheim on page 178); Limet 1971, p. 112 no. 10.2 (transliteration and translation); Finkel 1976, p. 112-113 ms. AA and pl. 58; Gelb 1977, p. 110: Type XXVIII: 4; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, p. 176-177 no. 17 and pl. II; Matthews 1990, p. 137 no. 65. Next to the 4-line inscription, a worshipper faces a Kassite cross above and a rhomb and an ear of grain below.

¹⁵⁴ Morgan 587 (Morgan Library & Museum; height: 25.5 mm. diameter: 11.5 mm): Porada 1948, p. 66, 178 no. 587 and pl. LXXXI; Limet 1971, p. 112-113 no. 10.3 (transliteration and translation); Finkel 1976, 112-113 ms. BB and pl. 58; Gelb 1977, p. 110: Type XXVIII: 5; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996, p. 223 no. 342 and pl. XXVIII; Matthews 1990, p. 138 no. 168. Next to the 4-line inscription, there is a small tree between two rampant wild goats facing each other, and three rhombs are above them.

¹⁵⁵ Krušina/Černý 1950, p. 303 and pl. 14: 26; Finkel 1976, p. 112-113 ms. U and pl. 54.

¹⁵⁶ For the second millennium amulets containing Ḫulbazizi incantations, see Zomer 2018, p. 187-189.

Belonging to Šamši-ilu (*šam-ši-lu*). So that the wrath of god and king does not affect Šamši-ilu (^d*šamši*[UTU]-*lu*).

Šchøyen Collection: MS 3001 (lines 7-8) (translation of George 2016, 92 no. 67).

Presumably, this amulet belonged to Šamši-ilu, the most significant dignitary of his time, the military commander-in-chief (*turtānu*). The inscription engraved on the object provided its bearer with protection against divine and royal wrath. Šamši-ilu's activity can be dated to the period 780–752 BCE, during which he served three Assyrian kings: Shalmaneser IV (782–773 BCE), Aššur-dān III (772–755 BCE) and Aššur-nērārī V (754–745 BCE).¹⁵⁷ This bead belongs to the group of neck stones. Its most notable characteristic is its shape, resembling a loaf. Its shape is slightly elongated, flat at the bottom but rounded at the top, and the short, straight sides are slightly rounded. The object is drilled on its central horizontal axis on both sides, so that it can be strung on a string and worn by its owner on a necklace, perhaps as the central element of a string of beads.¹⁵⁸ There is another neck stone of a similar shape, on which incantation Ḫulbazizi 38 is engraved (Table 2: 10). A flask-shaped amulet pendant made of chalcedony (Plate 2: 4) bears the incantation Ḫulbazizi 9 on one side and Ḫulbazizi 38 on the other. The incantation Ḫulbazizi 38 is also found on three Middle Babylonian cylinder seals (Plate 2: 7-9), while on a fourth, in addition, there is also Ḫulbazizi 33 (Plate 2: 6 and Figure 3). Of the objects inscribed with incantations from the Ḫulbazizi series, the cylinder seal (Plate 2: 5) kept in the Louvre is certainly the most important for us, since Ḫulbazizi 19 is engraved on it, which is identical to the inscription on one of our amulets, **Nimrud 3** (for the inscription see subsection 3.1.2).

In the images on the cylinder seals, it is worth noting that there are a relatively large number of fish-men (*apkallu*), who played an important role in cults and rituals (Table 2: 1-2, 6 and Figure 3).¹⁵⁹ These mythical creatures were cultural heroes for the Mesopotamians, and due to their roles, they can be linked to Mesopotamian priests and sages. Finally, it is worth mentioning that a relatively large proportion of cylinder seals inscribed with Ḫulbazizi from the Middle Babylonian period were broken, and it can be observed that it is always the bottom part of the object that is missing (Table 1: 1, 5 and 6). However, our finding is based on a small sample size, and it can be concluded that the proportion of broken objects in the entire corpus of Middle Babylonian cylinder seals is much smaller. This phenomenon might be explained if the objects were made for temporary use and for a special purpose and were then intentionally destroyed.

¹⁵⁷ Mattila 2000, p. 110-111 and especially Mattila 2011, p. 1226: Šamši-ilu 1.

¹⁵⁸ Neck stones of a similar shape which were part of strings of beads worn as necklaces were found in graves excavated in Assur and Uruk (Niederreiter 2018, p. 72).

¹⁵⁹ For the descriptions of these seal images, see footnotes 146-147, and 151.

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A new join to IGI 1¹

Krisztián Simkó

In their excellent new edition of the corpus of eye disease texts, Geller and Panayotov assign the small fragment AMT 12/5 to a group of Nineveh manuscripts that can only partially be related to the main IGI treatise.² These related manuscripts and fragments are important because they share parallel passages with IGI but belong to other compilations of medical remedies, such as UGU that includes treatments for eye diseases as a part of its systematic overview of the medical conditions affecting the head.

Geller and Panayotov record AMT 12/5 as one of these related Nineveh manuscripts, representing a parallel to IGI 1 lines 61'-63'.³ However, since the only bit of text preserved by AMT 12/5 is this three-line passage, one may also suggest that the fragment does not simply come from a related manuscript but actually belongs to the main IGI treatise. In this respect, Geller and Panayotov argued that AMT 12/5 is 'too fragmentary to judge but might be a fourth duplicate to IGI Tablet One'.⁴

The aim of this short communication is to show that AMT 12/5 is neither a related manuscript nor a fourth duplicate to the first tablet of IGI. This small fragment is, in fact, a direct join to BAM 510, the main manuscript of IGI 1, and partially fills the gap towards the top of the second column of the tablet.

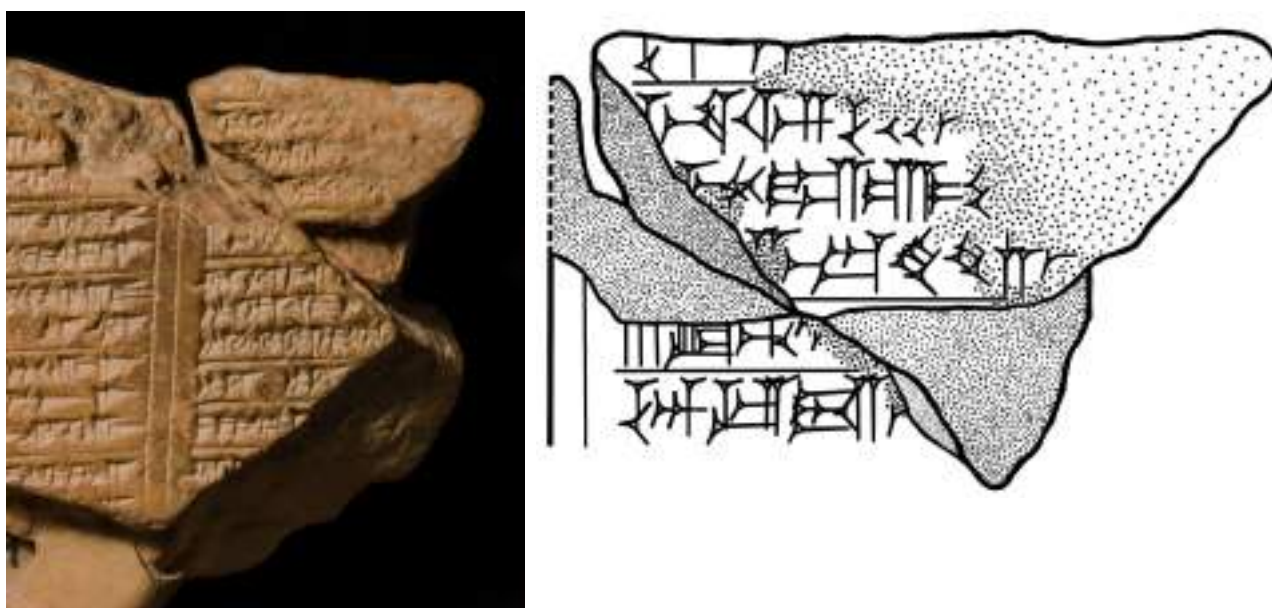


Fig. 1: Photo and hand-copy of the joining pieces BAM 510 column 2 top + AMT 12/5⁵

¹ This paper was prepared within the framework of the project 'Introducing Assyrian Medicine: Healthcare Fit for a King' (NinMed), funded by the Wellcome Trust and carried out at the Department of the Middle East of the British Museum.

² *BAM* 10 pp. 46-47 and pl. 42. In addition, AMT 12/5 was briefly discussed by Fincke in *Augenleiden* pp. 150 with n. 1140, and 166 with n. 1247.

³ *BAM* 10 pp. 72-74.

⁴ *BAM* 10 p. 47.

⁵ The fragment is published here by the kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, with the photo and hand-copy prepared by the author.

The first tablet of IGI is one of the few chapters in the therapeutic series from Nineveh that are known from more than one manuscript; here we have two other duplicates, BAM 513 and BAM 514, with preserved bits of text corresponding to what was once recorded in the opening section of BAM 510 col. 2, now partially filled with the help of the direct join AMT 12/5. Moreover, two related manuscripts from other cities (Ashur and Sippar / Borsippa) also include the prescription in IGI 1 lines 61'-63' and can be used for bringing our text reconstruction to a complete state.

The transliteration of the relevant lines is presented here in a synoptic fashion, with the sigla taken from Geller's and Panayotov's edition:

NA = BAM 510 (K 2573+)	NJ = AMT 12/5 (K 5852)
NB = BAM 513 (K 2570+)	AD = BAM 22 (VAT 13732)
NC = BAM 514 (K 2456+)	xA = BM 54641+ ⁶

Transliteration

60'	NA + NJ ii 1'	x x x [.....]
	NB ii 12'	[..... ⁿ a ⁴ as- <i>har</i> ina I ₃ .NUN SUD ₂ MAR
	NC ii 8'	[.....] ina I ₃ ¹ .NUN SUD ₂ MAR
<hr/>		
61'	NA + NJ ii 2'	DIŠ ¹ NA IGI.MIN-š _{u2} šik ¹ -n[a]
	NB ii 13'	[..... U ₅ A]RGAB ^{mušen} MUN <i>eme-sal-li₃</i>
	NC ii 9'	[..... š _{a2} M[UD ₂ U ₅ ARGAB ^{mu}] ^{šen} MUN <i>eme-sal-li₃</i>
	AD rev. 8-9	DIŠ NA IGI.MIN-š _{u2} šik-na š _{a2} MUD ₂ šak- ¹ na IGI ¹ -al U ₂ ¹ BABBAR / U ₅ ARGAB ^{mušen} MUN <i>eme-sal-li₃</i>
	xA 16'	[DIŠ NA] IGI.MIN-š _{u2} šik-na š _{a2} MUD ₂ ¹ š[ak-n]a (0 0) U ₂ ¹ BABBAR U ₅ ¹ [ARGAB ^{mu}] ^{šen} MUN ¹ e[<i>me-sal-li₃</i>]
62'	NA + NJ ii 3'	ru ₂ ¹ KUR.RA u ₂ ¹ KUR ¹ .[KUR]
	NB ii 13'-14'	u ₂ ¹ KUR.RA / [..... U ₂ .HI].A ¹ an-nu-ti DIŠ-niš ta-mar-raq
	NC ii 10'	[..... u ₂ ¹ KU]R.K[UR] U ₂ .MEŠ ŠEŠ ¹ DIŠ-niš ta- ¹ mar-raq ¹
	AD rev. 9-10	ru ₂ ¹ KUR. ¹ RA u ₂ ¹ KUR ¹ .KUR / šim ¹ GUR ₂ .GUR ₂ I ₃ .UDU šim ¹ GIG 7 U ₂ ¹ .HI.A ŠEŠ DIŠ-niš SUD ₂ ¹
	xA 17'	ru ₂ ¹ KUR.RA u ₂ ¹ [KUR.KUR šim ¹ G]UR ₂ . ¹ GUR ₂ GAZI ^{sar¹} [x x x] x 8 U ₂ ¹ .HI.A Š[EŠ]

⁶ For the *editio princeps* of this tablet, see Fincke CM 37 pp. 86-93.

63'	NA + NJ ii 4'	[<i>ina</i> ZE ₂ UD]U.NITA ₂ 𒄩.𒄩 ZA ¹ .N[A]]
	NB ii 14'-15'	<i>ina</i> ZE ₂ UDU.NITA ₂ [?] / [..... GAZ]I ^{sar} <i>ta-sa-pan</i> IGI.MIN- <i>šu</i> ₂ MAR
	NC ii 11'	[.....] x [.....] x ¹ <i>ina</i> A GAZI ^{sar} <i>ta-sa-pan</i> IGI.MIN- <i>šu</i> ₂ MAR ¹
	AD rev. 11-12	¹ <i>ina</i> ZE ₂ UDU.NITA ₂ ¹ 𒄩.𒄩 ZA.NA DU ₃ -uš ¹ <i>šum</i> ₄ - <i>ma</i> E ₂ .MEŠ <i>ina</i> A.MEŠ / <i>šum</i> ₄ - <i>ma</i> EN.TE.NA <i>ina</i> A.GEŠTIN.NA <i>t[a]-sa-pan</i> (0 0 0) MAR
	xA 18'	¹ <i>ina</i> ZE ₂ UDU.NITA ₂ ¹ 𒄩[𒄩.𒄩 ZA.N]A ¹ DU ₃ -uš <i>šum</i> ₄ - <i>ma</i> EN.TE ¹ .[NA <i>ina</i>] ¹ A ¹ .[M]EŠ ¹ <i>šum</i> ₄ - <i>ma</i> AMA.MEŠ <i>ina</i> A GAZI ^{sar} <i>ta</i> ¹ -s[<i>a-pan</i> MAR]
<hr/>		
64'	NA + NJ ii 5'	¹ 3 GIN ₂ U ₅ ¹ [ARGAB ^{mušen}]
	NB ii 16'	[..... <i>in</i>]a LAL ₃ KUR.RA SUD ₂ IGI.MIN- <i>šu</i> ₂ MAR <i>an-nu-u šam-mi</i> UD.20.KAM ₂
	NC ii 12'	¹ 3 ¹ G[IN ₂] ¹ 1/2 [?] GIN ₂ U ₂ ¹ [BABBAR SU]D ₂ IGI.MIN- <i>šu</i> ₂ MAR ¹ <i>an</i> ¹ - <i>nu</i> U ₂ UD.20.KAM ₂

Translation

60'	[. . .] (then) you pound (<i>tasâk</i>) <i>ašhar</i> (a stone) in ghee (and) daub (<i>teqqi</i>) (his eyes).
<hr/>	
61'-63'	If a man's eyes have blood deposits, but he is still able to see (<i>inaṭṭal</i>): <i>šammu pešû</i> ('white plant'), <i>rikibti arkabi</i> ('bat guano'), <i>emesallu</i> (a kind of salt), <i>nīnû</i> ('mint'), <i>atā'īšu</i> (a plant), <i>kukru</i> (an aromatic) (and) fat from <i>kanaktu</i> (an aromatic)—you crush these seven ingredients together, you mix (<i>tuballal</i>) them in gall from a sheep (and) make (<i>teppuš</i>) a gaming piece (from the mixture). You dip it in water if it is winter (or) in sap from <i>kasû</i> ('tamarind') if it is summer (and) you daub (<i>teqqi</i>) (his eyes).
<hr/>	
63'	You pound (<i>tasâk</i>) three shekels of <i>rikibti arkabi</i> ('bat guano') (and) half [?] a shekel of <i>šammu pešû</i> ('white plant') in <i>dīšpu</i> ('syrup') from the mountains (and) you daub (<i>teqqi</i>) his eyes. This is a medicament for twenty days.

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kurāru ‘lumpy lesions’¹

Frank Simons

Introduction

The nature of the *kurāru*-disease has long been the subject of discussion and uncertainty. While it is clearly some sort of contagious skin lesion, modern editors are more or less evenly split between two different translations: ringworm (*Dermatophytosis*)² or a kind of lump.³ The present paper will offer a few observations which favour the latter understanding.

It should be stated in advance that we do not propose to investigate every attestation of *kurāru* in detail – in particular the medical attestations have been studied in detail recently⁴ and so are not investigated here. Rather, the intent is to try to better capture the nature of the skin lesion *kurāru*. There is, of course, still much more research to be done, not least on the related terms *kurartu*, *kuraštu* or *gurartu*, *garaštu*, *guraštu*, *gurištu*, and *kullarum*, but this is beyond the scope of the present offering.

Etymology

The etymology of the word *kurāru* is unfortunately not particularly helpful in identifying the nature of the disease, as it can be used to argue for either interpretation. In neither case does it carry much weight.

The translation ‘ringworm’ was first suggested by Campbell Thompson,⁵ chiefly on the basis of supposed cognates in Hebrew and Arabic, and of the supposed Akkadian etymology of the word *kurāru*. Similar arguments have been advanced by Scurlock and Andersen.⁶ Both derive *kurāru* from a verb meaning ‘to turn, roll over; to go round’, understanding the underlying idea to be that ringworm forms characteristic circles on the skin.⁷ Scurlock and Andersen further suggest that this perhaps explains the occasional use of gold rings in treatments.⁸

There are a number of difficulties with this argument. In the first place, the etymology of *kurāru* is not entirely straightforward, as the first consonant could derive from /G/, /K/, or /Q/,⁹ a difficulty that is compounded by disagreement between the dictionaries. The CAD understands three distinct lemmata: *garāru* A ‘to turn over, roll over, writhe, coil’, *garāru* B ‘to shy away,

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² E.g. Campbell Thompson 1949 (*DAB*): 148; Adamson 1981 (*JRAS* 113): 125-126; Scurlock and Andersen 2005 (*Diagnoses*): 233-234; Wasserman 2007 (*CM* 36): 59-60. Earlier, Campbell Thompson (1924 (*PRSM* 17): 10, n.1; 1936 (*DACG*): 11-12) read ‘itch’, but he disavowed this translation in his later work.

³ E.g. CAD K: 556b, s.v. *kurāru* ‘carbuncle, lesion’; AHw: 510, s.v. *k/gurāru* ‘Bez. eines Karbunkels?’; Fincke 2000 (*Augenleiden*): 222 ‘sty’ & 2009 (*CM* 37): 80 ‘*chalazion*’; Böck 2003 (*AuOr* 21): 183-184 ‘Karbunkeln’; Bácskay and Simkó 2017 (*JMC* 30): 57 ‘boil’.

The earliest suggestion of a lump seems to have been made by Campbell Thompson (1926 (*PRSM* 19): 33 n.1), who suggests that *gig.gir* ‘might be “wen” or “pustule”’, presumably on the grounds that it can be found on the eyelid. He was apparently not aware that *gig.gir/peš* was a logographic spelling of *kurāru* (see below), which he translates ‘itch’ elsewhere in the same paper 1926 (*PRSM* 19): 71, n. 2).

⁴ Böck 2003 (*AuOr* 21): 161-184

⁵ Campbell Thompson 1949 (*DAB*): 148.

⁶ Scurlock and Andersen 2005 (*Diagnoses*): 233.

⁷ See Figure 1 below

⁸ Scurlock and Andersen 2005 (*Diagnoses*): 233.

⁹ Wasserman 2007 (*CM* 36): 60.

become scared, to be in a panic’, and *qarāru* ‘to overflow’.¹⁰ The AHw considers these to belong to a single lemma *q/garāru(m)* with the basic meaning ‘sich krümmen, schlängeln’.¹¹ The SAD follows the AHw in reading a single word *qarāru/garāru* ‘to turn over; to writhe, grovel; to be(come) frightened; to flow, to overflow’.¹² All three dictionaries concur in reading *karāru* ‘to set, place’ as a separate lemma.¹³

It is not at all certain to which of these lemmata the *kurāru*-disease is related, but, as Wasserman has pointed out, ‘the temptation of etymological acrobatics’¹⁴ is best avoided. Even if the cognate verb could be definitely identified, none of the established meanings of the verbs particularly clearly denote the circular shape of a ringworm infection. Furthermore, if roundness is the basic meaning from which the word *kurāru* is derived, while it might slightly favour an understanding ringworm, it would not be diagnostic – many lesions, including many lumpy ones such as warts and boils, are equally round, though this is not generally taken as their primary characteristic.

A similarly uncertain etymological suggestion concerns the possible cognate *karru* ‘knob, pommel’.¹⁵ Again, there is no guarantee that *kurāru* and *karru* share a derivation,¹⁶ though it must be noted that if the link is accepted, it is at least relatively unambiguous in leading us to a translation ‘lump’.

Sumerogram

The meaning of the Sumerian logogram with which the word is written does not seem to have been discussed, but is equally difficult. Modern editors are more or less evenly split in their reading of the logogram as either *peš.gig / gig.peš* or *gir.gig / gig.gir*. Either reading is possible, as *peš* and *gir* are simply two different readings of the same sign (𒍪), but only the former gives a reasonable Sumerian reading, something along the lines of ‘thick disease’, conceivably a reference to lumps, but difficult to connect to ringworm. If instead we take the latter reading, we should perhaps understand *gir* to be a phonetic complement pointing to the Akkadian word, i.e. the ‘*gir(aru)*-disease’, which naturally offers no assistance whatsoever in understanding the disease itself.

Etymological arguments, then, are not especially helpful – they are an unfortunate combination of ambiguous and uncertain. This is important, however, as such arguments are the chief grounds on which ringworm has been suggested as a reading.

Non-medical attestations

The *kurāru* disease is well attested in medical texts,¹⁷ but only three non-medical contexts have been suggested for the word. Of these, two should be ruled out.

The first is found in an entry in the lexical list Ura = *hubullu* III:¹⁸

III 307	<i>giš-gišimmar</i>	<i>gig-ḥab-ba</i>	=	<i>is-ku-ra-ru</i> , var. <i>as-qu-la-lu</i>
	Bitter date palm		=	<i>iskurāru / asqulālu</i>

¹⁰ CAD G: 47-48, s.v. *garāru* A & 49 s.v. *garāru* B; CAD Q: 127-128 s.v. *qarāru*.

¹¹ AHw: 902, s.v. *q/garāru(m)*.

¹² SAD G, K, Q: 126, s.v. *qarāru*.

¹³ CAD K: 207-209 s.v. *karāru* A; AHw: 447, s.v. *karāru* I; SAD G, K, Q: 58, s.v. *karāru*.

¹⁴ Wasserman 2007 (CM 36): 60.

¹⁵ Durand 1983 (ARM 21): 376.

¹⁶ As already noted by Wasserman (2007 (CM 36): 60).

¹⁷ As mentioned above, we will not analyse the medical attestations of *kurāru* here as this has already been done at length, most recently by Böck (2003 (AuOr 21): 161-184), which discusses all then known references to the disease. To this can now be added an Old Babylonian attestation in a tablet from the Schøyen collection, MS 3277 (George 2016 (CUSAS 32): no. 73).

¹⁸ Landsberger 1957 (MSL 5): 118, l. 307.

The readings *is-ku-ra-ru* and *as-qu-la-lu* each occur on just a single manuscript.¹⁹ Although tentatively associated with *kurāru* in the CAD, reading *iṣ kurāru* ‘*kurāru*-tree’,²⁰ the phonetically similar variant *asqulālu* suggests instead a phonetically written hapax *iskurāru/asqulālu*, presumably a loanword from a foreign language, the name of a particular kind of tree.

In two administrative texts from Mari, a cloth object called *kurāru* is found in association with weaponry. Durand initially suggested that this was to be understood as a figurative use of the *kurāru* disease,²¹ but in a later discussion he retracts the suggestion.²² In the SAD, the word is taken as a variant form of *karru* ‘knob, pommel’ and speculatively translated as both ‘handles(?)’ and ‘tassels(?)’.²³ Whether or not the various suggestions concerning this word are accepted, it is of no particular use for present purposes.

The remaining attestation is a line from the incantation series *Lamaštu*:²⁴

II 100 *ummarī baḥrūti ša ina gurārī bašlū baḥrūti* soup cooked on *gurāru*

The word *gurāru* – a hapax in this context – has been translated in a variety of ways in this line: ‘embers’,²⁵ ‘glühende Asche’,²⁶ ‘Feuer’,²⁷ ‘hoher Hitze’,²⁸ and ‘some sort of (heated) ring of stones or pottery cylinder’.²⁹ The basic point seems to have been missed in these translations. The line quoted is the last one in a brief speech from Enlil, describing what Wiggermann has termed a ‘mock cult’³⁰ for *Lamaštu*:³¹

II 97 <i>ša kurbannī līpušū bītki</i>	“may they build a temple for you from clods,
II 98 <i>lībil(l)akki kallatu šeḥirtu</i>	may an underage bride (?) bring you
II 99 <i>mulṭā šebirta pilaqqa šebra</i>	a broken comb, a broken spindle (and)
II 100 <i>ummarī baḥruti ša ina gurārī bašlū baḥrūti</i>	soup cooked on <i>gurāru</i> ”

Evidently the idea is that *Lamaštu* is to be given perversions of proper offerings – a house made of clods, rather than bricks, and a broken comb and distaff, brought, perhaps, by someone too young to be making a real offering.³² The soup should plainly be similarly distorted. We suggest reading ‘tepid soup cooked on cinders’ instead of Farber’s reading ‘hot broth cooked on embers’.³³ This hinges on the understanding of *baḥrūti* as ‘tepid’, which differs from the understanding of the word found elsewhere: AHW reads ‘gar; Gargekochtes’,³⁴ while the CAD reads ‘hot (said of liquids), as hot as can be tolerated’.³⁵

¹⁹ Landsberger 1957 (MSL 5): 118. A third manuscript, BM 33886 (now BM 33452+), is broken after the first sign of the word, reading *as-‘x’-[...]x*

²⁰ CAD K: 556b, s.v. *kurāru*.

²¹ Durand 1983 (ARM 21): 376.

²² Durand 2009 (ARM 30): 53-54.

²³ SAD G, K, Q: 60, s.v. *karru* II.

²⁴ After Farber 2014 (MC 17): 172-173. CAD B: 28-29 s.v. *baḥru*

²⁵ CAD K: 556b, s.v. *kurāru*; Farber 2014 (MC 17): 173;

²⁶ AHW: 510, s.v. *k/gurāru*.

²⁷ Myhrman 1902 (ZA 16): 177, l. 41.

²⁸ Köcher 1949 (PhD thesis): 109.

²⁹ Scurlock and Andersen 2005 (*Diagnoses*): 233. This reading is based on a supposed etymology from *garāru* ‘to turn, roll over’, but the step from this to a ring of stones is not clear to me.

³⁰ Wiggermann 2000 (CM 14): 240.

³¹ Translation after Farber 2014 (MC 17): 173.

³² See Farber 2014 (MC 17): 240 for a discussion of the otherwise unattested phrase *kallatu šeḥirtu*, which he translates ‘young bride-to-be’.

³³ Farber 2014 (MC 17): 173

³⁴ AHW: 96, s.v. *baḥru*.

³⁵ CAD B: 28-29 s.v. *baḥru*. Earlier suggestions include Myhrman 1902 (ZA 16): 177 ‘*baḥru*-Früchten’; Meissner 1903 (ZA 17): ‘Räuchergefäße’; Köcher 1949 (PhD thesis): 83 ‘geborstene’. Note that these all understand *ummarī* to mean ‘jar’ rather than ‘soup’

The word is used almost exclusively in medical recipes, principally relating to enemas, the only non-medical uses of the word being found in Lamaštu incantations and rituals.³⁶ A fully cooked enema seems very unlikely, and an extremely hot enema would presumably risk severe injury. As already noted by Labat and Tournay, *baḥru* denotes ‘une température plus proche sans doute de tiède que de bouillante’.³⁷

In the light of this reading, we should understand *gurāru* to mean a sort of heat source that would warm soup, but only ineffectually. Embers are a very good heat source, being more or less as hot as fire, but without the flames. Instead, we suggest understanding ‘cinders’ or perhaps ‘clinker’ – that is, small, lumpen, relatively cool remnants of a fire after the majority of the heat has been dispersed. Assuming we accept that *gurāru* ‘cinders’ is connected to the *kurāru*-disease, it should be seen as favouring a translation ‘lump’ – the small, burnt lumps of wood being thought of as akin to the little lumps of the disease.

Nature of the disease

Several scholars have given a description of the characteristics of *kurāru*-disease.³⁸ Briefly, the major points can be summarised as follows:

1. It causes skin lesions
2. It is contagious³⁹
3. It affects, at least, the head, face, eyelids, fingers, body, and legs, and so, presumably, skin in general⁴⁰

Two points are worth making. First, Böck has suggested, based on its treatment by means of three medications elsewhere used to treat fevers, that *kurāru*-disease may have involved a fever.⁴¹ This does not seem especially convincing – there is no good reason to suspect that *materia medica* were used only for a single symptom,⁴² and no sign in the preserved sources that fever was an element of the disease.

Second, Adamson’s argument that *kurāru* is found just on the head can no longer be maintained.⁴³ Particularly important is the fact that it occurs on the fingers. Ringworm (*Tinea*) can occur on the finger, and indeed almost anywhere on the body – ringworm, athlete’s foot, jock itch, and a host of other such infections are, medically speaking, simply the same condition in a different place. Ringworm of the finger (*Tinea manuum*) is, for all intents and purposes, the same as athlete’s foot (*Tinea pedis*). The main argument advanced in favour of understanding *kurāru* to be ringworm is the clear circular infection that ringworm causes on the body (*Tinea corporis*), reflected in an Akkadian etymology derived from ‘roundness’.⁴⁴ In

³⁶ CAD B: 29a s.v. *baḥru*. It is noteworthy that both *bahrūti* and *gurāru* are otherwise only attested in medical contexts. Probably this was suggestive to Akkadian ears: ‘enema-heat soup cooked over lumpy lesions’ is an unappetising meal fit for a demoness.

³⁷ Labat and Tournay 1946 (RA 40): 119.

³⁸ E.g. Adamson 1981 (JRAS 113): 125-126; Böck 2003 (AuOr 21): 183-184; Scurlock and Andersen 2005 (*Diagnoses*): 233-234; Wasserman 2007 (CM 36): 59-60.

³⁹ Wasserman 2007 (CM 36): 59-60.

⁴⁰ The majority of these locations are found in the second Tablet of the physiognomic omen series *šumma liptu* ‘If a liptu-spot’. This Tablet bears the incipit *šumma kurāru* ‘If *kurāru*-disease’, and details the ominous effects of a *kurāru* lesion on various parts of the body (Böck 2000 (AfO Beiheft): 179-183).

⁴¹ Böck 2003 (AuOr 21): 183.

⁴² Although Böck seems to be arguing that the overlap between the three medications is fever, it is worth noting that at least one of them, *miriṣmara*-plant, is used to treat conditions other than fever, viz. toothache (CAD M/2: 107b, s.v. *miriṣmara*).

⁴³ Although the majority of attestations concern *kurāru* affecting the head, this seems almost certain to be an accident of preservation. The Tablet *šumma kurāru* ‘If *kurāru*-disease’ is unfortunately poorly preserved, and so some areas affected by *kurāru* attested elsewhere are not found here. That *kurāru* affects the legs can be seen in a commentary to this Tablet (Böck 2000 (AfO Beiheft): 264, l. 10); that it affects the fingers is seen in an Old Babylonian medical tablet (George 2016 (CUSAS 32): No. 73; Bácskay and Simkó 2017 (JMC 30): 43, n. 140).

⁴⁴ Campbell Thompson 1949 (*DAB*): 148; Scurlock and Andersen 2005 (*Diagnoses*): 233.

infections of the finger, however, the circles are not nearly as distinct, if they are discernible at all,⁴⁵ and so the fact that *kurāru* is found on the fingers is a strong argument against the identification.

In fact, we should probably go further. Although modern medicine groups these conditions together on the basis that they share an underlying cause, it is far from certain that Mesopotamians, unaware of the fungal nature of the infection, would have considered the relatively dissimilar looking types of ringworm found in different parts of the body to be the same disease. Contagious lumpy lesions (e.g. boils, carbuncles, and warts), on the other hand, appear more or less the same whether on the finger or the head (or anywhere else), and so are much more likely to have been considered the same condition.

Conclusion

Taken together, the arguments here strongly suggest that the reading ‘ringworm’ should be abandoned. The etymological case underpinning the suggestion is flimsy at best, and even if accepted does not particularly make a reading ‘ringworm’ more likely than a reading ‘lump’. More fundamentally, it is unlikely that ancient scholars would have recognised a ringworm infection of the hand as being identical with one of the body or head. Scurlock’s suggestion of a ring of heated stones notwithstanding,⁴⁶ it is very difficult to see any way in which ringworm and smouldering cinders could be brought together.

A reading ‘lump’, on the other hand, is more or less supported by the evidence. Etymological evidence, though still not particularly strong, at least favours an understanding of something *karru* ‘knob’-shaped. The Lamaštu reference to cinders could plausibly be associated with small lumps, and, unlike ringworm, little lumpy lesions on the finger, the eye, the head, or the body, appear very similar.⁴⁷

The translation ‘lump’ is perhaps a little unsatisfactory from a modern point of view. Unfortunately, other possible translations (e.g. papule, pustule, nodule, boil, wen, styne, carbuncle, and wart)⁴⁸ all have very precise and specific definitions, and it is both impossible to identify *kurāru* so closely, and unlikely that the ancient taxonomic system matched the modern one.⁴⁹ The term *kurāru* very probably covered several conditions now recognised as separate and distinct, but the general principle is likely a notably lumpy, contagious skin lesion, a definition which does not include ringworm.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ See Figure 2 below.

⁴⁶ See above, note 29.

⁴⁷ We have not mentioned the cognate *guraštu*-disease in the present paper because we have no new arguments favouring any particular understanding of the word, except insofar as our understanding of *kurāru* as ‘lump’ implies a similar identification – perhaps a different kind, size, or shape of lumpy lesion. For a recent study of *guraštu* see Fincke 2011 (WOO 6): 181-184, which concludes that the evidence is too sparse to make a clear identification.

⁴⁸ Note that blisters cannot have been included within *kurāru* as the disease is contagious, which is not true of blisters.

⁴⁹ This is a general principle in approaching foreign taxonomies of any kind – diseases, animals, plants, colours &c. – the boundaries between what two unrelated taxonomic systems understand to be wholly separate entities need not be the same, and one for one identifications are often impossible. On Mesopotamian medical taxonomy in particular, see e.g. Couto-Ferreira 2020 (Disturbing Disorders): 262-263.

⁵⁰ Adamson 1981 (JRS 113): 125-126.

Figure 1



Figure 1 - Photograph of a ringworm infection on the leg
By James Heilman, MD - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19051050>

Figure 2



Figure 2 - Photograph of a hand infected with ringworm.
By Mohammad 2018 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=68044290>

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Lilith unsexed

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Among the many types of demons which plagued ancient Mesopotamian were those of the *lîl*-type.¹ One of the female members of this type, *lilîtu*, is the ‘ancestor’ of the Jewish demoness Lilith, and indeed Aramaic incantation bowls from the city of Nippur make it possible to document the change from *lilîtu* to Lilith over time.²

Not all the members of the *lîl*-type are equally well attested. Assuming that information about one type also applies to the others, the following overall picture emerges. *Lîl*-demons (at least sometimes) represent the spirits of people who died unmarried, and so roam the earth in search of living human spouses / sexual partners / children.³ Though they were not the only demon type to behave thus,⁴ it is nonetheless a significant characteristic, and one which is harmful to humans: incantations list them alongside other supernatural aggressors.⁵ One has the impression that they afflicted individuals rather than communities.⁶

It is not clear whether *lîl*-demons’ attacks on adult humans *always* had a sexual dimension – the language, at least, is not always sexual.⁷ Furthermore, Sylvie Lackenbacher points out that the misfortune of the *ardat lilî* (leading her to prey on humans) is not just sexual: she also has the privation “de ne pas partager la vie sociale des autres *ardatu*”.⁸ Nonetheless, the sexual dimension is prominent in our extant sources in relation to the activities of *lîl*-

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¹ By this I mean *lilû*, *lilîtu*, *ardat lilî*, and *eṭel lilî*, on the basis that their names include an element ‘lil’ which is written sumerographically as *lîl*. Wiggermann, *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 77/2 (2011) 312 suggests that the *naššuqîtu* ‘female kisser’ belongs to the same group. AHw (1969) 761b takes this more generally as “bösaartig küssende (Dämonin)”, with ref. to GAG § 35o: 36 (“Adjektive für schlechte Gewohnheiten”). CAD N/i (1980) 79a instead takes the word as “a hardship”. Be that as it may, the *naššuqîtu* is so rarely attested that it makes little difference to the present analysis whether one includes her or not.

² See Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913) and many more recent publications, such as Ford and Morgenstern, *Hilprecht Bowls* (2019) or Shaked, Ford and Bhayro, *Bowl Spells* (2022).

³ Lackenbacher, RA 65/2 (1971) 149 collected evidence that the *ardat lilî* was “la jeune fille qui n’a pas eu son destin normal, c’est-à-dire qui n’a pas perdu sa virginité et n’a pas eu d’enfant”. See also the characterisation by Scurlock, *Incognita* 2 (1991) 151: “The *lilû*-demons and their female counterparts the *lilîtu* or *ardat-lilî* demons were hungry for victims because they had once been human; they were the spirits of young men and women who had themselves died young”. Geller and Vacín, *Udug-hul* (2015) 28:53 term them “incubus/succubus demons”. Cases have been reported in modern times of patients believing they had sexual congress with demons, e.g. Campbell Thompson, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 28/ccix (1906) 83: “[One of my men] told me that he knew a man in Mossoul who declared he was visited of nights by a spirit in the form of a beautiful woman who had borne him three children”, with the comment by Kinnier Wilson in *Studies Landsberger* (1965) 296; also Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 229.

⁴ Butler, *Dreams* (1998) 62-63 points out that the *alû*-demon is also attested as an incubus.

⁵ See e.g. Meier, AfO 14 (1941) 142 lines 34-36 in a *Bît mēseri* incantation addressed to Lugalgirra: *ana utukki šēdi rābiṣi eṭemmi lilî lilîti kat-til-lu be[n]ni lemni šudingirakki rehût šulpaea u antašubbê* “against *utukku*, *šēdu*, *rābiṣu*, *lilû*, *lilîtu*, *kattilu*, evil *bennu*, *šudingirakku*, spawn of *Šulpaea*, and *antašubba*”. Though the latter items in the list are arguably diseases rather than demons, *lilû* and *lilîtu* appear before the rare *kattilu*, which seems to be a demon. Cf. CAD K (1971) 307b, *inter alia* citing a passage where *kattilu* is listed between *utukku* and *rābiṣu*. AHw (1965) 466a books it as “ein mythisches Raubtier”.

⁶ See already Bottéro, *Annuaire EPHE. 4e section* 1975 (1974-1975) 131 commenting on the incantation compendium BRM IV 20: “Chaque conjuration se rapporte à une action précise. Et chacune de ces actions intéresse la seule vie individuelle, jamais le bien commun, l’intérêt public”. He also notes that the *lilû* and *ardat lilî* “réparaissent également une demi-douzaine de fois dans S.T.T., 300 : 3, 8, 12; rev. 8, 11s, et devaient donc jouer un grand rôle dans la vie privée”.

⁷ Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 48.

⁸ Lackenbacher, RA 65/2 (1971) 151. See on this point also Steinert in *Fabric of Cities* (2014) 128, stressing that the *ardat lilî* “never ha[d] the chance to take part in the social life of her community”.

demons, and is the likely source of ‘gender polarity’ between demon and human victim (see below).

Gender polarity: the normal situation

Grammatically, *lilītu* is the feminine equivalent of masculine *lilû*. The *lilû* and *lilītu* are therefore generally viewed as gender-opposite (male and female) manifestations of the same demonic agency,⁹ who target victims of the opposite sex. Thus for example Marten Stol observes that, according to hemerologies, on particular days a man is in danger of being chosen for marriage by an *ardat lilī* demoness.¹⁰ Similarly, since the *ardat lilī* and *eṭel lilī* were not able to marry a human spouse in the normal way,¹¹ it can be supposed that they preyed on victims of suitable gender.

This picture is made even clearer by several diagnoses in Tablet XXVI of the *Diagnostic Handbook* (SA.GIG), where the gender of *lilû/lilītu* is the opposite of the gender of the afflicted human:

ana sinniṣti lilû(līl.lá.en.na) ana zikari lilītu(^{munus}līl.lá.en.na)

For a woman: *lilû*; for a man: *lilītu*

Ex. 1. (SA.GIG XXVI 47’)¹²

ana sinniṣti lilû(līl.lá.en.na) ana zikri lilītu(^{munus}līl.lá.en.na) zi.zi-bi

For a woman, a *lilû*; for a man, a *lilītu* will zi.zi-bi

Ex. 2. (SA.GIG XXVI 83’)¹³

qāt lilī(līl.lá.en.na) sar-ru ana sinniṣti lilû(līl.lá.en.na) zi.zi-bi

Hand of *maleficent*¹⁴ *lilû*; for a woman: a *lilû* will zi.zi-bi¹⁵

Ex. 3. (SA.GIG XXVI 49’)¹⁶

This notion that humans are affected by a *līl*-demon of opposite sex seems to be the norm, cohering with the dominant role of heterosexuality in Mesopotamian written sources. The

⁹ See already e.g. Ebeling in *RIA II* (1938) 110b: *lilû, lilītu* and *ardat-lilī* “gehören zu einer Gemeinschaft, weil sie in ihrem Wesen übereinstimmen, sozusagen die männliche und weibliche Seite ein und desselben Prinzips darstellen”.

¹⁰ Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 47 with ref. to CT 51 161 rev. 15 (see now Livingstone, *Hemerologies* (2013) 168), KAR 177 rev. i[v].5 (= Livingstone p. 189) and Iraq 21 (1959) 48:14 (= Livingstone p. 183).

¹¹ Cf. *ardat lilī ša muta lā ṭšû eṭel lilī ša aššata lā ahzu* ‘the *ardat lilī* who does not have a husband, the *eṭel lilī* who was not able to marry a wife’ (Borger in *lišān mīthurti* (1969) 7) and similar passages.

¹² Heeßel, *Diagnostik* (2000) 282.

¹³ Heeßel, *Diagnostik* (2000) 282.

¹⁴ For *sarru* ‘mendacious(?)’, Heeßel p. 294 cites the parallel in BAM 407, 7’ and 10’.

¹⁵ *zi.zi-bi* poses two problems. 1) it clearly represents a form of *tebû*, but exactly how to understand it is uncertain. Scurlock, *Sourcebook* (2014) 203 translates it as “he can get up (afterwards)”, apparently assuming the form is *tebû* Gtn (though AHW (1977) 1343a recognises several other nuances for this). However, at SA.GIG XXVI 82’ (Heeßel p. 285) we find *šumma parid-ma it-te-né-et-bi magal iddanabbub u i[gd]anallu[t]* ‘if he is scared and *ittenetbi*, he speaks a lot and is constantly scared’, suggesting that our *zi.zi-bi* – also next to a form of *parādu* – might well be hiding an *ittenetbi* (Ntn present). The translation of *ittenetbi* is itself uncertain. Heeßel renders the two occurrences in the prescription in lines 82’-83’ as “immer wieder aufsteht” and “sie werden sich hinwegheben”. CAD T (2006) 320b does not cite Heeßel’s attestations, but interprets another as “causes pain continuously”, which does not fit SA.GIG XXVI 82’ because the patient is the subject there. The second occurrence of *zi.zi-bi* above involves a female patient, and so may denote the male demon’s sexual arousal. 2) However the verb should be read, there is the question of who its subject is. My translation above supposes it is the *līl*-demon, but Scurlock supposes it is the human patient.

¹⁶ Heeßel, *Diagnostik* (2000) 282.

general principle coheres with Marten Stol's observation that women are always attacked by *lilûs*, never (in extant sources) by *lilîtu*.¹⁷

Gender polarity: exceptions

Sometimes, one finds a *lilû* where gender polarity vis-à-vis the human sufferer would lead one to expect *lilîtu*. Stol has rightly recognised “a problem” in such cases,¹⁸ because they upset the pattern of gender polarity.

An example is again found in the *Diagnostic Handbook*:

šumma ina mūši maruṣ-ma ina šērti baliṭ u ušamša qāt li[lî](lîl.la[.en.na])

If in the night he is sick, and in the morning / at dawn he is well *but he has not slept*: hand of *lilû*.

Ex. 4. (SA.GIG XVII 78)¹⁹

What is going on in cases such as these – is a male incubus indeed afflicting a male human? Or does the logogram *lîl.la.en.na* conceal (against all expectation) a feminine form? I will suggest a different answer.

The proposed solution

The solution proposed here is that, while *lilû* can denote the male demon specifically, it is also used as a gender-neutral umbrella term for the category of *lîl*-demons as a whole.²⁰

The situation would be analogous to that for e.g. ‘dog’. Babylonian and Assyrian had two words (or two forms) for ‘dog’: morphologically masculine *kalbu* and morphologically feminine *kalbatu*. While it seems certain that *kalbatu* was only used for female dogs, many of the attestations of *kalbu* cited in *CAD* and *AHW q.v.* are as likely to apply to a female dog as a male one – the gender of the animal is unimportant. Instead of these all being male dogs, it is easier to suppose that *kalbu* can be used in a gender-neutral way, as occurs with masculine forms in many languages (including Arabic).²¹

This coheres with the fact that, when a Babylonian list of impossible occurrences wants to specify that a male dog has given birth, it goes out of its way to add the word ‘male’, a usage recognised by the dictionaries:²²

¹⁷ Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 48.

¹⁸ Thus e.g. Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 48, proposing as a solution that in Tablet XXVI of SA.GIG the “hand of *lilû*” is “solely a form of epilepsy”, while also noting that a male incubus might do harm to a man “in order to get hold of his wife”, like Asmodeus in the book of Tobit.

¹⁹ Edited by Heeßel, *Diagnostik* (2000) 202. The line is preserved on a Kuyunjik manuscript (K. 3962) and a Neo-Babylonian manuscript in Chicago, perhaps from Uruk (A. 3437; see George, RA 85/2 (1991) 138-139 n. 9). The end of the line was collated by Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses* (2005) 751 n. 18.

²⁰ Cf. the observation by Fauth, WdO 17 (1986) 72 that an Aramaic incantation expressly mentions ‘male and female’ *lyly* (morphologically masculine) demons, suggesting that “auf einer älteren sprachlichen Stufe des Westsemitischen die Bezeichnung לילי (lyly) offenbar auch für den weiblichen ‚Nachtdämon‘ verwendet wurde”. This was probably a feature from Babylonian. Fauth (*ibid.*) further observes that in later Aramaic magic the opposite of the Babylonian situation arises: the morphologically feminine word is used as an umbrella term for demons of both genders. For this phenomenon a different line of explanation is necessary. It probably has to do with the greater prominence of the female demon in the Aramaic magical tradition (which prominence is also inherited from Babylonian, probably owing to male-centric healing traditions – cf. fn. 34).

²¹ Though see Alhawary, *Arabic Grammar* (2011) 39 on Arabic using default feminine forms for animals whose sex is “not obvious”, e.g. *ḥayya* ‘snake’, *naḥla* ‘bee’.

²² *CAD Z* (1961) 111-112, *AHW* (1981) 1526b.

ina qereb māt kaldi kalbu(ur.gi₇) zikru/zakru(nita) itta 'lad
 In the middle of southern Babylonia, a male dog gave birth.
 Ex. 5. (CT 29: 48 19)²³

Evidently, the morphologically masculine form *kalbu* was deemed insufficient to make the point that the dog was biologically male, so a semantic reinforcement was sought.²⁴

This principle is likely to have a much wider application than just the word for ‘dog’. It probably holds good for all pairs of words where the gender distinction is of little importance. This would apply to most animals in most contexts (excepting those which have gender-specific lexemes, e.g. *lītu* ‘cow’ vs *alpu* ‘ox/bull’).²⁵ To wit the following case of a bird in a therapeutic ritual:

qaqqad iššūr hurri zikri/zakri teleqqe tušabšal
 You take (and) boil the head of a male *rock partridge*.
 Ex. 6. (K. 3719 = AMT 76,6 line 10')²⁶

Where there is no such specification, presumably we should either understand that the animal’s gender was obvious contextually, or that it did not matter.

By contrast, in view of the strongly gendered nature of ancient Mesopotamian human society, in which being male or female made a big difference to the roles one performed, the principle of gender neutrality probably did *not* apply to most morphologically masculine nouns denoting people.²⁷

It is instructive to compare the use of the word *šalmu* ‘effigy’, which Nicholas Postgate observes to be used of people and gods but not animals, even though many figurines of animals exist. Postgate convincingly explains the asymmetry in terms of anthropomorphic beings’ greater individuality: anthropomorphic statuettes are effigies of a *particular person*, while statuettes of animals represent a *type*.²⁸

Where does this leave us vis-à-vis līl-demons? They were probably anthropomorphic rather than theriomorphic, but gender neutrality is less problematic for them than for humans: aside from gender polarity vis-à-vis the victim, the sources do not give this writer the sense of differences in nature or behaviour between male and female līl-demons. The idea that *lilû* could refer to both genders, like *kalbu*, seems plausible.

What is more, this idea coheres with the *Exorcist’s Handbook* (‘Leitfaden der Beschwörungskunst’), which lists *guruš.līl.lá* (i.e. *eṭel lilī*) and *ki.sikil.līl.lá* (i.e. *ardat lilī*)

²³ Edited by Guinan in AMD 2 (2002) 36 and 39, with comment on her p. 40. The form *itta 'lad* is presumably a corruption of *ittalad* (G perfect of (w)*alādu* ‘to give birth’)

²⁴ Salonen, *Fischerei* (1970) 143 and Salonen, *Vögel* (1973) 94 maintains that Sumerian used *ab* “father” (*sic!*) and *áb* ‘cow’ to indicate the gender of fish and birds. This usage would be different from the phenomenon discussed above, since Sumerian cannot indicate gender morphologically, whereas Babylonian and Assyrian can. However, PSD A 128a and 169a takes *ab* and *áb* as the names of fish (as does ePSD). This seems simpler, as usually there would have been little point in specifying fish’s gender.

²⁵ Cf. von Soden, *GAG*³ (1995) § 60a* on *pirsu*: “*pirsu* ‘entwöhntes Kind bzw. Tierjungen’ steht meistens auch für das Fem”.

²⁶ The edition by the BabMed team is accessible at <http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT-2/AMT-76-6/index.html>.

²⁷ Though the morphologically male *amīlu* ‘man’ who is ubiquitous as the patient in Babylonian/Assyrian medical prescriptions has been suspected to represent a gender-neutral figure (cf. e.g. fn. 39). *CAD I-J* (1960) 90b and 98a envisage a small number of instances where the morphologically masculine *ilu* ‘god’ refers to a female deity. AHW (1963) 374a tentatively (i.e. with a question mark) recognises an instance in the Neo-Assyrian personal name *Ištar-ila-a-a* ‘Ištar is my god’. There is of course the problem of whether the sign dingir might represent *iltu*.

²⁸ Postgate in *The Ancient Mind* (1994) 178-180.

consecutively,²⁹ while later giving only *líl.lá.en.na* (i.e. *lilû*):³⁰ *prima facie*, *lilûtu* is missing. Since the Handbook lists titles of incantation series, we would have a situation where the other three *líl*-types each had their own collection of incantations, while *lilûtu* did not. Most likely, *líl.lá.en.na* = *lilû* covers both the male and female incarnations of the same basic lexeme (i.e. both *lilû* and *lilûtu*) – a compression which cannot be achieved in the case of *ardat lilî* and *eṭel lilî*, because they involve different lexemes.

The same consideration might explain why, as Marten Stol observes, babies are only reported as being attacked by *lilûs* (not *lilûtus*):³¹ if in the context of medical writings babies were considered gender-neutral,³² then *lilû* would fit, as the gender-neutral term.

The principle of gender neutrality may also clarify the thinking behind a lexical list which explains Sumerian *igi.kár* as *Bab/Ass hâru ša lilî* ‘to choose/marry, (said) of a *lilû*’.³³ If the picture in our sources is representative,³⁴ marrying a human victim seems more characteristic of the female demonesses than the male *lilû*.³⁵ Probably the compiler of the lexical list used the morphologically masculine form as a catch-all.

Finally, if *ardat lilî* means ‘maiden possessed by a *lilû*’,³⁶ then following rigid consideration of grammatical gender one would expect her male counterpart to be *eṭel lilîti*, ‘young man possessed by a *lilûtu*’. That one instead finds *eṭel lilî* would suggest that *lilû* is again being used in a gender-neutral way, and in fact referring to female demons.

The perspective suggested above does not solve *all* the problematic passages. Notably, there is a case in the terrestrial omen series *Šumma ālu* where a man is apparently ‘seized’ by a male *lilû*:

šumma biršu kîma zîmî(sag.ki) ili zikari(nita) innamir(igi.du8) amîlu šû líl.lá išabbassu
šumma biršu kîma zîmî(sag.ki) ilti sinništi(munus) innamir amîlu šû ki.sikil.líl.lá 2
mu^{mēš} išabbassu

If (there is) a *biršu* like the face³⁷ of a male god, that man: a *lilû* will seize him.

If (there is) a *biršu* like the face of a female god, that man: an *ardat lilî* will seize him for two years.

Ex. 7. (*Šumma ālu* XX 26-27)³⁸

²⁹ KAR 44: 10: *gu-ru-uš guruš.líl.lá^{mēš} ki.sikil.líl.lá^{mēš} u alan.níg.é.sag.fl.^{mēš}.udug hul.gál.a mu.du.du*, ed. Geller in *Studies Lambert* (2000) 244 (with minor variants on the two duplicate manuscripts, BM 55148+ and Rm 717+; lacuna in von Weiher, *SpTU V* (1998) no. 231). I see no reason to follow Geller *ad loc.* (on his p. 253) in viewing the gloss *gu-ru-uš* as referring to another incantation. For comments on *gu-ru-uš* see Farber, *ZA* 79/1 (1989) 33 n. 45.

³⁰ KAR 44: 34: *a.lá hul líl.lá.en.na sag.hul.ha.za šu nam.érim.ma šu nam.lú.u₁₈.lu* (Geller p. 291; *hul* omitted on the two duplicate manuscripts). The asymmetry between this and the earlier line is noted by Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 48.

³¹ See Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 48 on this point as a “flaw in the picture” of *líl*-demons’ gendered behaviour.

³² Cf. Steinert, *Menschseins* (2012) 96 on how Mesopotamians sometimes classified people as “Alte (Frauen und Männer), Erwachsene (Frauen und Männer) und Kinder”, the latter category implicitly being gender-neutral. Admittedly there are also rituals in which infants were given gender-specific objects, see Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 63.

³³ For this meaning see refs in Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 47. *CAD H* (1956) list two verbs ‘*hâru*’, one meaning ‘to get ready (transitive)’ (attested only in “SB, NB”) and one meaning ‘to pick for marriage’. Since the meanings and uses are quite close, it is simpler to treat them as one verb, as done in AHW (1962) 342-342.

³⁴ As pointed out by Stol, *Epilepsy* (1993) 47, the higher incidence of female *líl*-demons (*lilûtus* and *ardat lilîs*) is probably because of male-centricity in the extant sources as regards the victim.

³⁵ The above statement discounts the ‘preparatory’ step by which an *ardat lilî* demoness came into being, as a human girl possessed by a male *lilû*.

³⁶ Cf. Scurlock, *Incognita 2* (1991) 181 n. 192: “the term *ardat lilî* means literally ‘*lilû*’s girls’, which might imply that these were originally young girls chosen as wives by those demons”.

³⁷ In taking *sag.ki* as ‘face’ I follow Freedman, *If a City*, vol. 1 (1998) p. 298 note to line 21, who cites an ancient commentary (CT 41 25 r.9): *sag.ki* = *zîmû* ‘*sag.ki* means ‘face’”.

³⁸ Freedman, *If a City*, vol. 1 (1998) 298-299. On the place of K. 3698+ = CT XXXVIII 28 (CDLI P236900) within *Šumma ālu* see Heeßel, *Divinatorische Texte I* (2007) 7 n. 66.

Here the symmetry between the two lines suggests that, since a female deity results in seizure by the (female) *ardât lili*, a male deity (unusual for this to be specified) results in seizure by a male *lilû*. There are two ways out of this scenario: one is to suppose that *amīlu* can be used gender-neutrally, to mean ‘person’. But while one can see why JoAnn Scurlock translates it thus in medical recipes,³⁹ where in most cases it (presumably) makes no difference if the patient is male or female, it seems difficult to suppose that *amīlu* (let alone *amīlu šū*) can refer specifically to a woman, *as opposed to* a man.

The second way to account for gender behaviour in our pair of omens starts with the observation that they are not, in fact, properly symmetrical: the second one has a temporal specification (‘for two years’) which is missing in the first. Had they been conceived as a pair, it is hard to see why this would be so. Perhaps, then, the two omens originated independently, and were brought together by a redactor of *Šumma ālu*. In this scenario, it would be fascinating if the redactor failed to realise that *lilû* was gender-neutral, and so inserted the specifications ‘male’ and ‘female’ to produce a contrast which was originally not there. This would cohere with the fact that the misunderstanding arose while dealing with terrestrial omens, not with typologies which presupposed expertise in demonology (such as SA.GIG). Perhaps redactors of *Šumma ālu* did not know much about demons! But the matter is hard to resolve.

A further gender complication

We have seen that (morphologically masculine) *lilû* can refer to male or female demons, and (morphologically feminine) *lilitu* only to female ones. But, at least for First-Millennium Assyria, the situation was different in the plural.

Many Neo-Assyrian nouns which are masculine in the singular have morphologically feminine plurals in *-āte*. This can happen even with nouns denoting male humans. Thus *etinnu* ‘master builder’ is attested in a morphologically feminine plural ^{lú}*e-tin-na-ti* (SAA I 138: 13),⁴⁰ which is virtually certain to mean ‘male master builders’, despite its feminine morphology. The same applies to *hazannu* ‘mayor’:

ana ^{lú*}*ha-za-na-te ana urāsī šībūte assa’al*
I consulted the mayors, masons and elders.
Ex. 8. (SAA I 77: 12-14)⁴¹

Here too it is overwhelmingly likely that male mayors are meant.

Therefore, on Neo-Assyrian manuscripts, *lilâti* might be the plural of masculine *lilû*. One could object that, since Neo-Assyrian society did not (as far as we know) have female master builders or female mayors, the forms *etinnâte* and *hazannâte* are unambiguous (i.e. they can in practice refer only to men), whereas if *lilâti* were used to denote male demons, it would end up being ambiguous. However, this is not a serious obstacle, because when the gender of *lil*-demons is important, this is obvious from the context.

An effect of this is that, when (as I have argued elsewhere)⁴² Ea uses *lilâti* to refer to demons in his ambivalent oracle in the *Gilgameš* Flood story, Neo-Assyrians would not

³⁹ Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses* (2005) e.g. p. 30 and *passim*. Cf their p. xxiii: “the masculine LÚ and NA (but not the specifically male NITA/NĪTA) are used to refer to both sexes”.

⁴⁰ Parpola, SAA I (1987) p. 113. The word is followed by a lacuna. The context concerns a wall (é.sig₄) that [*i*]ddi’ib ‘caved in’ (line 12).

⁴¹ Parpola, SAA I (1987) p. 71. Frank Simons alerts me to another possible translation: ‘the mayors and senior masons’. The difference does not impinge on the argument above.

⁴² Worthington, *Ea's Duplicity* (2019) 225-227.

necessarily have understood him as referring to specifically female lîl-demons, but to lîl-demons generally.⁴³

The question of plurality

The above interpretation of *ina lîlâti* presupposes that one *can* have multiple *lîlîtu*-demonesses: in other words that *lîlîtu* is not the name of an individual demon (as is the case with Lamaštu or Pazuzu), but rather the label for a *type* of demon.

In Aramaic magic, from at least the time of the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* (8th-10th centuries AD onwards) there was an original Lilith, the first wife of Adam, who went on to produce a brood of her kind.⁴⁴ In discussions of Aramaic magic, ‘lilith’ is therefore often capitalised, as the proper name of an individual demon.⁴⁵ However, Aramaic magic bowls from Nippur mention plural *liliths*,⁴⁶ and also envisage *liliths* having names, showing that ‘lilith’ is not (or not always) their name.⁴⁷ Whether or not they were all regarded as the brood of an original Lilith, it seems safe to infer that it should often be uncapitalised, and understood as a demonic type rather than the name of an individual demon. In this, they may be preserving the Babylonian usage.

Similarly, it seems clear that Babylonian/Assyrian *lîlû* and *lîlîtu* denote a demon *type* rather than individual (named) demons in Pazuzu incantations. For a start, the plural lîl.lâ^{meš} *lem-nu-ti* ‘evil *lîlûs*’ is attested,⁴⁸ though Frank Simons (pers. comm.) points out that, in principle, this could refer to a quartet of individuals. Frans Wiggermann notes that the plural occurs *only* in Pazuzu incantations,⁴⁹ but this is as likely to derive from idioms of usage as than from varying perceptions of individualisation across source types. Secondly, the circumstance that Pazuzu describes himself as ‘king’ of the lîl-demons suggests a large group:

én ġe₂₆.e ^dpà.zu.zu dumu ^dha.an.ba lugal lîl.lâ hul.a^{meš}
anāku pazuzu mār hanbi šar lîlê (var. *lîlêya*) *lemnūti*
hur.saġ kala.ga mun.huš ba.an.e₁₁.dè ġe₂₆-e-me-en
ana šadî dannî ša uštar’iba ellâššu anāku
im.e.ne.ne lû šà.bé ġen.na im.mar.tu igi.ne.ne ba.an.ġar
šārî ša ina libbišunu attalku ana amurri panīšunu šaknū
dili.e.ne pa.e.ne.ne ba.an.haš
iltēnū izīrīšunu ušabbir

I am Pazuzu, son of Hanbu, king of the (var. my) evil *lîlûs*.

I shall rise up against the mighty mountain at which I anger.⁵⁰

The winds in whose midst (or: against whom) I march, they face West.

⁴³ The present argument thus fulfils the anticipation in fn. 928 of *Ea’s Duplicity*.

⁴⁴ Wojciech, Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies & Gender Issues /32 (2018) 115-116, who goes on to compare traditions about Lilith with earlier traditions about Eve. (Wojciech also notes that the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* may have originally been intended as satirical or scurrilous). For another example of the same tradition see Gingzberg, Szold and Radin, *Legends of the Jews* (2003) 172b (after Yerahmeel).

⁴⁵ E.g. Handy in *Lilith* (1992) 324.

⁴⁶ E.g. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913) no. 7 p. 147 = Isbell, *Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (1975) 21-22 line 14.

⁴⁷ Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913) 118 line 15.

⁴⁸ Borger in *Studies Reiner* (1987) 25: 103 (Sm 98: 9’ and STT 147 r.11); cf. also line 102. Pazuzu heads offer further plural forms, e.g. lîl-lâ-hul-a^{meš} (Heeßel, *Pazuzu* (2002) p. 105).

⁴⁹ Wiggermann, *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 77/2 (2011) 312.

⁵⁰ Interestingly, the Št of *ra’ābu* is used of wind in medical descriptions of symptoms (see *AHw* (1971) 933a). It is possible that it has overtones of windiness in our incantation (but this is not certain, as it is also used of the gods).

One by one I broke their wings.

Ex. 9. (*Pazuzu* ‘Standardinschrift A’)⁵¹

Strictly speaking, the Akkadian has the same ambiguity as the English over whether the epithet ‘king of the evil *lilûs*’ belongs to Pazuzu or to his father Hanbu.⁵² But the variant *lilêya* (spelled *líl.lá-ia*) ‘of my *lilû*-demons’, found on a Pazuzu head from Babylon,⁵³ shows that at least in the mind of one person Pazuzu ruled over the *lilûs*. Further, Nils Heeßel has sensibly pointed out that, as Hanbu is attested nowhere outside the Pazuzu incantations, his own ontology is faltering, and essentially he only exists as part of the Pazuzu demonology.⁵⁴ Hence, even if the title is his, it very likely applies to Pazuzu too.⁵⁵

Of course, *lilîtu* could have originated as a personal name and subsequently become a type (in the same way that Ištar became a word for ‘goddess’),⁵⁶ but at present there is no evidence for this.

Summary

The morphological gender of words denoting *líl*-demons need not always reflect the gender of the demon denoted. Grammatically masculine *lilû* served as a gender-neutral term covering both male *lilû* and female *lilîtu* (and possibly other members of the *líl* ‘family’). This explains seeming departures from the principle of ‘gender polarity’ between demon and victim. Conversely, the morphologically feminine plural *lilâti* which appears (as I have argued elsewhere) in *Gilg. XI* need not refer to specifically feminine *líl*-demons, but could itself be a catch-all plural.

⁵¹ Text composed eclectically (with variants usually not noted) from the ‘score’ transliteration in Borger in *Studies Reiner* (1987) 25-26. The translation follows the Akkadian and is informed by Heeßel, *Pazuzu* (2002) pp. 109-110. As Heeßel (his p. 95) points out, ‘Standardinschrift A’ (a term introduced by B. K. Ismail) corresponds to lines 102-109 of the Nineveh Pazuzu collection, and is attested more often as unilingual Sumerian than bilingually.

⁵² Apparently sometimes pronounced Anbu (dumu *an-bi*). This is how I interpret the Pazuzu head published by Frank, RA 7 (1909) 24 line 2. Differently Heeßel, *Pazuzu* (2002) p. 111, positing a *saut du même au même* (^d and *an* being two readings of the same cuneiform sign): dumu ^d<Ha-an>-bi and Frank, MAOG 14 (1941) 20, positing a logogram: dumu ^dBI.

⁵³ Borger in *Studies Reiner* (1987) 25:103 MS VA Bab 569. The inscription was first edited by Lambert, FuB 12 (1970) 42 (“text F”), who read the signs syllabically (*líl-lá-ia*).

⁵⁴ Hanbu’s obscurity might be reflected in variation over the pronunciation of his name (see fn. 52 and cf. Worthington, *Textual Criticism* (2012) 77 n. 260 on corruptions of unfamiliar place names).

⁵⁵ Heeßel, *Pazuzu* (2002) pp. 65-66: “Hanbus Führungsanspruch ist vollständig auf Pazuzu übertragen und daher kann sich der Titel auch auf Pazuzu beziehen”.

⁵⁶ For the view that *lilîtu* “auf einen Individualnamen für eine ... Dämonin des altbabylonischen Pantheons zurückgeh[t]” see Fauth, WdO 17 (1986) 67. On his p. 79 he notes that plurality could have come about through the demons’ activity as incubus and succubus. (I do not understand the suggestion on his p. 68 that “Lilitu von vornherein in einer die verschiedenen dämonischen Aspekte einfangenden Trias (Lilu, Lilitu, Ardat Lili) integriert war”).

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