

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

The question of plurality

The above interpretation of *ina lilāti* presupposes that one *can* have multiple *lilītu*-demonesses: in other words that *lilītu* 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 *lilū* and *lilītu* denote a demon *type* rather than individual (named) demons in Pazuzu incantations. For a start, the plural *lil.lá^{meš} lem-nu-ti* ‘evil *lilūs*’ 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 *lil*-demons suggests a large group:

én ġe₂₆.e d^hpà.zu.zu dumu d^hha.an.ba lugal l^ll.lá hul.a^{meš}
anāku pazuzu mār hanbi šar lilē (var. *lilēya*) *lemnūti*
hur.saġ kala.ga mun.huš ba.an.e₁₁.dè ġe₂₆-e-me-en
ana šadī danni ša uštar’iba ellāššu anāku
im.e.ne.ne lú šà.bé ġen.na im.mar.tu igi.ne.ne ba.an.ġar
šārī 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 *lilūs*.

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. *lil-lá-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 *lil.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 *lil*-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 *lil* '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 *lil*-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 (*lil-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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