

LAMAŠTU AMULET

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The reverse of the amulet described above, p. 57, is inscribed with three well-known exorcistic incantations in Akkadian, written in Babylonian script. The first spell is expressly against Lamaštu herself, the second and third against other demonic forces. While incantations 1 and 2 are often found on comparable amulets, incantation 3 is less commonly attested in such a context. The first of these texts is also found written out among the Lamaštu rituals known on cuneiform tablets, while the latter two were included as nos. 60 and 63 in the ancient compilation of exorcistic incantations entitled *Hulbazizi*.

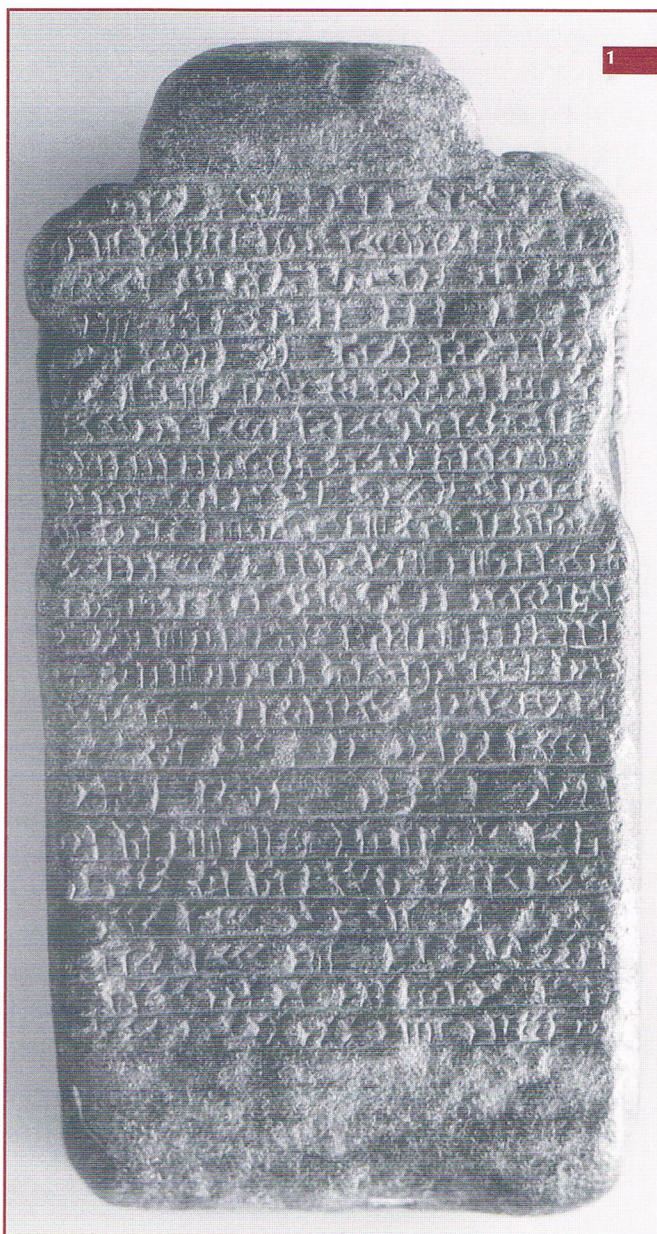
Many inscribed amulets of this kind survive from the first millennium BC. It is evident that they were suspended by means of the hole through the top, either on the wall of a patient's bedroom, or on the bed itself. The amulet turns from left to right, and not top to bottom, as does a cuneiform tablet.

Comparatively speaking, the quality of the carved signs here is high; there is a sprinkling of minor errors or examples of carelessness, but such phenomena are almost invariably found in cuneiform amulets, probably due to the fact that the inscriptions were repeatedly reproduced by the stone cutter from a master copy provided by an exorcist. In this case neither the frequency nor the gravity of such details warrants the assumption that the amulet is a modern forgery, indeed, the unparalleled spelling *il-tar-tu₄* in line 5 for what elsewhere in versions of this spell appears as *il-tu₄* or *AN-tu₄*, "goddess," establishes that this cannot be other than an ancient object.

As with the scene carved on the front, the closest published parallel is the bronze example IM 74648, published by K. M. Abadah; *Sumer* 28 (1972) 78 and figs. 3-4. This latter amulet contains five incantations, the first three duplicating those in the present example, in the same order, the fourth and fifth being the additional spells nos. 48

and 65 from the same ancient exorcistic corpus mentioned above.

A curious point is that four or perhaps five lines of inscription have been rather carefully erased at the bottom of the amulet. From the parallels it is evident that these lines would have sufficed to contain the end of the third spell, and, for example, the two lines of *Hulbazizi* no. 48 too.



Note: this transliteration has been prepared from photographs; round brackets are used to indicate parts of signs that are not visible on the photographs, but which are presumably complete on the original.

INCANTATION 1

1. ÉN ^dRAB+GAM DUMU AN.NA MU-šá 1-en
Dimme, daughter of Anu, is her first name;
2. 2-ú ḥa-a-a-at? (sic!) DINGIR.MEŠ šá su-qa-a-ti
the second, sister of the gods of the street,
3. 3-šú pat-ru šá SAG.DU i-la-tu-u
the third, sword which cleaves heads,
4. 4-ú šá IZI i-nap-pa-ḥu
the fourth, who kindles fire,
5. 5-šú il-tar-tu₄ šá IGI-šá šak-ṣ[u]
the fifth, goddess whose face is wild(?)
6. 6-šú pa-qid qa-ti le-qàt ^dir-na-n[a]
the sixth, committed into the hands, adopted by Irnina,
7. 7-šú niš DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ lu-u ta-m[a-tú]
the seventh, be conjured by the great gods!
8. KI MUŠEN AN-e lu ta-par-ra-ši-ma T[U₆ ÉN]
Like a bird in the sky, fly away! Spell.

INCANTATION 2

9. (É)N šá mal-di GIŠ.NÁ-ia₅ it-ti-q[u]
Spell. He who passes by the edge of my bed,
10. ú-pal-laḥ-an-ni ú-šag-ra-ra-an-ni
frightening me, and making me panic,
11. (M)ÁŠ.GI₆.MEŠ pár-da-a-ti ú-kal-la-man-ni
showing me fearful dreams,
12. (an)a LÚ.NE.DU₈ <Ì.DU₈>.GAL KI-tì i-paq-qí-du-š(ú)
let them commit him to Nedu, the great <doorkeeper> of the Underworld!

Incantation 1

The spell lists the seven names by which Lamashtu can be known, and is thus a magical attempt to gain control of her. In line 2, the word aḥat, "sister," is written ḥa-a-a-at! by mistake. Curiously, the identical error occurs in the above-mentioned IM 74648 line 2. Note the spelling il-tar-tu₄ for the proper noun iltartu/ištartu, "goddess," discussed above. The name of the goddess Irnina is here, as in IM 76468, written Irnana.

Incantation 2

The demon here is not named, but is clearly feared for its arrival by night. The spell puts the sufferer under the protection of Marduk and Ninurta, both major gods powerful in protective magic, and the very door and lock to the patient's room are charged with responsibility to protect him.

13. ina qí-bit ^dMAŠ IBILA SAG.KAL DUMU ra-a¹-m[e]
At the command of Ninurta, firstborn son, beloved
progeny!
14. ina qí-bit ^dTUŠ a-<šib> é-sag-gil u KÁ.DINGIR.K[I]
At the command of Marduk, who lives in Esagil and
Babylon!
15. GIŠ.IG u GIŠ.SAG.KUL lu ti-da-a
Oh door and bolt, may you know,
16. [a-na(?)]¹ ki-din 2 ^dEN MEŠ
that I have fallen under the protection of
17. an-da-qut TU₆ ÉN
these two divine lords! Spell.

INCANTATION 3

18. (É)N šá é-zi-da <u> é-šu-me-ša₄
Spell. Of Ezida and Eshumesha
19. ^dŠEŠ.KI šá EDIN.NA ḥa-am-[mu/mat]¹
The moon god who gathers up the steppe;
20. (ana) ŠEŠ.MEŠ-šú iš-pa-su(?)
For his brothers he filled
21. GI.MEŠ ú-ma-al-li
his quiver with arrows;
22. ina a-mat ^dMAŠ EN é-šu-me-ša₄
By the word of Ninurta, lord of Eshumesha,
23. ina a-mat ^dEN EN é-zi-da
By the word of Bel, lord of Ezida

(Remainder, perhaps 4 lines, almost completely
erased)

Incantation 3

Here again the demon is unnamed, but Marduk and Ninurta are called upon to defend the patient. The expression "gathers up the steppe" is obscure, but perhaps refers to collecting the staves to make the arrows mentioned in the next line. In all but one of the other known versions of this text it is not the moon-god, Nanna, who is the archer, but the goddess of love and war, Inanna. The substitution is probably due to the similarity in sound of the two names, but it is suggestive that the other case occurs in the same amulet IM 74648.