

The Mesopotamian Pandemonium

A Provisional Census

Supernatural agency

The long history of Mesopotamian civilization has produced over three thousand gods, and a far smaller number of monsters, sages, spirits, and demons, which together with the protective deities of the individual, the uncountable souls of the dead, and the demonized witch defined supernatural agency in Mesopotamian thought. The features distinguishing the evil species from gods and among each other, and the mythologies in which they functioned, will be assessed here on the basis of the two types of evidence available, literary and visual.

The literary tradition starts halfway the third millennium BC, and extinguishes early in the Christian era together with the cuneiform writing system. In the first millennium BC the relevant material becomes abundant and explicit, but also contradictory and confusing, because new thoughts expressed in traditional garb can hardly be distinguished from old thoughts preserved out of antiquarian interests. The visual evidence starts considerably earlier than the literary, and has the advantage of being datable, the disadvantage of being inexplicit and therefore hard to decipher. Mesopotamian art is but sparsely supplied with captions, and the identification of types and scenes is preponderantly based on indirect matches between sundry pieces of visual and literary evidence.

Native descriptions of visual types and art works do exist, but are limited to the extraordinary, and thus of little use for the ordinary. The Standard Babylonian *Göttertypentext*¹ describes twenty-seven images of gods and spirits which presumably once lined the walls of a temple in Kassite Babylon; the Neo-Assyrian *Underworld Vision*² reviews the netherworld and its inhabitants as seen by an Assyrian prince in a dream: Nergal with his wife and their major courtiers, plus fifteen lesser hybrid netherworld officials, “gods/spirits” (*ilānu*) in Nergal’s service. None of the images of

¹ F. Köcher, *Der babylonische Göttertypentext*, in «Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung» 1(1953), pp. 57-107.

² A. Livingstone, *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince*, in «Sate Archives of Assyria» 3(1989), pp. 68-76.

either text has been identified as such in art, but details of dress, attribute and appearance may be realistic.

The pantheon: divine order and its enforcement (Figs. 1, 2)

A pantheon of over three thousand gods seems too large to consist solely out of distinct, well defined natural and cultural agents, and in fact it didn't. The most important agencies are covered by a relatively small and stable core pantheon of some ten to twenty deities of nature, in the texts summarized as the seven or twelve "Great Gods". These few great gods, the ones that "determine destiny", constitute an overarching national pantheon, while the many lesser gods, the "gods of the land", head local city panthea, or serve the courts of the great gods in specialized functions: spouse, child, vizier, herald, deputy, messenger, constable, singer, throne, weapon, ship, or harp. A special place is taken by a small group of "dead" or "bound" gods, the primeval ancestors of Enlil, who after the creation of the modern cosmos were relegated to the netherworld, where they sometimes served as gatekeepers.

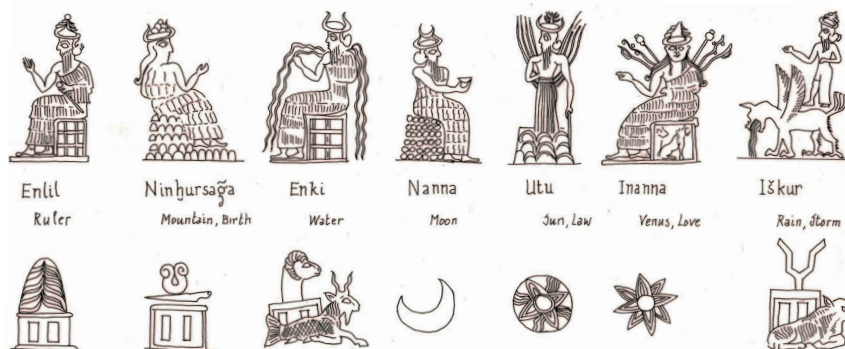


Fig. 1: A selection of early anthropomorphic Great Gods and the symbols that later replaced them. Drawing: F.A.M. Wiggermann.

In art the great gods are anthropomorphic, while the lesser gods may be represented by hybrids, animals, or personified objects. In the course of time these and other non-anthropomorphic elements such as sun disc, star, or crescent moon developed into the symbols that replaced the increasingly distant anthropomorphic gods.

In the daily life of Mesopotamia kinship determined one's place in society, and so it did in the supernatural world: the relations between gods, Monsters, Sages, demons and people were fixed by their origins, that is

by cosmogony. Mesopotamian cosmogony was standardized only in the late second millennium creation myth *Enūma Eliš*, where Marduk, the god of the contemporary capital Babylon, replaced Enlil, the god of the old religious centre Nippur. The earlier version of the myth, the one updated in *Enūma Eliš*, is available only as a list of Enlil's ancestors, which functioned in a yearly wailing ritual for the dead gods of primeval times. With many variants this list recurs in lexical texts, god-lists, and incantations from the third millennium onwards. With the help of fragmentary information culled from various other texts the implied cosmogony can be summarized as follows: the primeval ocean, Namma, grew an entity An-Ki, the as yet undivided "Heaven-Earth"; "Heaven-Earth" somehow became a productive unit, and produced a male-female pair, Enki and Ninki "Lord and Lady Earth", the first of a chain of seven, fourteen, or twenty-one generations closing with "Lord and Lady Dukug", the personified and productive Dukug "Holy Mound", on and from which Enlil "Lord Air" was born. By his very nature Enlil, deified air or ether, separated Heaven and Earth, brought the actual cosmos into being, and became the first and chief god in the centre of the now available living space. Major and minor gods were born and populated the earth, which was not yet finished, though: riverbeds had to be dug, and houses had to be built for the leading gods, specifically Enlil. After a while the "worker gods" (^dalla-meš / *allū*)³ got fed up with their heavy toil, and rebelled. To unburden them Enlil gave orders for a substitute to be created, man, who from then on would carry the workload. The creation of man proceeded by mixing clay with the blood of the executed rebel leader, named Alla or [W]ella (Fig. 2).

Thus the cosmogony established the power relations between the inhabitants of the cosmos: the national great gods, specifically Enlil, take the decisions (n a m t a r), and rule; the local lesser gods peacefully follow and serve the centre; and finally man is the solution to a past labor conflict between the two groups of gods, and as such can count on the support of both, at least as long as his service is deemed satisfactory. Enlil's decisions are enforced by netherworld spirits or gods in his service: *namtaru* "Decision, Fate", his son, is the vizier of Ereškigal, the queen of the netherworld; *namtaru*'s wife is called simply "She-Fate" (*namtartu*), or in older texts ^dḥuš-bi-sa₆ "Its Horror is Good", an expression of the legality of *namtaru*'s office; *mūtu* "death" is the "lord of man"; *bibbu* "(a feline² representing) plague" is the "butcher" (*tābiḥu*) of the netherworld"; other attendants of death operate in groups, the *gallū* "constables", the *rābiṣu* "deputies", and the *ūmu* "day-demons", roaring manifestations of bad news. The power relations in the cosmos reflect those of actual Meso-

³ The collective occurs in a bilingual creation myth and in *Utukku Lemnūtu* 4:67, where the evil spirits are their offspring (reading *dumu* ^dalla-la-a-meš / *mar al-le-e*).

potamian politics: a hegemonic ruler takes unpleasant decisions in a distant centre; local worthies exploit the peasants; and a semi-independent civil service enforces the decisions that had to keep the hierarchy intact, the ruler in control, the local worthies comfortable, and the peasants subservient.

On earth, in the houses of man, the semi-independent supernatural enforcers spelled doom, and, although following orders from a lawful source, could be counted among the evil demons; even Enlil himself and his palace Ekur “House Mountain”, the supervisor and source of the dreaded enforcers respectively, could take on demonic traits.

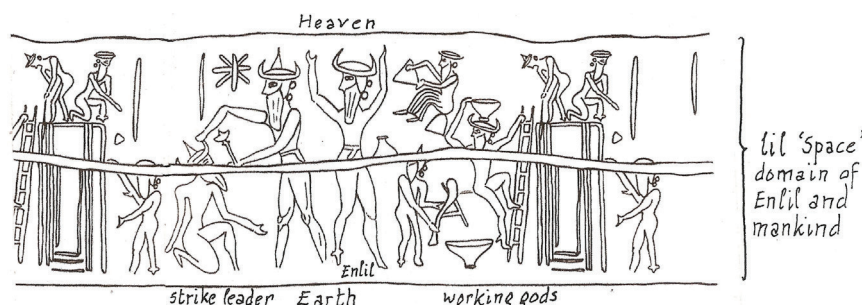


Fig. 2: Enlil, the working gods, and the creation of man.

A late third millennium (Akkadian) seal follows the earlier creation myth in detail. The largest figure, the one in the middle, does nothing but raising his hands up to heaven; his headdress, a horned crown, identifies him as a god, and, as will appear from the rest of the scene, that god must be Enlil himself, keeping Heaven and Earth separated. To the right gods are busy building a house, Enlil's temple in Nippur no doubt. Since carrying the basket and building houses for the gods was precisely what man was created for, the fact that on the seal gods are doing this work sets the scene firmly and uncontestedly in the early days of the cosmos, the time *before* the creation of man. To the left a great god is executing a smaller one, the rebel leader (Alla) we may assume, and at the foot of the building a further deity is mixing something in a through, clay and Alla's blood for the creation of man we may assume.

After Muscarella (ed.), *Ladders to Heaven*, cit., no. 44 (photo).

With the exception of *namtaru*, whose form is not described, the Neo-Assyrian *Underworld Vision* has the quasi-demonic netherworld officials represented by hybrids; from earlier sources next to nothing is known about the appearance of such beings⁴:

namtaru “Fate” does the honours, with a dagger in his right hand, and the hair of the man to be killed in his left; *namtartu* “She-Fate”, his wife, has the head of

⁴ A lyre from the Royal Graves at Ur presents the netherworld as the reverse of the normal world, with an ass playing the harp and singing, and a lion (the butcher of the netherworld) serving food for a banquet. Chthonic netherworld gods like Ninazu, Tišpak, Ningišzida, and Ištaran were associated with poisonous serpentine hybrids, and themselves could be partly theriomorphic. Netherworld gods may be bald, or wear a flat cap instead of a horned crown.

a griffin, human hands and feet; *mūtu* “Death” has the head of a snake-dragon, human hands, and the feet of a [...]; *šēdu lemnu* “Evil Genie” has a human head and hands, a tiara, the talons of an eagle, and his left foot on a *kušū*-animal standing on its hind legs; *alluḥappu* “(Hunting) Net” has a lion’s head, and four human hands and feet; *mukil reš lemutti* “Attendant of Evil” has the head of a bird, wings spread out and flapping, human hands and feet; *ḥumuṭ-tabal* “Take Away Quickly”, the ferryman, has the head of an *anzū*, four hands and feet of a [...]; *eṭemmu* “Ghost” has an ox’s head, and four human hands and feet; *utukku lemnu* “Evil Spirit” has a lion’s head, and the hands and feet of an *anzū*; *šulak*, from elsewhere known as a demon lurking in lavatories, is a lion rearing on his hind legs; *māmītu* “Oath” has a goat’s head, and human hands and feet; *bedu* “The One Who Opens”, the doorman, has a lion’s head, human hands, and feet of a bird; *mimma lemnu* “Anything Evil” has two heads, one of a lion, and one of a [...]; *muḥra*, his front two feet are those of a bird, his rear one is that of a bull; *two gods*, whose names the visionary does not know, one has the head, hands, and feet of an *anzū*, in his left hand a [...]; the other has the head of a man, a tiara, in his right hand a mace, in his left his [...].

The *Göttertypentext* describes one netherworld inhabitant, also a hybrid: *amma[kurkur]*, a female doorkeeper of Ereškigal, is partly monkey, gazelle, fish, sheep, dog, and human.

The primeval Monsters: brute force in the service of order (Fig. 3)

The languages of Mesopotamia did not have a word for “Monster”; sometimes they were named after their theriomorphic traits (*umāmū* “animals”), and sometimes after their function as executioners of divine will (*gallū* “constables”, *ūmū* “day-demons”). Textually the Monsters are defined as a group by their appearance in rituals against intruding evil, in descriptions of art work in temples or palaces, and especially in the creation myth *Enūma Eliš*, where they constitute the army of primeval “Sea” (Tiamat). Visually the members of the group are marked by hybridity, that is composition out of human and animal elements; only one, *laḥmu* “Hairy (Monster)”, is completely anthropomorphic, but distinguished from the civilized Mesopotamian by his barbarian nudity and unkempt hair, – a kind of social hybridity⁵.

Although primeval “Sea” gave her monstrous “constables” (*gallū*) an awe-inspiring sheen (*puluḥtu* and *melammū*), and thus “made them godlike”, they are never called *ilū* “gods”, rarely supplied with the divine determinative, and rarely admitted into the god-lists. In the art of the earlier periods the Monsters did not wear the horned crown, the mark of

⁵ F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits. The Ritual Texts*, Styx & PP, Groningen 1992; A.R. Green - F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mischwesen*, in «Reallexikon der Assyriologie» 8(1993-1997), pp. 222-264.

divinity, but in first millennium art, where horned crowns proliferate, they often do. Monsters did not normally receive cultic attention, but there are some exceptions. In Middle Assyrian Assur, for instance, a deified Bull-Man (*kusarikku*) was presented with a bronze cross by his servant Šamaš-tukultī, while in Neo-Babylonian Uruk Mad-Dog (*uridimmu*) and Lion-Man (*urmahlullû*), both supplied with the divine determinative, received offerings. But even the Monsters that did receive cultic attention remained minor deities with limited responsibilities. Prior to *Enūma Eliš* evidence on the origin and nature of the Monsters is sporadic; some were unruly and rebellious, some, like *lahmu*, played a role in cosmogony.

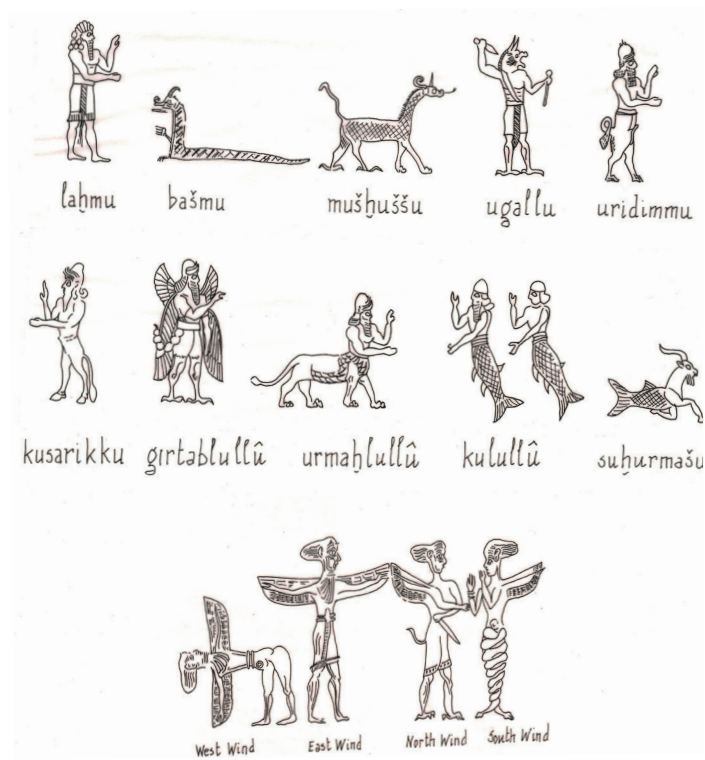


Fig. 3: A selection of Monsters, and the Four Winds.
Drawing: F.A.M. Wiggermann.

In *Enūma Eliš* the distinctive hybridity of the Monsters must be due to their roots in the pre-normal, embryonic cosmos. “Sea” herself is certainly not anthropomorphic, since she has horns, a tail, and udders; her vizier Mummu has a ram’s head, whose bleating may have given him his name: “*muh-muh*”. About the appearance of the other gods of the prime-

val cosmos little is known (see Fig. 1 for Alla), but Berossos⁶ makes the connection between primeval chaos and hybridity explicit:

He (that is Oannes, the first fish-sage) says there was a time when everything was darkness and water and that in this water strange beings with peculiar forms came to life. For men were born with two wings and some with four wings and two faces; these had one body and two heads, and they were both masculine and feminine, and they had two sets of sexual organs, male and female. Other men were also born, some with the legs and horns of goats, and some with the feet of horses and the foreparts of men. These were hippo-centaurs in form. Bulls were also born with human heads and four-bodied dogs with fish tails growing from their hind quarters, and dog-headed horses and men and other beings with the heads and bodies of horses and the tails of fish and still other creatures with the forms of all sorts of beasts. In addition to these there were fish and creeping things and snakes and still further amazing (variously formed) creatures differing in appearance from one another.

Berossos concludes with remarking that “images of these are set up in the temple of Bel (Marduk)”, which aligns with the cuneiform version of the creation myth, where Marduk set up statues of Tiamat’s defeated monster soldiers at the gate of Apsû, “that it be a token, that it may never be forgotten”. Other, non-mythological cuneiform sources confirm that representations of the defeated Monsters were to be seen at Marduk’s temple in Babylon.

In as far as Tiamat’s army is concerned Berossos’s description is very imprecise, as if he never really looked at the images in question, and on one point, their hybrid sexuality, it is mistaken. There were asexual primeval beings, as we will see, but not the Monsters. Monsters may form male-female pairs, albeit unproductive ones, and in art they are usually bearded and ithyphallic, an exception being the female fish-woman, who appears next to her bearded male counterpart (*kulullû*) on late first millennium seals. In this respect the Monsters differ from the *utukku*-demons, which have no recognizable components at all, and were, at least initially, unrepresentable and unrepresented. Another difference between Monsters on the one hand, and demons or ghosts on the other, is that Monsters were never viewed as agents of suffering or disease.

The primeval Monsters of “Sea” behaved like mercenaries, and, defeated by the gods of order, stepped into their service to become guardians against the demons that threatened the state, the king, and the people. In fact images of Monsters in apotropaic functions have been found regularly at the gates, on the walls, and under the floors of first millennium palaces (figurines and reliefs) and private homes (figurines), less regular-

⁶ The translations of Berossos follow S.M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, Udena, Malibu 1980.

ly on amulets to be worn on the body, and in great quantities on cylinder seals of all periods.

Through time the group of Monsters adapted to current mythologies, but its membership remained limited to a handful of items, all identified with well-established iconographic types, and all defined textually and visually as apotropaic helper spirits. The Monsters as members of a coherent group of helper-spirits must be distinguished from the hybrids, a much larger and less permanent group, which excluded the major gods, and included some lesser deities, the Sages, most or all netherworld officials, and, at least in the later periods, the evil demons⁷.

A group of spirits that formally and functionally can be associated with the Monsters is that of the Four Winds⁸; they are supernatural hybrids, and, although wearing the horned crown sometimes, they are not full gods and do not figure in the god-lists; they are unruly, but not agents of disease; and, like the Monsters, they could act as protective spirits in the service of the gods. Of their origin, primeval or otherwise, nothing is known. The exceptional first millennium wind-demon Pazuzu, about whom more below, is at once a demon *and* an apotropaic hybrid.

Generally breezes, winds, and storms embody good, evil, or neutral intentions:

alû “(a demonized atmospheric phenomenon)”; perhaps originally identical with *alû/lû* “Bull (of Heaven)”; – *gulûlu* “(a wind demon)”; – ^(d)*idiptu* “gush of wind”; a demon at the gate of the netherworld; – *imḥullu* “evil wind”; – ^(d)*šāru* “wind, spirit”; said of gods and the dead; “flatus” as cause of disease; *pazūzu* is addressed as *šāru*; – *šēḫu* “wind, breath, emanation”; *ša šēḫi* “one possessed by a spirit”; – ^(d)*ūmu* “Day(-Demon)”; the violent bad news demon “day” can be manifest in stormy weather; – ^(d)*zaqīqu* “phantom, haunting spirit; ghost; (a god of dreams)”, one of the *lil*-spirits (see below); *zaqīqu*.’s are airy, powerless, and harmless, but can cause disease (*qāt zaqīqi*); (in dreams) the *zaqīqu* may transmit messages from gods; the dream god “Breeze” is a “son of *Šamaš*”.

The primeval Sages: pristine magic against disorder (Fig. 4, 7)

In their effort against suffering and disease the primeval Monsters and the Winds are supported by the Seven Sages. From the Late Bronze Age onwards, when their mythology was restructured, there is a wealth

⁷ I will use “Monster” for the (textually and visually defined) hybrid helper spirit, and “hybrid” as a descriptive term for any unnatural composite, defined either textually or visually.

⁸ F.A.M. Wiggermann, *The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu*, in Cl. Wilcke (ed.), *Das geistige Erfassen der Welt im alten Orient*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 125-167.

of material on these beings, both visual and textual, but here Berossos' summary must suffice:

In the first year a beast named Oannes⁹ appeared from the Erythrean Sea in a place adjacent to Babylonia. Its entire body was that of a fish, but a human head had grown beneath the head of the fish and human feet likewise had grown from the fish's tail; it also had a human voice. A picture of it is still preserved today. He (Berossos) says that this beast spent the days with the men but ate no food. It gave to the men the knowledge of letters and sciences and crafts of all types. It also taught them how to found cities, establish temples, introduce laws and measure land. It also revealed to them seeds and the gathering of fruits, and in general it gave men everything which is connected with the civilized life. From the time of that beast nothing further has been discovered (....). Later other beasts also appeared (....). He (Berossos) says that these creatures all together explained in detail the things which had been spoken summarily by Oannes.

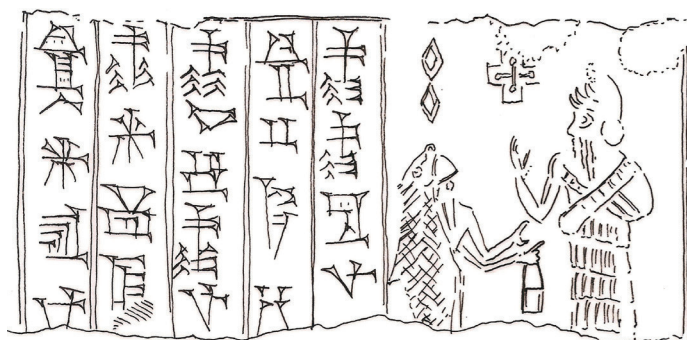


Fig. 4: Kassite amulet seal with a Sage holding a bucket with holy water, and a spell from the series “*Evil will be eradicated*”.

Drawing: F.A.M. Wiggermann, after J. Westenholz - R.S. Bianchi (eds.), *Dragons, Monsters, and Fabulous Beasts*, Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem 2004, no. 12 (photo).

Like the Monsters and the Four Winds the Sages were supernatural hybrids, but no gods, although in the first millennium they regularly wear the horns of divinity. They were fish-men (Figs. 4 and 7), who (accord-

⁹ Berossos ascribed *Enūma Eliš* to this Oannes, who is identical with the primeval Sage Uanna or Uanna-adapa of the cuneiform sources. Since the longer form of the name can be re-read as the first line of *Enūma Eliš* written logographically, the ascription of the cosmogonic poem to the ancestor of scribal art probably predated Berossos by several centuries: “When (u) above (anna) the heavens (an) were not (na) yet named (pada)”. This way the cosmogonic poem becomes an eyewitness report, transmitted by the Sage who wrote it and his successors to the present of the Babylonian and Assyrian scholars.

ing to Berossos) had emerged from “Sea”, or (according to the cuneiform sources) were born in the Stream (*nāru*), but posterior to the creation of man, and thus past the point where disorder became order, unruliness obeisance, and cosmogony actual history and geography¹⁰.

Like the Monsters, the Sages opposed adversity and disease, but unlike the Monsters they did not do so with brute force, but with the pristine cleansing rituals they brought with them from the depths of the primeval stream¹¹. As the ultimate source of knowledge and scholarship they became the patrons of the scholar, and, more specifically, of the exorcist (*āšipu*), who in actual reality was the one that cleansed the victim and exorcized the demons.

Unlike the primeval demons, which were their opponents, and like the monsters, which were their allies, the primeval Sages never acted as agents of suffering or disease.

The primeval pandemonium: cosmic outcasts, total otherness, irredeemable evil

Mesopotamian demonology is less varied than Mesopotamian theology, and at the same time less defined. One of the reasons is that the ancient scholars did not collect, organize, and explain their demonic material in demon-lists¹², like they did their theological material in god-lists. A run through the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*¹³ on the search terms “spirit”, “demon”, “ghost”, and “personified” produced the names of ca. 25 personal and protective spirits, and 119 (evil) spirits (including netherworld officials and *utukku*'s), among which ca. 20 are demonized diseases, ca. 13 types of ghosts, and smaller numbers demonized animals, (storm-)winds, places, time periods, and abstractions; a further group (ca. 18) consists of personified demonic activities or characteristics, like “The fearless one” (*la ādiru*), “The lawless one” (*ḥabbilu*), “The watcher” (*ḥā'ītu*), “The flasher” (*muštabbabbu*), or “The snatcher” (*ekkemu*)¹⁴.

¹⁰ Hence Berossos' “first year” (the start of history) and “Erythrean Sea” (real geography).

¹¹ The cleansing fluid contained in the bucket from which the Fish-Sage sprinkles the victim of a demonic attack is holy water “from the source of the streams”.

¹² The remarkable absence of demon-lists may be more than coincidence, cf. *Utukku lemnūtu* 13, 8: šid-dè an-ki-a la-ba-an-šid-a- meš /ina mināt šamē u eršeti ul immannū “in the census of Heaven and Earth they (the demons) are not counted”.

¹³ A.L. Oppenheim (ed.), *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, The Oriental Institute, Chicago 1956-2010.

¹⁴ Unless stated otherwise the lists below and above are based on this run through the CAD; lemmata and translations are adopted from the CAD with no or only minor alterations; the Sumerian “equivalents” of the Akkadian spirit and demon names (listed below) can be found in the CAD's lexical sections. With the bilingual incantations and lexica, and with the unilingual Akkadian medical, magical, and literary texts, the CAD covers all important sources

A relatively well preserved bilingual magical series of late third millennium origin is our earliest and most systematic source. The series collects exorcisms and cleansing rituals against a number of demonic powers, which are summarized in the title of the work as *utukkū lemnūtu* “evil spirits”, or “demons”¹⁵. The text, though progressively antiquated, remained in use until the end of the cuneiform tradition, keeping its place besides various later unilingual magical and medical compilations reflecting more advanced views on demonology.

The *utukku*-demons stem from the early, embryonic cosmos. Their ancestors are variously named, but most often they are the “spawn” (*riḥūtu*) of Heaven and Earth, who on principle can have formed a productive pair only before their separation by Enlil; elsewhere the demons are related to Enki and Ninki, to other primeval pairs, to the Dukug “Holy Mound”, Enlil’s birthplace, or to the Apsū, at the ends of the earth a primeval locality. Once they are called “children of the *allū*’s”, the primeval “working gods”, whose rebellion led to the creation of mankind. They “have no god”, no living divine parent to whom they were responsible, and who was responsible for them. A demon is not a god, but “although not a god, his voice is loud, and his sheen (*melammū*) is lofty”. The godlike sheen notwithstanding, however, the demon’s “shadow is very dark, there is no light in his body”.

Like the primeval Monsters the demons did not have cults, but unlike the latter, who found employ in the service of the gods, they became cosmic outcasts, unintegrated vagabonds feeding “without mercy” (*la pādū*) on a civilization they could not be part of. The demons, not understanding, “keep wandering around from temple to temple, but since no flour has been scattered for them, nor any divine offering has been made for them, their behavior has become aggressive”. Because they do not keep court in temples like gods, they are unable to “heed prayer or supplication”. In the exorcistic rituals they are advised to satisfy themselves with the food and drink offered to ghosts, and then leave.

As to appearance the *utukku*-demons were beyond monstrosity. The text explains that they were neither male nor female, had no wives or children; that they were incorporeal non-beings, without mouth, limbs, face, hearing, or vision; that they were concealed, could not be seen even by daylight; that their names did not exist in Heaven and Earth, and that they were not counted in the universal census.

of Mesopotamian magic except the unilingual Sumerian incantations (and literary texts), in as far as they did not have bilingual versions. It is useful and possible to make a distinction between “older” magic (basically the bilingual texts with third millennium roots) and “younger” or “later” magic (basically the unilingual Akkadian texts); finer distinctions might be desirable, but at the moment cannot be realized.

¹⁵ M.J. Geller, *Evil Demons. Canonical Utukkū Lemnūtu Incantations*, The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki 2007.

The demons, then, partook in the not-yet being of the not-yet, embryonic cosmos¹⁶, and as incorporeal, featureless, placeless, and in general negatively defined carriers of pure otherness they were not, and could not be represented in any form. Thus it is no coincidence that *utukku*'s did not have cults, since without representation by a statue in a temple there was no way that they could. Another supernatural figure without a proper cult or temple is Ereškigal, the queen of the underworld, not because she was a member of the embryonic not-yet cosmos, however, but because the laws of the universe did not allow the gods of the underworld and the gods of upper-world to leave their respective realms.

Later demonology is less precise in its distinction between primeval *utukku*'s as unrepresentable not-yet beings, and primeval helper spirits (Monsters and Sages) as hybrids. The *Underworld Vision*, for instance, describes a "god/spirit" (*ilu*) "Evil *Utukku*" as a hybrid with a lion's head, and the hands and feet of an *anzû*-bird. Generally later texts describe all demons and netherworld servants as hybrids, and thus as formally indistinct from the exclusive group of Monster helper-spirits. In the Standard Babylonian *Gilgamesh Epic* Death (*mūtu*) is still classified as a non-being of the *utukku* type, "whose image (*šalmu*) cannot be drawn", while a contemporary ritual employes "an image (*šalmu*) of Death", undoubtedly a hybrid of the sort described in the *Underworld Vision*, where Death has the "head of a snake-dragon (*mušhuššu*), human hands, and the feet of a [...]". In a Standard Babylonian legend about the Akkadian king Narām-Sîn the only difference between evil demons (*šēdū*, *namtarū*, *utukkū*, *rābišū lemnūtu*), messengers of Enlil, and nomadic warriors, is that the former do not bleed, while the latter do. The first millennium *gallū*'s, too, must have resembled human beings, since the word is regularly used to characterize evil people.

Contrary to the apotropaic Monsters, demons of whatever description are, with one exception, not found represented in Mesopotamian art at any time. First millennium exorcistic texts occasionally prescribe the manufacture of clay figurines representing the combatted evil (a. o. *lamaštu*, *utukku*, *šēdu*, *rābišu*, *mūtu*), which proves that at the time specific demons were imagined under specific forms. An example is the all-inclusive first millennium demon "Anything Evil" (*mimma lemnū*), representations of which could be male or female, have wings, and hips on which its name could be written; the *Underworld Vision* describes the same demon as having "two heads, one the head of a lion, the other the head of a [...]". That figurines representing demons have not been identified in the archaeological record is explainable from the fact that the figurines in ques-

¹⁶ In Mesopotamian cosmogony the state of the cosmos before creation is often described with "not (yet)" sentences, as for instance in the first line of *Enūma Eliš*: "when above the Heavens were not (yet) named".

tion were made solely to be destroyed in the ensuing exorcism.¹⁷ The same can be said about the figurines of warlocks and witches employed in rituals against witchcraft: made of wax or clay they were annihilated by burning, or by dissolution in water. The one exceptional evil whose image has been preserved is the baby-snatching demoness Lamaštu, but only two-dimensionally on terracotta, stone, or metal amulets, not three-dimensionally in the form of a clay or wax figurine¹⁸.

The *utukku lemnūtu* class includes among other:

alū “(a demonized atmospheric phenomenon)”; perhaps originally identical with *alū/lū* “Bull (of Heaven)”; – *asakku* “(breach of) taboo (and its consequences), disorder, disease; rebellious god/spirit”; a general word for disease-demon (“disorder”), and the name of a specific mythological enemy of Ninurta/Ninĝirsu (“Disorder”), hence also a general term for “rebellious god”; the “evil *asakku*’s” are the subject of a separate series of bilingual exorcisms and cleansing rituals; –^(d)*rābišu* “deputy, attorney; guardian; lurker, genie”; the *rābišu* is a minor functionary, who under orders of the cosmic authorities promotes the cause of justice, and enforces decisions; – *šēdu* “spirit, aspect of the soul; demon”; *šēdu* (translating ^(d)alad or ^(d)udug) is the male counterpart of the *lamassu* protective spirit; protects persons, houses, temples, palaces, cities; – *utukku* “spirit, aspect of the soul; demon (of disease); ghost”. The evil udug (“demon”) of the bilingual texts and the lexical lists is translated into Akkadian as *utukku* or sometimes *šēdu*. Sumerian udug “ghost” is translated *utukku* in Akkadian, but for “ghost” the specific term *gidim/eṭemmu* is preferred. A propitious udug-spirit (translated *šēdu*; ^(d)alad/ *šēdu* occurs in the same function) operates together with a female counterpart (^(d)lamaš/lamassu) as an aspect of the soul, and as a supernatural protector of persons and buildings (udug translated *šēdu* or *rābišu*); when viewed as an instrument of divine rule udug can be translated as “deputy” (*rābišu*). To “afflict with sickness” (*ra’ība šuršū*) must be a defining characteristic of an *utukku*, since Marduk, when he does that, is qualified as such.

Demonized diseases proceeding mechanically

Diseases are winds, flames, or fluids, which drip down from heaven, break through the ground like weeds, or blow into the body, and seize, bind, burn, or consume the victim. They could be demonized, or viewed as operating under divine supervision, but in essence remained misplaced

¹⁷ Figurines of demons and ghosts (*utukku*, *šēdu*, *rābišu*, *eṭemmu*) are burnt in Maqlū 1:136.

¹⁸ A (Lamaštu?) amulet in the shape of a cylinder seal shows theriomorphic figures, probably demons, attacking a man in his bed (D. Collon, *First Impressions*, British Museum Press, London 2005, no. 804). The demons may represent the additional evils against which the Lamaštu amulets were employed; one is specifically reminded of the incantation “that which transgressed the privacy of my bed”, which occurs on several Lamaštu amulets, and perhaps on the first millennium amulet discussed below.

pieces of nature proceeding mechanically, while their treatment was the province of the healer (*asû*), rather that of the exorcist (*āšīpu*):

aḥḥāzu “the seizer (jaundice)”; – ^(d)*bēl-ūri* “lord of the roof (epilepsy)”; – ^(d)*ben-nu* “epilepsy”, deputy of Sîn; – *bibītu* “chills; – ^(d)*bibbu* “wild sheep; (a feline?)”; plague”, the butcher of the netherworld; – *dī’u* “headache (possibly malaria)”; – *e’ēlu* “binder”, messenger of Ištar; – *ḥimṭu/ḥindu* “fever”, represented by a hybrid *lahmu*-spirit in the service of Ea; – *išātu* “fire, fever”; – *kāsistu* “consuming (*išātu* fire)”; – *kibbu* “burning”; – *labašu* “(a disease)”; – *la’bu* “fever (a skin disease)”; – *li’bu* “fever (a skin disease)”; – ^(d)*miqtu* “fall”; – *pāšittu* “the obliterating (one)”, a baby-snatching demoness associated with bile, and similar to, or identical with *lamaštu*; – *pessû* “crippled, deformed”; a (demonized) congenial deformation designated *gig-ti-la* “healthy disease”; possibly the word for the bow-legged dwarf (a good-luck figure, opposite of *šūlu* ?); – *qāt eṭemmi* “hand of a ghost”, a disease, deputy of Ištar/Ea; – *riḥūt šulpae* “offspring of Šulpae (the planet Jupiter)”; – ^(d)*šīdānu* “vertigo”; – *ša ištēt ammatu lānšu* “the one of one cubit, dwarf, pygmee”; – *šūlu* “pockmark, wart”, a (demonized) congenial deformation designated *gig-ti-la* “healthy disease”; equated with *eṭemmu* “ghost”; a bad luck figure; – ^(d)*ummu* “fever”.

Wandering souls craving attention from the living, and causing disease in the process

The ghosts (*eṭemmu*) of people that are properly buried receive offerings (*kispū*; basically water) from their living family members, and do not cause harm; the ghosts of unburied people search for food and drink among of the living, and cause unease or disease trying to get their attention. Rituals against the latter provide male and female clay figurines representing them with the food and drink they crave, and with a (model) ship to travel back to the netherworld and find rest. Figurines representing ghosts have not been found¹⁹, and were probably annihilated in the course of the exorcism. A male or female necromancer (*ša eṭemmi*, *mušēlū*, *šā’iltu*) could raise ghosts from the netherworld and have them pronounce on the fate of the living.

The ghosts of (unmarried) youngsters who died sexually unfulfilled become *lil*-spirits, a type of “phantoms” or “apparitions” that try to satisfy their needs with the living, and in the process cause suffering and disease; the female ones are particularly aggressive.

The group of *lil*-spirits consists of: *ardat lilī/kiskilīlu*, “phantom-bride”; – *eṭel lilī* “phantom-bridegroom”; – *lilītu* “female phantom”; –

¹⁹ Statues of late third millennium kings or en-priestesses could remain in the temple after their death, be supplied with the horns of divinity, receive offerings, and fulfill minor functions in the divine court, for instance as the male *udug / sedu* (or *rābišu*) and female *lamaš / lamassu* protective figures.

lilû “male phantom”; – and probably *naššuqītu* “(phantom-)kisser (demoness)”. The plural “*lil*-spirits” occurs only in Pazuzu’s qualification “king of the evil *lil*-spirits”, and must cover Lamaštu, one of the beings over whom Pazuzu exerts power as king. The remarkable and unexplained grouping of sexually unsatisfied spirits under a king cannot be independent from the king’s equally remarkable and unexplained serpentine penis.

Wild animals and dragon-snakes: representatives of the disobedient (Figs. 5, 6)

The identification of certain iconographic types as supernatural helpers immediately leads to the identification of their iconographic adversaries as supernatural aggressors. The first millennium ritual “To prevent the entry of evil in someone’s house” summarizes its long and varied list of such aggressors with the all-inclusive demon “Anything Evil” (*mimma lemnu*); a comparison with similar ritual texts shows that more specifically the apotropaic Monsters protected a house against *mūtānū* “plague”, or “cases of (untimely) death” imagined as a band of demons going from house to house and killing everything in their way.



Fig. 5: Kassite amulet seal with an image of the protective South Wind mastering bulls (the embodiment of evil), and a spell involving Asalluḫi/Marduk.
Drawing: J.-P. Grégoire, *Inscriptions et Archives Administratives Cunéiformes, Multigraphica* Editrice, Roma 1981, no. 76; transcription: F.A.M. Wiggermann.

Combats involving Monsters (including the Four Winds) and their various bestial opponents are common on cylinder seals of all periods, undoubtedly because the implied victory of the agents of order over the agents of disorder helped the bearer to avoid or endure adversity and disease. From halfway the second millennium onwards the seals could be supplied with prayers or incantations enhancing their amuletic value. A Kassite seal (Fig. 5) shows an image of the South Wind mastering bulls,

with beside it the magical formula “Marduk is the god who keeps me healthy”. Generally the supporting inscription addresses high gods like Marduk, Nabû, Ninurta, or Šamaš, while the image shows Monsters, Winds, Sages, or Heroes in the act of subduing the enemy, supervised no doubt by the visually absent high god of the inscription. Often the incantations stem from the series “*Evil will be eradicated*”, which, among other, is directed against the all-inclusive first millennium demon “Anything Evil”.

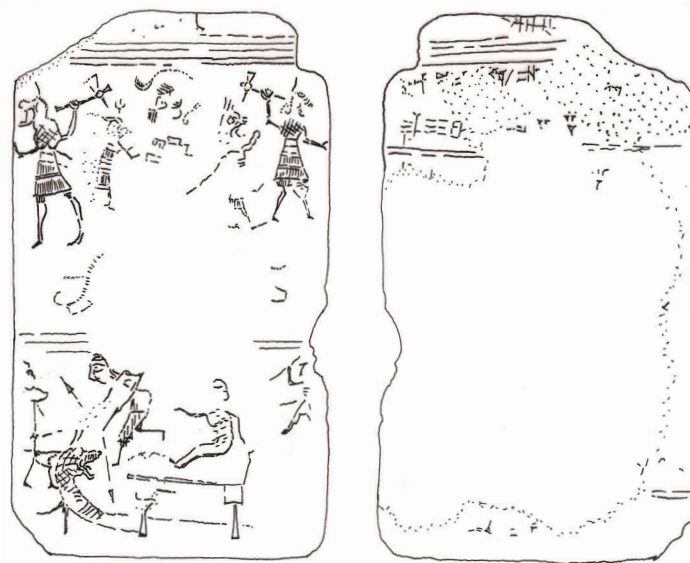


Fig. 6: First millennium amulet against an unnamed evil in the form of a dragon-snake rearing its deadly head from underneath the victim’s bed.
Drawing: F.A.M. Wiggermann, after A. Becker, *Uruk. Kleinfunde 1. Stein*, von Zabern, Mainz, 1993, Pl. 5, no. 7 (photo).

The opponents in the combat scenes on the seals are lions, bulls, be-zoars (all optionally winged in the more recent periods), and later also ostriches, – the wild, or rather disobedient animals that embodied the wild, or rather disobedient supernatural aggressors combatted by the helper spirits and their peers, the “cases of death” of all sorts, or “Anything Evil” for short.

A first millennium amulet (Fig. 6) shows in its upper register two *ugallu* Monsters raising their weapons against invisible supernatural enemies threatening the space between them from outside the field of vision; the lower register shows a human figure seated on a bed and gesturing,

while in front of him a second human figure, presumably the exorcist²⁰, combats an aggressive dragon-snake rearing its head from underneath the bed. The text on the reverse of the amulet is broken, but undoubtedly featured the well-known incantation that in its first line identifies precisely such a threat as «that which transgressed the privacy of my bed, made me shrink for fear, and gave me frightening dreams». The dragon-snake then represents this nameless evil, which shares its deadly dragon-head with the demon Death of the *Underworld Vision*. On contemporary seals the dragon-snake embodies a mythological version of the same evil, combated by Ninurta, the ancient warrior god.

The visualization of generic evil by wild animals, snakes, and dragons is widely attested in the Ancient Near East²¹, but not explicit in the Mesopotamian sources; I substitute a quote from the Old Testament (Psalm 91:13): «You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot», and one from the New Testament (Luke 10:19): «I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you».

Numina loci manifest in animals; demonized dangerous and noxious animals

The *numina loci* of deserted places could be manifest in the animals that one encountered there. The “lurker(-demon)” (*rābiṣu*), for instance, who “hides in corners”, could take the form of a goat, while Šulak, the “lurker(-demon) of the lavatories”, could take the form of a rearing lion. Some other *numina loci*, guardian spirits, and personified places are:

š*a* *ḥarībi* “he of the ruins”; – *ḥuršānu* “ordeal river”; –^d*enḡidudu* “the lord who makes his regular nightly rounds”; guardian of the city; – *en(n)ungallu* “chief warden”; “*en(n)ungallu* of the forests who smashes the skull”; perhaps a name of *ḥuwawa*; – *ḥuwawa* “the growler”; a quasi-demonic evil troglodyte, who, deputized by Enlil, guarded the cedar mountain, the “dwelling of the gods”; –^d*kidudu* “he who makes his regular rounds of the place”; *maššar dūri* “guardian of the wall”; – *kinūnu* “stove (personified)”: *qāt kinūni* “hand of the stove” (a disease); –^d*maššar kussē* “guardian of the throne”; – *maššar šamē u eršet* “watchmen of Heaven and Earth”; a function of the twin gods opening the gates of Heaven; – *nāru* ^did “river (goddess)”; –^d*nidugallu* “doorkeeper”; a cosmic function; guards the gates of temples; –^d*silakku* “he of the alleys”; among enemies of the

²⁰ Another type of exorcist, the *kalū* (with his characteristic mitre, and a *gamlu* magic wand), is shown in the upper register of a Neo-Assyrian seal amulet published in O.W. Mutscharella (ed.), *Ladders to Heaven: Art Treasures from the Lands of the Bible*, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto 1981, no. 86.

²¹ D. Frankfurter, *The Binding of Antelopes: A Coptic Frieze and its Egyptian Religious Context*, in «Journal of Near Eastern Studies» 63(2004), pp. 97-109.

gods qualified as “*asakku*-demon, son of Anu”; – *šadû* “mountain (personified)”; – ^(d)*šarrabu* (dálad-edin) “vagabond (Sumerian: “spirit of the steppe)”, the “lord of all warfare”; – ^(d)*ulāja* “(River) *Ulaya*”, guardian of the city.

Farmers combatted demonized field pest, collectively designated as the “dogs of Ninkilim”; Ninkilim “Lord Rodent” was the “lord of wild animals (a-za-lu-lu / *nammaštu*)”, and as such had power over the field pests. The rituals and incantations are collected in the first millennium series “*To seize (i. e. paralyze) the locust-tooth*”²².

Demonized (wild) dogs, snakes, and scorpions are the subject of a relatively large number of early incantations. Some further demonic animals, large and small, are:

aburrišānu “(an insect; a demon)”; – ^(d)*bibbu* “wild sheep; (a feline?); (a demon of) plague”, “butcher” (*tābiḫu*) of the netherworld; – ^(d)*hallulāja* “centipede”; a demon and a protective spirit; – ^(d)*išqippu* “(big) worm (a disease)”; – *kattillu* “(a predator; a demon)”; – *kilili* “(the one) of haunted places; (deified ominous owl)”; (evil) owl-demoness, the “queen of the windows”; occupies herself with “leaning into windows”, and causing trouble inside; also called *muširtu*; – *labbu* “lion”; a mythological enemy of divine rule; – *muširtu* “she who leans in(to the house/window)”, a name and epithet of *kilili*; – *nimru* “leopard”; – *samānu* “the red one”; a noxious insect and a demonic disease of man, animals, and grain; descended (together with other demonic diseases) from the “teats of heaven”; the detailed description of this field pest in a third millennium incantation is poetical (lion’s mouth, dragon’s tooth, eagle’s claw, crab’s tail).

Personified time periods

Besides the bad (rarely good) news demon *ūmu* “Day”, one of the enforcers of divine rule, various other time periods may be represented by good or evil spirits²³:

barīrītu “she who (comes) at dusk”; – *mašartu* “watch”; the personified three watches of the night (*barīrītu*, *qablītu*, *šāt urri*); – *mušītu* “night (personified)”; the “veiled (*kuttumtu*, *pussumtu*) bride”; – ^(d)*šēru* “morning star, dawn (personified)”; represented by a hybrid going on all fours, the throne-bearer of *Sîn*; – ^(d)*ūmu* “day (personified)”. A “Day(-Spirit)” gets its good or evil character from the day it personifies, and, since what happens in history can be represented as depending on divine decisions, a day-spirit can be represented as an instrument of divine rule; “days” are imagined as roaring leonine monsters, which as de-

²² A.R. George - J. Taniguchi, *The Dogs of Ninkilim, Part Two: Babylonian Rituals to Counter Field Pests*, in «Iraq» 72(2010), pp. 79-148. The relation of Ninkilim to the animals resembles that of Pazuzu to the *lil*-spirits.

²³ F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Some Demons of Time and their Functions in Mesopotamian Iconography*, in B. Groneberg - H. Spieckermann (eds.), *Die Welt der Götterbilder*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 2007, pp. 102-116.

monic powers bring evil, and as frightening apotropaic figures protect against supernatural intruders; the element *ūmu* in the names of the propitious seven sages denotes the well-being, health, and prosperity which marked their time on earth; as executioner of divine will “the day(-demon) is the heart of Anu (Sum. Enlil) that has become angry”; one’s day of death is represented by an “evil day(-demon)” in the service of the netherworld. In art the apotropaic ^(d)*ugallu* “Great Day(-Demon)” is represented by the Lion-Demon, and Adad’s mount the *ukaduhhū* “Roaring Day-demon” by the Lion-Dragon.

Personified abstractions and related

Certain aspects of human-human or human-divine interaction are represented by anthropomorphic deities, hybrids, animals, or objects. Personified abstractions and related are a reminder that not everything in Mesopotamian iconography is to be taken at face value.

“kittu “Truth” (feminine) and *“mīšaru* “Justice” (masculine) are the daughter and vizier of Šamaš respectively, and probably anthropomorphic; *kīnātu* “Truth”, and *tašmū u magāru* “Listing (to prayers) and Granting (them)” may be anthropomorphic as well; *adammū* “Strife” and *ippīru* “Struggle” are described in the *Göttertypentext* as two similar hybrids locked in perpetual battle; *anantu* “Battle”, *šaltu* “Fight”, and *“ferdu* “Persecution” are probably hybrids as well; *niziqtu* “Grief” is described in the *Göttertypentext* as a winged naked woman with theriomorphic traits, winged probably because the emotion moves towards the subject from an outside source; *puluhtu* “Fear” is represented by a winged hybrid (or a bird) for the same reason; ^(d)*pū u lišānu* “Mouth and Tongue (the instruments of intercession)” are cultic objects that transmit prayers, represented perhaps by (symbols of) these body parts, replacing the earlier anthropomorphic figures (*lamassu*’s) with this function.

Lamaštu and Pazuzu: two exceptional cases (Fig. 7)

The two best known Mesopotamian demons, Lamaštu and Pazuzu, are also the two most aberrant ones: contrary to all other evils they have stable and explicit iconographies²⁴. This difference between Pazuzu and Lamaštu on the one hand, and the remainder of the pandemonium on the other, requires an explanation.

Pazuzu, the personified West Wind, is the “king of the evil *lil*-demons”, who as such had power over his unsatisfied subjects including Lamaštu, apparently in some respect – frustrated motherhood? – an un-

²⁴ N.P. Heeßel, *Pazuzu*, Brill and Styx, Leiden 2002, F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Pazuzu*, in «Realexikon der Assyriologie» 10(2004), pp. 372-381; Id., *Lamaštu, Daughter of Anu. A Profile*, in M. Stol, *Birth in Babylonia and in the Bible*, Styx, Groningen 2000, pp. 217-252.

satisfied *lil*-demon, too²⁵. First millennium ritual texts prescribe the manufacture of Pazuzu heads, not to be destroyed during an exorcism like the representations of other demons, but to be worn on the body, or hung in the house. Representations of Pazuzu, just the heads or complete bodies, could be made of terracotta, stone or metal, and thus emphatically were not meant to be destroyed, but on the contrary, to remain in use for an extended period of time. Pazuzu then, though a king of the demons, functioned not like a demon to be exorcized, but like an apotropaic Monster guarding a house or a person against aggressive *lil*-demons.

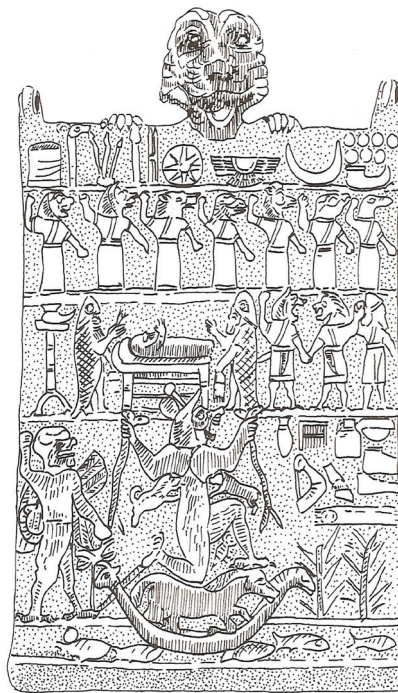


Fig. 7: First millennium amulet with apotropaic Monsters, Sages, Lamaštu, and Pazuzu.

Representation of a permanent Lamaštu exorcism, with images of the demoness herself, of the gifts she receives, and of a donkey, a ship, and provisions for her journey back to the netherworld. In the upper register the symbols of the gods are visible, which passively supervise the proceedings from distant Heaven; to the left of the demoness (and on top of the amulet) Pazuzu appears, who's threatening gesture ensures her obedience. The bedroom of the victim in the middle of the amulet is protected by two primeval *ugallu* Monsters and Lulal (a minor apotropaic god), while two primeval Sages, the patrons of the human exorcist, are performing a cleansing ritual on the victim in his bed.

Drawing F.A.M. Wiggermann, cf. Wiggermann, *Lamaštu, Daughter of Anu. A Profile*, cit., Fig. 6 (photo).

²⁵ Pazuzu's relation to his evil subjects is comparable to that of Ninkilim "Lord Rodent", the "lord of wild animals", to his evil subjects, the "dogs of Ninkilim", or field pests.

Since the protection afforded by king Pazuzu was not punctual but durative, the threat posed by Lamaštu, his most dangerous subject, must have been durative too, and indeed it was. Lamaštu attacks unborn babies during pregnancy, and young children up to a certain age, and thus can be active against the same human victim for an extended period of time. The temporal extension of Lamaštu's evil activities at once supplies a ground for the existence of her iconography. The Lamaštu *figurines* or *drawings*, manufactured during the exorcism, concerned an *acute* threat of the demoness, and were meant to be destroyed; the representations of Lamaštu on terracotta, stone or metal *amulets*, on the other hand, which are the source of her iconography, concerned the *chronic* threat of repeated future attacks, and were meant to be permanently displayed. In other words, the reason why Lamaštu and Pazuzu have iconographies is the temporal extension of the former's threat, and consequently of the need for the latter's protection.

Lamaštu and Pazuzu are exceptional in other respects, too. The originally divine baby-snatching demoness Lamaštu, daughter of Anu, is an outcast and a hybrid not by virtue of her origin in the pre-normal early cosmos, like the Monsters and the (later) *utukku*'s, but by virtue of her evil and rebellious plan to have mankind for dinner, on account of which she was demoted to the rank of demon (*utukkat* "she is an *utukku*"), provided with a "dog's head" by Enlil, and thrown out of Heaven. Thus the mythology of Lamaštu makes two points of later²⁶ Mesopotamian demonology explicit: that hybridity, congenial or acquired, visually distinguishes (netherworld) demons (or Monsters) from (heavenly) gods; and that gods do not hatch destructive plans against mankind, while demons do.

The first millennium wind-demon (*šāru*) Pazuzu fulfills a function in Mesopotamian magic, which did not exist before his introduction into the pandemonium from a foreign, presumably Aramean, source. In traditional Mesopotamian magic the incantations against the demons originated with the gods of white magic, the protagonists of cosmic order, while in the Pazuzu rituals they originate with Pazuzu himself²⁷, the king of the evil *lil*-demons, who is bound by honor to keep his minions in check. With this new arrangement Mesopotamian magic relegated the al-

²⁶ Lamaštu is much older than Pazuzu, but the absence of a corpus of bilingual incantations shows that the Akkadian exorcisms did not have a continuous history from the third millennium onwards. The original Sumerian *dim(-me)* is a member of a group of seven similar demons, and much less individualized than her Akkadian counterpart. Possibly the extant Sumerian material originates from the early second millennium, and was influenced by the Akkadian concept of the baby-snatching demoness.

²⁷ In his address to the demon in the incantation *atta dannu* "you, strong one" Pazuzu uses phrases that in traditional magic were spoken by the exorcist as emissary or embodiment of the gods of white magic.

ready distant heavenly gods to a passive role in the background, putting its trust in a dubious but more earthly and more accessible demonic ally. The Lamaštu amulets reflect this innovation better than the contemporary but more traditional Lamaštu ritual texts, where the neophyte Pazuzu is still ignored (Fig. 7).

The Sumerian names of a number of linguistically unrelated Akkadian demons or spirits reveal the earlier existence of a class of male and female demonic *dime* “figures”, in a late third millennium Sumerian incantation summarized as the “seven *dime*-demons”: ^(d)**dīm(-me)** / *lamaštu* “*dime*-demoness”; – ^(d)**dīm(-me)-a** / *labāšu* “*dime*-demon of the waters”, a demon of disease; – **dīm(-me)-a-ra-li** / *gašir Šamaš* “*dime*-demon of the netherworld” / “Strong one of Šamaš”, dubious; – ^(d)**dīm(-me)-kù** / *ḥallulāja* “pure *dime*-demon” / “centipede”, a demon and a protective spirit; – ^(d)**dīm(-me)-ġi** / *lilītu* “*dime*-demoness of the night”, a type of sexually unsatisfied ghost active at night; – ^(d)**dīm(-me)-nīġin** / *aḥḥāzu* “encircling? *dime*-demon” / “seizer”, a demon of disease; – ^(d)**dīm(-me)-tab** / *bibītu* “*dime*-demon causing fever”, a demonized disease; – **DĪM.NUN.ME**, an Anatolian mother goddess with demonic traits; – ^(d)**dime(-me):pi-kù** “*dime*-demon of pure understanding?”, a third millennium netherworld god.

One of the properties of simple, unqualified ^(d)dīm(-me) / *lamaštu* should be valid for the whole group of ^(d)dīm(-me) “figures?”, each distinguished from simple ^(d)dīm(-me) by its individual qualification. Due to a lack of evidence on the individual figures it remains unclear, however, what property (besides horror) is shared by all members of the *dime*-group, or what property distinguishes the *dime*-group from other groups of demons such as that of the *lil*-spirits, with which the *dime*-group has members in common (*lamaštu*, *lilītu*).

Provisional list of Sumerian “equivalents” of Akkadian spirit and demon names

a-lá see *alū*; – **a-rá** (phonetic variant of *alad*) see ^(d)*rābišu*, *šēdu*, *utukku*; – **á-sàġ** see *asakku*; – ^(d)**ab-ba-šú-šú** “she who leans into windows” see *kilili*; – ^(d)**alad** see *šēdu*; – ^(d)**álad** see *šēdu*; – ^(d)**álad-edin** see ^(d)*šarrabu*; – ^(d)**alla^a-a-meš** “(primeval) worker gods” see ^(d)*allū*; – **ama-è-a** “absentee mother” see *lilītu*; – **ama-lul(-la)** “mother of a human being” see *muttiltu*, *amālu*; – **ama-lul(-la)** “false mother” see *muttiltu*; – **ama-uru** “mother of a human being” see *amālu*; – **amalu** “mother of a human being” see *ištaru/išartu*, *amālu*; – **an-ta-šub-ba** “fallen down from up high” see ^(d)*miqtu*; – **aš-ru** see *aḥḥāzu*; – **áš-ḥul** “evil curse” see *arrat lemutti*; – **ba-an-za** “cripple, deformed” see *pessū*; – **bar-ġiš-ra** “he who hits the body” see *e’ēlu*; – **di-bi** see *dūtu*; – **diḥ** see *la’bu*, *li’bu*; – ^(d)

dim(-me) “(supernatural) figure” see *lamaštu*; – ***dim(-me)-a-ra-li** “(supernatural) figure of the netherworld” see *gašir Šamaš*; – **dim-kù** “pure (supernatural) figure” see *hallulāja*; – **dim(-me)-a** “(supernatural) figure of the waters” see *labašu*; – **dim(-me)-ĝi** “(supernatural) figure of the night” see *lilītu*; – **dim(-me)-niĝin** “encircling (supernatural) figure” see *aḥḥāzu*; – **dim(-me):nun** see *dime*-demons; – **dim(-me):pi:kù** see *dime*-demons; – **dim-tab** “(supernatural) figure causing fever” see *bibītu/bibihtu*; – **diĝir** “(personal) god, spirit” see *iltu, ilu*; – **diĝir-gub-ba** “standing gods” see *dingirgubbū*; – **diĝir-ku₄-ra** “entering gods” see *dingirkurū*; – **diĝir-tuš-a** “seated gods” see *dingirtušū*; – **diĝir-ug₇-ga** “dead gods” see *dingiruggū*; – ^(d)**dù-dù** see *aḥḥāzu*; – **dugud-da** “the ponderous one” see ^(d)*miqtu*; – **é-lá-a** “who hangs over houses” see *muširtu*; – **èḥ** “crippled, deformed” see *pessū*; – **en-ĝi₆-du-du** “the lord who makes his regular nightly rounds” see ^(d)*enĝidudu*; – **érin-ḥuš** “battle” see *anantu*; – **ĝal₅-lá** “constable” see *gallū*; – **gidim** “ghost” see *eṭemmu, šēdu*; – **giĝ-ti-la** “healthy disease” see *pessū, šūlu*; – **gud** (variant of *gidim*) see *eṭemmu*; – **gud-an-na** “bull of heaven” see *alū*; – **ĝuruš-líl-lá** “phantom-bridegroom” see *eṭel lilī*; – **ḥul-dub/dúb** “evilly hitting” see *ḥultuppu, ^(d)rābišu*; – **hur-saĝ** “foothills” see *šadū*; – **id** “river” see *nāru*; – **igi-niĝin-na** “whirling eye” see ^(d)*šidānu*; – **im** “spirit” see *šāru*; – **im-ḥul** “evil wind” see *imḥullu*; – **inim-kúr-du₁₁-du₁₁** “she who speaks hostile words” see *barīrtu*; – **inanna-ĝalĝa-sud** “counsellor goddess” see *mal(i)katu*; – **izi** “fire” see ^(d)*ummu*; – **izi-šub-ba** “fire fallen down (from up high)” see ^(d)*miqtu*; – **ka-duḥ-ḥa** “one opening its mouth” see *nā’iru*; – **ka-im-ma** “mouth of a spirit” see *pāšittu*; – **ka-muš-i-kú-e** “being consumed by worms” see *pāšittu*; – **ka-ta-è** “one fallen from the mouth” see *kattillu*; – **KAL** see *baštu*; – **kar-mud-da** see ^(d)*idiptu*; – **ki-du-du** “he who makes his regular rounds of the place” see ^(d)*kidudu*; – **ki-sikil-líl-lá(-en-na)** “phantom-bride” see *ardat lilī, kiskilīlu, lilītu*; – **ki-sikil-ud-da-kar-ra** “girl abducted by a day-demon” see *ardat lilī*; – **ki-ti-la** see *lamassu*; – **kiĝ-gal-ud-da** “director of day-demons” see *muttilu*; – **kum** “feverish” see ^(d)*ummu*; – **lamaš** see *lamassu*; – **li-bi-ir** “herald” see *gallū*; – **lil** “moron” see *lillu*; – **líl(-lá)** “phantom” see *lilū, zaqīqu*; – **líl-lá-en-na** see *lilū*; – **líl-ud-tar-en-na** see *ardat lilī*; – **líl-líl-ús-sa** “she who follows the *lil*-demons” see *pāšittu*; – ^(d)**lil_x** (DUG.QA.BUR) “potter” see ^(d)*lillu*; – **lú-ḥuš-a** “angry man” see ^(d)*luḥušū*; – **lú-líl-lá** “male phantom” see *lilū*; – **lugal-amaš-pa-è-a** see ^(d)*bennu*; – **lugal-ĝir-ra MAR.KI** see ^(d)*šarrabu*; – **lugal-me** see ^(d)*bennu*; – **(lugal)-nam-en-na** see ^(d)*bennu*; – ^(d)**lugal-ūr-ra** “lord of the roof” see ^(d)*bēl-ūri*; – **mar-gal** “big worm” see *išqippu*; – **maškim** “deputy, attorney” see ^(d)*rābišu, utukku*; – ^(d)**maškim-ĝi₆-lú-ḥar-ra-an-na** “night watchman of the traveller” see *hallulāja, muštabbabbu*; – **me** “hidden (power)” see *dūtu*; – **munus-líl-lá** “female phantom” see *lilītu*; – **nam-érim** “oath, curse” see *māmītu*; – ^(d)**nam-tar**

“fate, decision” see *namtaru*, *šīmtu*; – **nam-ug** “death” see *mūtu*; – **nar-[mud]-a** see ^(d)*idiptu*; – **niġ-gi-na** “truth” see ^(d)*kittu*; – **niġ-si-sá** “justice” see ^(d)*mīšaru*; – **niġ-zi(-da)** “truth” see ^(d)*kittu*; – **niġin** “premature/stillborn child” see ^(d)*kūbu/kummu*; – **nin-ninna** “(goddess of the) owl” see *kilili*; – **nin-piriġ-TUR-da** see ^(d)*bibbu*; – **nin-tu/tùr** see *šassūru*; – **nir-mu-da** see ^(d)*idiptu*; – **num-nim** “spring fly” see *samānu*; – **nun-ùr-dù-dù** (late variant of *inim-kúr-du₁₁-du₁₁*) see *barīrītu*; – **piriġ/piriġ** “lion, leonine (day-demon, wind)” see *lābu*, ^(d)*ūmu*; – **piriġ-ka-tab-ba** “lion with fiery mouth” see *kattillu*; – **piriġ-tur(-ra)** “little lion” see ^(d)*bibbu*, *nimru*; – **piriġ-dib-bi-ħuš** “lion whose passing-by is horror” see *muštabbabbu*; – **sa-ad-niġin** (variant of *saġ-niġin*) see ^(d)*šīdānu*; – **sa-ad-num** (variant of *saġ-num*) see *samānu*; – **sa-al-ħab** “(a type of net)” see *alluħappu*; – **sa-ma-ná** “the red one” see *samānu*; – **saġ-ba** “oath” see *māmītu*; – **saġ-diġir** see *ħuršānu*; – **saġ-gig** “head ache” see *di’u*; – **saġ-ħul-ħa-za** “attendant of evil” see *mukil rēš lemutti*, *sagħulħazū*; – **saġ-kal** “the foremost one” see *kattillu*; – **saġ-niġin** “whirling head” see ^(d)*šīdānu*; – **saġ-num** (variant of *sa-ma-ná*) see *samānu*; – **saġ-tuku** “supporter” see ^(d)*rābišu*; – **si-si-ig** “breeze” see *zaqīqu*; – **siġ-siġ-ga** “breeze” see *zaqīqu*; – **sumug** “pockmark” see *šūlu*; – **ša-tùr** “mother goddess, womb” see *šassūru*; – **šar-ra-ab-du/dù** “bailiff” see *šarrabt/īu*; – **še-en-tu** see *šassūru*; – **šed₇-dè** “cold” see *li’bu*; – **šir-en-na** see *lilū*; – **šul-pa-è-ta-ri-a** “spawn of Šulpaē” see *riħūt^dšulpaē*; – **tés** “pu-dendum” see *baštu*; – **ù-mu-un-ħuš/ħul** “evil lord” see *šūlu*; – **ud** “day(-demon)” see ^(d)*ūmu*; – **ud-ug** “leonine day(-demon)” see ^(d)*ūmu*; – **ud-zal** “morning” see ^(d)*šēru*; – **udu-idim** “wild sheep” see ^(d)*bibbu*; – **udug** “spirit, demon” see ^(d)*rābišu*, *šēdu*, *utukku*; – **ug** “leonine (day-demon)” see ^(d)*ūmu*; – **ug-ka-duḥ-a** “leonine (day-demon) opening its mouth” see *nā’iru*; – **ug₅(-ga)** “death” see *mūtu*; – **ul** see *alū*; – **ur-me(-me)** “dog of Meme” see *samānu*; – **ùlu^{lu}** see *alū*; – **úš** “death” see *mūtu*; – **x-šub-ba** see *aburrišānu*; – **za-gàr** see ^d*zaggar*, *zaqīqu*; – **zag-gar** see ^d*zaggar*, *zaqīqu*.

ABSTRACT

Il pantheon dell’antica Mesopotamia è ben noto, il pandemonium molto meno. Un rapido spoglio delle voci del Chicago Assyrian Dictionary fornisce i nomi di circa 119 demoni, che si distinguono l’uno dall’altro in diversi modi: alcuni erano malefici per natura, altri agivano in tal senso solo per le funzioni loro attribuite nel cosmo ordinato dagli dèi; alcuni erano invisibili, altri orribilmente composti da parti umane e animali; alcuni avevano un’iconografia, altri no. Ai demoni malefici corrispondevano due gruppi di spiriti ibridi ausiliari, i Saggi e i Mostri, che giocavano un importante ruolo nella magia apotropaica del primo millennio.

The pantheon of Ancient Mesopotamia is well known, its pandemonium much less. A run through the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary revealed the names of some 119 demons, who differed among themselves in various ways: some were evil by nature, others feared only because of the functions they fulfilled in the divinely ordered cosmos; some were invisible, others dreadful composites of human and animal parts; some had iconographies, others had not. The evil demons were matched by two groups of hybrid helper spirits, the Sages and the Monsters, who played an important role in first millennium apotropaic magic.