

WALTER FARBER:

Lamaštu: An Edition of the Canonical Series of Lamaštu Incantations and Rituals and Related Texts from the Second and First Millennia B.C. (Mesopotamian Civilizations 17.) xiv, 381 pp., 91 plates. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014. \$99.50. ISBN 978 1 57506258 7.
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This book has been in the making for more than 44 years (p. xi). The result is a high-quality critical text edition of the canonical Lamaštu Series and related texts, and includes a valuable and extensive glossary. The aim of all these texts, on tablets or amulets, was to protect humans in their homes from the Lamaštu demon, and these texts are essential to our understanding of domestic magico-medical practices.

In the introduction the author briefly explains who *Lamaštu* is (pp. 1–6), and for further elaboration (pp. 1, 44) refers us to Wiggermann, *Lamaštu, Daughter of Anu. A Profile* (Cuneiform Monographs 14, 2000, 217–49). Farber explores in depth the development of the different text variants (pp. 7–38), listing also Sumerian *Lamaštu* incantations not included in his edition (pp. 7–8). Additionally, he carefully reviews the previous studies of the Lamaštu Series (pp. 39–44).

The text edition is a masterful philological work with reliable transliterations, transcriptions, translations and extensive commentaries. Well-structured lists of manuscripts and publications (pp. 45–66) precede the score edition of the tripartite canonical series (pp. 68–144) with transcriptions and translations (pp. 144–95). Farber illustrates his philological perfectionism with a detailed commentary (pp. 196–258). The same approach is adopted for related texts that are not part of the canonical series (pp. 259–342). Importantly, a glossary of all the words closes the edition (pp. 343–63).

The Lamaštu amulets were hung up in the domestic area – usually the bedroom (III: 15). Farber lists new house-amulets (p. 30). In plate 90 the numbers of amulets 90 and 91 must be exchanged in order to match the images and museum numbers. Numbers 86–7 were first assigned to amulets in Wiggermann, *Some Demons of Time and their Functions in Mesopotamian Iconography (Die Welt der Götterbilder, 2007, 107⁵)* – not noted in the bibliography. Thus, number 86 would presumably correspond to the “one from the collection Moussaieff”, and no. 87 to the MS 2779 (p. 30). Fortunately, this does not alter Farber’s order of nos 88–96. However, there are dozens of further amulets, additional examples in the British Museum are: 80-7-19-319, BM 026169, BM 099373, BM 104891, BM 120388, BM 127371 and BM 139511.

There are also amulets consisting mostly or entirely of text. “OA₁” is the oldest amulet-shaped clay tablet known today with a version of “incantation three” and no images (pp. 8–9). Farber states that the amulet-shaped clay tablet “Emar” “does not show any pictorial scenes” (p. 14), which is misleading since the artefact actually shows seven stripes of seal impressions. The “Emar” manuscript reflects local tradition but its apotropaic context is obvious. Interestingly enough, the artefact has lines presumably comparable to the “magical diagram” of the amulet-shaped tablets (see literature in Panayotov, *A Ritual for a Flourishing Bordello* (Bibliotheca Orientalis 70, 2013, 288²²)). The stone fragment “Aa” (presumably an amulet) is a combination of both Hulbazizi and Lamaštu incantations, structurally corresponding to the amulet “Ad”. “Aa” contains “incantation one”, preserved also on Lamaštu amulets showing images (pp. 68–72). Farber does not consider “Emar” nor “OA₁” amulets (pp. 30, 48) but considers “Aa” an amulet (pp. 32, 48). This is confusing, since

the artefacts have the same format. The difference in materials (clay vs. stone, p. 14) does not always explain different functions but it does explain different prices. Similarly, a Hulbazizi clay text-amulet, KAR 76 contains no images. But one of its incantations, *ša malti eršiya*, is well known from the Lamaštu amulets (Wiggermann 2007 cited above, and Ebeling, *Sammlungen von Beschwörungsformeln* (Archiv Orientalní 21, 1953: Gattung IV)). I suggest, therefore, that all these stone and clay artefacts with pierced projections should be considered house-amulets functionally analogous to the Lamaštu amulets with images. This is, furthermore, supported by another stone amulet housed in the California Museum of Ancient Art (<http://www.cmaa-museum.org/meso111.html#a%20href>). That singular text-amulet with no images contains a version of “incantation ten” in archaic script and text orientation when hung up. The text and its appearance date the amulet to the Middle Babylonian and/or Assyrian period, comparable to Wiggermann’s Group A (p. 31).

All lines are ruled off: obv. ¹én r̄é̄-[nu-ru] ²dD[IM-me] ³dumu a[n-na] ⁴mu p[ad-da] ⁵dingir-n[e-ke₄] ⁶d_i[n-nin] ^{Rev.} ¹íb-G[U¹⁷-ul] ²lú¹-RA¹(ŠĒ²) [x²] ³nam-ba-[te-gá] ⁴zi a[n-na] ⁵h[é-pà] ⁶zi ki [hé²-pà²] obv. ¹Incan[tation]: ² Oh, La[maštu], ³daughter of the he[aven (Anu)], ⁴kn[own by] name ⁵among the god[s] (as) ⁶In[nin], ^{rev.} ¹the one ma [de big], ³may you not [approach ²the] man! ⁴Ma[y you be bound] ⁵by the oath of he[aven], ⁶[may you be bound] by the oath of earth!

This stone amulet suggests that the images could be omitted but the function remained the same, since versions of “incantation ten” are often found on Lamaštu amulets (pp. 114–6, additional published amulets being versions of incantation ten are nos 9, 24, 44, 55, 86, 94 and 95). Then, “OA₁”, “Emar”, “Aa”, KAR 76 and the Californian amulet functioned as the Lamaštu amulets with images. Conversely, there are also amulets where the text could be omitted, and the images protected alone, no. 1, 29, 46, 79, 93. In both cases it is important that the amulets were displayed in the domestic context to ward off Lamaštu.

Walter Farber’s edition of the canonical Lamaštu series is an important philological milestone for the study of the most fascinating demons from Mesopotamia. The book will remain the standard edition of the Lamaštu Series for generations to come. The glossary is particularly welcome as it provides the opportunity to study the world of Lamaštu in depth, and likewise enables thematically based research into the realities within the Series itself. All who are interested in ancient magic and medicine should be grateful to the author.

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