

Tyche and the Angels Who Sit: Three Amulets in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic

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Abstract

This paper publishes three Jewish Palestinian Aramaic amulets dating from the fifth to seventh centuries CE. Though originating from different contexts, they share a distinctive angelological formula invoking angels who “sit” in various cosmic locations to restrain demons emerging from the heavens, earth, waters, and the abyss. One amulet also appeals to Tyche, the Greek goddess of fortune, alongside the Jewish God and His angels, reflecting the interaction between Jewish and Greco-Roman religious traditions. Through philological and comparative analysis, the study explores the “angels who sit” formula, situating it within the broader cultural context. The discussion traces the development and adaptation of this formula across time and language, from its late antique manifestations to its echoes in medieval Ashkenazi sources.

In late antiquity, professional Jewish scribes wrote numerous textual amulets, which were intended to be worn on their clients’ bodies to protect them from various dangers.¹ Some of these amulets were

¹ The research for the present study was funded by the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development. We are grateful to L. Alexander Wolfe for the permission to publish his amulets, to Matthew Morgenstern for photographing the amulets, and to Ilia Reznitsky for producing reflectance transformation images of the amulets. We are also grateful to Yuval Harari, Ohad Abudraham, and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. In what follows, we use the following abbreviations: ABS = Shaul Shaked, James Nathan Ford, and Siam Bhayro, *Aramaic Bowl Spells: Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2013–2022); AMB = Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985); CAMIB = J.B. Segal, *Catalogue of the Aramaic and Mandaic Incantation Bowls in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 2000); DJPA3 = Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 3rd rev. ed. (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2017); DSA = Abraham Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2000); GMA = Roy Kotansky, *Greek*

written on perishable organic materials, such as papyrus and parchment, and thus most of them perished long ago. However, others were inscribed on thin sheets of silver, copper, bronze, gold, or lead and thus had a much greater chance of survival. More than 110 such amulets are currently known, and more than seventy of these have already been published.² They were written mostly in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and Hebrew, and a handful of amulets also include sections in Greek. And as the texts written on them often are quite long, they have much to tell us about the late-antique Jewish world, including the languages spoken by Jews, the personal names of the clients and their mothers, the fears and ailments from which they suffered, and the supernatural forces in which they believed and whose assistance they sought.

In the present paper, we wish to publish one well-preserved amulet and two that are only partly preserved.³ They were made for different clients who probably lived in different times and places, likely between the fifth and seventh centuries CE. We are publishing them together because they share an intriguing angelological formula that must have been quite well known among Jews in late antiquity and seems to have survived even into the Middle Ages. Moreover, the best-preserved of these amulets also contains an appeal to Tyche, the Greek goddess of fortune, in addition to the more common appeals to

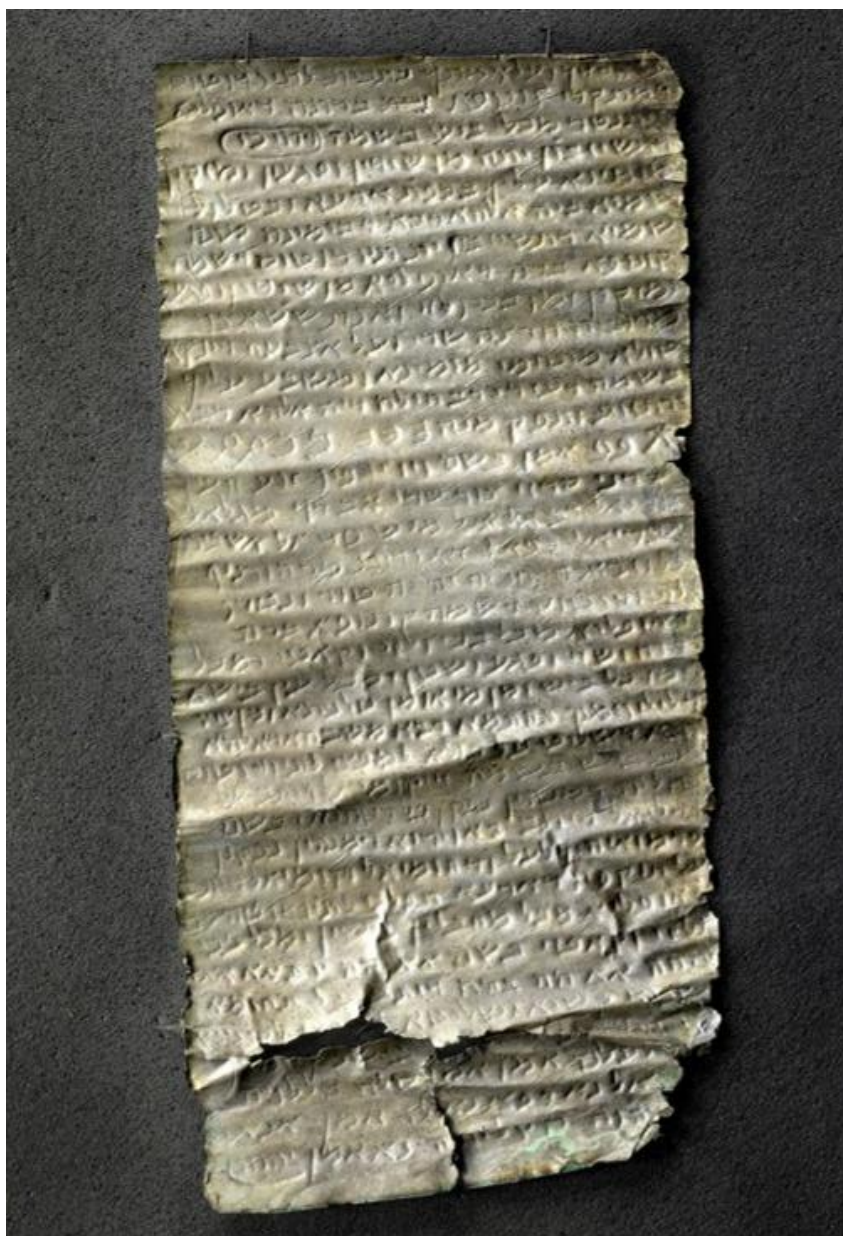
Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae. Part I: Published Texts of Known Provenance (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994); HAITCG = Lawrence H. Schiffman and Michael D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); MSF = Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993); MTKG = Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994–1999); PGM = Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1931; rev. Albert Heinrichs [Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–1974]).

² For a detailed survey of the entire corpus, see Rivka Elitzur-Leiman, “Jewish Metal Amulets from Late Antiquity” [Hebrew] (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 2022). For earlier surveys, see Hanan Eshel and Rivka Leiman, “Jewish Amulets Written on Metal Scrolls,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 1 (2010): 189–99; Yuval Harari, *Jewish Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah*, trans. Batya Stein (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 216–30; Gideon Bohak, “Jewish Amulets, Magic Bowls, and Manuals in Aramaic and Hebrew,” in *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 388–415.

³ An earlier version of this edition, based on a first draft of the present paper, was published in Elitzur-Leiman, “Jewish Metal Amulets,” 77–97.

the Jewish God and His many angels. Such phenomena have much to tell us about the beliefs of ordinary Jews in late antiquity, beliefs that were not always shared—and were sometimes actively opposed—by the rabbinic elite.

Amulet A





The first amulet we wish to present here is inscribed on a rectangular silver lamella (9.9 cm x 4.6 cm). Its provenience is unknown, as it was bought by Shlomo Moussaieff in the early 2000s. After his death, it was sold at auction, and it is now part of the Wolfe Family Collection in Jerusalem. It is well preserved and the small piece that is missing on the bottom right side was probably already lacking when the amulet was inscribed, entailing no loss of text. The verso, which is blank, is partly covered with patina on the bottom part. Thus, it seems likely that the amulet was rolled from top to bottom (and presumably placed

in a tubular container, to be hung on its owner's neck), so that the bottom part remained more exposed and suffered greater damage.⁴ That the amulet was rolled rather than folded is clear from the wavy surface of the unrolled lamella.

The text is neatly written by an experienced scribe. The average height of the letters is ca. 2 mm, and the overall textual density is ca. 20 letters per square centimeter.⁵ Moreover, as the lamella is very thin, most of the writing is visible—in mirror image—on the verso, thus aiding the deciphering of the text. But for a few doubtful readings and some missing letters, the text is entirely legible. It runs as follows:⁶

For your lovingkindness and for your truth. ⁷ I have written for Theodotus	על חסדך ועל אמתך כתבית לתודוטוס	1
who is called Konopa, the son of Ophelia,	דמתקרי קונופא ברתה ⁸ דאופליא	2
so that he will be guarded from all evil. In the name of <u>Tyche</u> ,	דיתנטר מכל ביש בשמה דתיכי	3
that you will save him from demons and harmers and tormentors.	דתשיזבין יתה מן שידין ופגעין ומזקין	4
I adjure you, by the vault of the earth and by the canopy	מומינא עליך בכפת ארעא ובטלול	5
of heaven, by YH the Great God, who stretched the heavens	שמיא ביה אלהא רבא דבימינה מתח	6
with His right hand, that you will save Theodotus whose name is	שמיא דתשיזבין ית תודוטוס דשמה	7
Konopa, son of Ophelia, from demons and harmers	קונופא ברה דאופליא מן שידין ופגעין	8

⁴ The use of containers for Aramaic amulets is discussed in Elitzur-Leiman, “Jewish Metal Amulets,” 158–60; see also Appendix A.

⁵ For the importance of textual density for assessing scribal competence, see Gideon Bohak, “Scribal Overkill: Textual Density on Ancient Jewish Amulets,” in *Amulets of Protection and Texts for Fears in Antiquity*, ed. Angelika Berlejung and Gideon Bohak (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2024), 219–37.

⁶ In the following transcriptions, we have used dots above letters to mark uncertain letters; dots to mark unidentified letters; square brackets for missing parts of the inscription and curved brackets for letters that were misplaced.

⁷ Ps 138:2 (and cf. Ps 115:2).

⁸ Lege: ברה, as in ll. 8, 19, 29, and 34.

and tormentors, and from weeping and affliction. And you, Sheshazar	ומזקין ומן בכי ולזי ואנת ששאצר	9
Merubia, ⁹ loosen (your) loins, ¹⁰ and on the bed-covering ¹¹ of the child	מרוביה חרצה שרי ועל אצבעה דינקא	10
a shadow is (not?) seen—I conjure and adjure you	טולא ¹² מתחמי מומינא ומשבע עליך	11
by the name of Ezrir, by the power of YH the Great God,	בשמה דעזריר בחילה דיה אלהא רבא	12
that you (m. sg.) will move and come out of him (magic signs)	דתזוע ותפק מנה III ככ X	13
(magic signs). Amen. In the name of the splendor of His beauty, ZW' ZW'YN ¹³	X פפ אמן בשם זיו יופיו זוע זועין	14
SRNY SRZY the Rock, Shaddai, 'BRK ¹⁴ MGL'L	סרני סרזי צור שדי אברך מגלאל	15
PRY'L RB'L 'L MYŠ PD'L 'ŠBYRWN	פריאל רבאל אל מיש פדאל אשבירון	16
Gabriel, Raphael, 'GYRWT MRHWTYP	גבריאל רפאל אגירות מרהותיף	17
LLWZB', HY HY ¹⁶ YH YH YH, thoroughly guard (pl.)	ללוזבא חי חי יה יה טור ונטר ¹⁵	18
Theodotus whose name is Konopa, the son	לתודוטוס דשמה קונופא ברה	19
of Ophelia, from every weeping and affliction and quarrel (?), and from every	דאופליא מכל בכי ולזי וקאטי ומכל	20
spirit and demon and harmer and satan, and from every evil eye,	רוח ושד ופגע ושטן ומכל עין בישא	21
and from every evil, and from water(?), and from the shadow-spirit, and from fright	ומן כל ביש ומן מיא ומן טלגיתא ומן צדר	22

⁹ Or: "Sheshazar the educator." See our comments below.

¹⁰ Or: "Loosen the loins."

¹¹ Or: "On the finger."

¹² Add: לא?

¹³ Or: "Earthquake, earthquakes."

¹⁴ Or: "I will bless."

¹⁵ Lege: טורו נטרו.

¹⁶ Or: "Living, living."

of the night and of the day, by the great (and) exulted seal of the Great	דלילי וימם בחתמא רבא משבחא דאלהא	23
God, who rules over everything, to save Theodotos	רבא דשליט על כולא למפצי לתידודוטוס	24
from every evil. In the name of Yequmiel, who sits upon	מכל ביש בשמה דיקומיאל ויתב ¹⁷ על	25
the streams from which all the spirits emerge, and in the name	נחליה דמנהין ¹⁸ נפקן כל ריוחיא ¹⁹ ובשם	26
of Badaliel, who sits in the airs from which the upper	בדליאל דיתב באויריא דמנהין נפקין	27
PRMW'YH emerge, and of Tomiel and Qomiel, who sits	פרמואיה דלעל ודתומיאל וקומיאל דיתב	28
upon the high point of the earth—you (m. sg.) will deliver Theodota (!) son	על תוקפה דארעא תפלט לתידודטה בר	29
of Ophelia from all evil destroyers and from every weeping	אופליא מכל מחבלין בישין ומכל בכי	30
and affliction and quarrel (?). In the name of " HH YW T " "	ולזי וקאטי בשם אא הה יו ת אא אאא	31
HHH " HH BHH, who sits upon the abyss, ²⁰	ההה אא הה בהה דיתב על תהומא	32
the strong and powerful name, to save Konopa,	שמא קשיא ושלטיא ל[מ]פצי לקונופא	33
son of Ophelia, from every evil, from this day	[ב]רה דאופיליא מכל ביש מן יומזן	34
[and] forever. Amen Amen Selah Hallelujah.	[ו]לעלם אמן אמן סלה הללויה	35
O God, please heal him. ²¹ Amen. Please	אל נא רפא נא לו אמן אנא	36
O Lord, grant success. ²² Amen, <u>YHWH</u> .	יהוה הצליחה נא אמן יהוה	37

¹⁷ Lege: דיתב.

¹⁸ Here and in the next line, lege: דמנהין.

¹⁹ Lege: ריוחיא. The form ריוחיא is also documented in the incantation bowl JNF 244:2–4, see in this volume, James Nathan Ford, "The Exorcistic Formula 'Thus Is This Oath,'" pp. 116–17.

²⁰ These words ("who sits [...] abyss") should probably have appeared earlier in the text; see our discussion below.

²¹ Num 12:13, with slight modification (on which see below).

²² Ps 118:25.

The text is made up of smaller textual units and may be broken up into twelve different sections. (I) An opening formula (l. 1), followed by (II) a general statement of the text's aim (ll. 1–3), (III) an adjuration of Tyche (ll. 3–9), and (IV) an adjuration of Sheshazar (ll. 9–14). This is followed by (V) an adjuration by a series of magic names (ll. 14–18), who are asked, or ordered, to protect the client (ll. 18–23). Then comes (VI) a short adjuration by the seal of the Great God (ll. 23–25). The next section is (VII) an adjuration by a series of angels, who are described as sitting in various locations (ll. 25–31), followed by (VIII) an adjuration by a series of magic names that is identified as a strong and powerful name (ll. 31–35). This is followed by (IX) an ending formula (l. 35) and by (X–XII) two biblical verses and another ending formula, which were probably added so as not to leave a blank space at the bottom of the lamella (ll. 36–37).

1 על חסדך ועל אמתך The biblical phrase that serves here as an opening formula has the same function in an aggressive lamella found in Meroth, in a silver pendant-shaped amulet from the Jesselsohn collection, and in an amulet that was recently published by Ohad Abudraham.²³ It also appears, in an abbreviated form, at the very end of three amulets, two of which are virtually identical,²⁴ and reappears in numerous Jewish magical texts from later periods.²⁵

כתבית The use of the first person for the “authorial voice” of the amulet’s producer is attested in several other ancient Jewish amulets. One amulet begins with the words כתב אנא די תתאסי ארסינואי “I am writing (this) so that Arsinoe will be healed”;²⁶ another contains the phrase משבע אנה וכתב “I adjure and write”;²⁷ yet another amulet states

²³ See (a) MSF A16, (b) Rivka Elitzur-Leiman, “The Shema on Ancient Amuletic Jewelry,” in *Hear, O Israel: The Magic of the Shema*, ed. Nancy Benovitz and Dudi Mevorakh (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2021), 48, and (c) Ohad Abudraham, “An Ancient Silver Lamella—Towards a Clarification of a Parallel Formula” [Hebrew], *Cathedra* 182 (2022/23): 61.

²⁴ For two of these amulets, see Roy Kotansky, “Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets from Syria,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 41 (1991): 270 and 275; a third amulet, which is a duplicate of the second of Kotansky’s amulets, was published in Ohad Abudraham, “Duplicate Jewish Lamellae from Late Antiquity: Wolfe NA 1 and Getty Museum 80.AM.55.2,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 71 (2021): 105.

²⁵ See, for example, AMB G7, also published as HAITCG, no. 8.

²⁶ See Kotansky, “Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets,” 270.

²⁷ MSF A19.

יִי אֵנָה כְּתִבְתָּ יִי אֵסִי, “I have written, [the Lo]rd [will] heal.”²⁸ One finds similar expressions in the Aramaic and Syriac incantation bowls; for example, אֵנָה כְּתִבְתָּ וְאִסְתָּא תִּיהוּ מִלְעִילָה, “I have written, and may there be healing from above.”²⁹ The *plene* form כְּתִבְתָּ is typical of Targum Onkelos and is unusual in the Aramaic of the metal amulets.

1-2 תִּיּוּדוּסוֹס דְּמַתְקָרִי קוֹנוּפָא The Greek name Θεόδοτος, literally “God-given,” was very common among Jews in antiquity from the Hellenistic period onwards.³⁰ The addition of a person’s nickname was quite common in ancient magical texts and was probably intended to ensure the text’s effectiveness by avoiding any possible misidentification of the person whose protection or harm it sought.³¹ The nickname itself probably is a Greek name, Κώνωψ, “a gnat, mosquito.” For this name, which could also have derogatory overtones, see, for example, Achilles Tatius’s *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.20.³² It is thus far unattested in Jewish sources.

2 בִּתָּה דְּאוֹפִלִיא The scribe seems to have confused the client’s gender, writing “daughter of” instead of “son of” (as he wrote, correctly, in ll. 8, 19, 29, and 34).³³ Ophelia is a Greek name, Ὀφελία, which is quite rare, and rarely attested among Jews.³⁴ The form אוֹפִלִיא, with a final א rather than ה, is uncharacteristic of the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic attested in the metal amulets. As Abudraham has shown, the vast majority of the examples in this corpus tend to

²⁸ AMB A1.

²⁹ See ABS 1:271. For such formulae, see the many examples adduced in James Nathan Ford and Matthew Morgenstern, *Aramaic Incantation Bowls in Museum Collections, Volume 1: The Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection of Babylonian Antiquities*, Jena (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 78–80.

³⁰ See Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, 4 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002–2012), 1:285–86, 2:217–18, 3:295–99.

³¹ See Shaul Shaked, “Time Designations and Other Recurrent Themes in Aramaic Incantation Bowls,” in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern and Other Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch*, ed. Jeffrey Stackert, Barbara Nevling Porter, and David P. Wright (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2010), 222. For an amulet made for בִּתָּה דְּאוֹפִלִיא וְכָל שֵׁם דְּלָהּ, “Basileia daughter of Polychronia, and any name she has,” see Elitzur-Leiman, “Jewish Metal Amulets,” 60.

³² See the online Lexicon of Greek Personal Names: <https://search.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/browse.html?facet-nymRef=%CE%9A%CF%8E%CE%BD%CF%89%CF%88>.

³³ Later, he also erred in writing his client’s name as תִּיּוּדוּסָה (l. 29).

³⁴ See the online Lexicon of Greek Personal Names: <https://search.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/browse.html?field=names&sort=nymRef&query=wfelia+&collection=&start=1&facet-nymRef=%E1%BD%A8%CF%86%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%AF%CE%B1>.

See also Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names*, 3:602.

represent final [ā] with ה.³⁵ However, in this amulet, the scribe deviated from this general trend, consistently using א in more than twenty cases, including מומינא, ללובא, שמיא, ארעא, and so forth.

3 בשמה דתיכי The name and the particle ד are encircled by a cartouche, as is the Tetragrammaton in line 37, thus indicating that this is a powerful name.³⁶ That the addressee is a divine being and not a demon is made clear by the subsequent appeals to this being to guard Theodotus against evil demons. It seems probable that the scribe had the Greek goddess Tyche in mind.³⁷ The ubiquitous presence of Tyche-Fortuna in late antique Palestine is demonstrated in numerous mosaics, city coins, sculptures, and gemstones (including magical gemstones), and even in rabbinic literature, which is reluctant to mention “pagan” deities.³⁸ In Greek magical texts, Tyche is occasionally

³⁵ Ohad Abudraham, “The Language of the Aramaic Metal Amulets from Israel and Neighboring Countries” [Hebrew], *Lešonenu* 85 (2023): 271.

³⁶ This is a common feature of ancient Jewish amulets; see, for example, Ada Yardeni and Gideon Bohak, “Five Amulets for the Protection of Kyra Marian and the Fetus in Her Womb” [Hebrew], in “Ada Yardeni Memorial Volume,” ed. Hannah Cotton, Shmuel Aḥituv, and Moshe Morgenstern, special issue, *Eretz Israel* 34 (2021): 82, 83, 85, 90, 94. It is also well attested in the Aramaic incantation bowls; see, for example, ABS 1:57, 72, 74, 84, 110, 227, 229, 236, 239, 246–47, 271.

³⁷ For the goddess Tyche in the Greco-Roman world, see Laurence Villard, “Tyche”, in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. VIII.1 (Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1997), 115–25, and Federico Rausa, “Tyche-Fortuna,” *ibid.*, 125–41.

³⁸ See Rivka Gersht, “The Tyche of Caesarea Maritima,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116 (1984): 110–14; Orit Peleg, “Roman Intaglio Gemstones from Aelia Capitolina,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 135 (2003): 54–69; Martin Henig and Mary Whiting, *Engraved Gems from Gadara in Jordan: The Sa’d Collection of Intaglios and Cameos* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1987), nos. 96–124 (we are grateful to Richard Gordon for this reference); Nicole Belayche, “Tychè et la Tychè dans les cités de la Palestine romaine,” *Syria* 80 (2003): 111–38. See also the marble medallion of Tyche found in Horvat Tinsihmet in Uzi Dahari, “H. Tinsihmet, The Church of St. Bacchus” [Hebrew], *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 106 (1996): 102–4, <https://www.imj.org.il/he/collections/548731>. For טיכי דרומי, i.e., the Tyche of Rome, see y. ‘Abod. Zar. 3:3 (42d), with Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 2nd ed. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962), 134. See also Emmanuel Friedheim, *Rabbinisme et Paganisme en Palestine romaine: Étude historique des Realia talmudiques (Ier–IVème siècles)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), esp. 65, 177–88.

invoked alongside a host of other deities.³⁹ The current amulet might also preserve an invocation of a group of deities in addition to Tyche, since the word תשיזבן could also be read as תשיזבון, masculine plural, forming an appeal to a group of entities. However, an adjuration by Tyche's name may also have been facilitated by the habit of taking an oath by the *tyche* of the emperor, a habit documented in the Babatha archive.⁴⁰

5 מומינא The use of a participle + enclitic pronoun is typical of Eastern Aramaic, and its appearance here and in line 11 might seem unexpected. However, such forms are attested in other Palestinian Jewish Aramaic amulets, as well as in Cairo Genizah fragments of the Palestinian Talmud.⁴¹

5–6 בכפת ארעא ובטלול שמיא Oaths by heaven and earth were quite common in antiquity. The phrase מעיד אני עליי את השמים ואת הארץ, “I adduce Heaven and Earth as witnesses against me,” is documented in rabbinic literature, as well as in one of the Bar Kokhba letters.⁴² This phrase also appears in the rabbinic discussions of the boundaries between different terms of adjuration, as in *m. Šebu.* 4:13: משיבע אני עליכם, מצוה אני עליכם, אוסרכם אני, הרי אלו חייבין. בשמים ובארץ, הרי אלו פטורין (If someone said) ‘I adjure you,’ ‘I command you,’ ‘I bind you,’ they are

³⁹ See, for example, PGM IV.2598 and 2661 and PGM VII.506, with Eleni Pachoumi, *The Concepts of the Divine in the Greek Magical Papyri* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 13–14.

⁴⁰ See Naphtali Lewis, ed., *The Documents from the Bar Kochba Period in the Cave of Letters: Greek Papyri* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), 67–68: Βαβθα Σίμωνος θυγατρὸς τοῦ κυρίου Καίσαρος, “I, Babtha, daughter of Simon, swear by the *genius* of our lord Caesar.”

⁴¹ See, for example, AMB A1: משבענה עליך; MSF A28: אסרנה לך; Kotansky, “Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets,” 275: קרינא לכוך, “I call upon you.” See further Shai Heijmans, “Morphology of the Aramaic Dialect in the Palestinian Talmud According to Genizah Manuscripts” [Hebrew] (MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2005), 18–19; Abudraham, “The Language of the Aramaic Metal Amulets,” 287.

⁴² See, for example, *Y. Hor.* 3:7 (48b), מעיד אני עלי את השמים ואת הארץ, “Straightaway his eyes began shedding tears, and he said, ‘I adduce Heaven and Earth as witnesses against me that I will not depart from here before I redeem him,’” or *B. Yebam.* 16a, מעידני עלי שמים וארץ ששל, אבל מעידני עלי שמים וארץ ששל, “But I adduce Heaven and Earth as witnesses against me that Haggai the prophet sat on this mortar and said three things.” See also J.T. Milik, “Une lettre de Siméon Bar Kokheba,” *Revue biblique* 60 (1953): 277–82, שאני נתן תכבלי, מעיד אני עלי תשמים... שמיני נתן תכבלי, “From Shime'on ben Kosiba to Yeshu'a ben Galgalah. I adduce Heaven as a witness against me ... that I will place the shackles on your feet.”

liable. ‘By Heaven and Earth!’, they are exempt” (since these are not God’s names or substitutes thereof). See also James 5:12: *Πρὸ πάντων δέ, ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ὀμνύετε, μήτε τὸν οὐρανὸν μήτε τὴν γῆν μήτε ἄλλον τινὰ ὄρκον*, “But above all things, my brothers, do not swear—neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath,” and compare Matt 23:22: *καὶ ὁ ὁμόσας ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὀμνύει ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ*, “And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.”

עולם כמין קובה הוא, The notion that the earth is vault-shaped is also attested in rabbinic literature (*B. Baba Bat. 25b*), *דומה ורוח צפונית מסוככת*. וכיון שחמה מגעת אצל קרן מערבית צפונית מקפת וחוזרת אחורי הכפה, “The world is similar to a cupola, and the north wind covers it; when the Sun reaches the north-western corner, it comes around and returns from behind the vault.”

6–7 This description of God echoes several biblical creation traditions, reflected in verses such as Isa 40:22, *הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל חֹג*, “He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its dwellers are like grasshoppers; who spreads out the heavens like a curtain, and stretches them like a tent to dwell in”; Ps 104:2, *עָטָה אֹר כְּשִׁלְמָה נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּיְרִיעָה*, “He wraps himself in light as with a garment; He stretches out the heavens like a tent”; and Isa 48:13, *אֲף יָדִי יָסְדָה אֶרֶץ וְיָמִינִי טָפְחָה שָׁמַיִם קָרָא אֲנִי אֶלֵּיהֶם יַעֲמְדוּ יַחְדָּו*, “My hand established the earth, and my right hand set up the heavens; I call them, and they stand together.”

9 This word is hitherto unattested in published Jewish magical texts, but it appears in an unpublished amulet for a certain Yehudah son of Ḥamudah, who seeks protection from numerous demons and dangers, including *ומן שבטה וסטנה ומן דחלויי⁴³ ומן בר אגרי⁴⁴ ומן ל..ה ומן קתיה* “and from a beating, and a satan, and a frightful apparition, and from the roof-demon, and from ... and from קתיה (on which see

⁴³ Lege: דחלולי or דחלול? These frightful apparitions are attested in the Babylonian incantation bowls (see, for example, Dan Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity* [London: Kegan Paul, 2003], 62 and 65) and in the unpublished amulet for Basileia mentioned above, n. 31.

⁴⁴ For this demon, see Theodore Kwasman, “The Demon of the Roof,” in *Disease in Babylonia*, ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller (Leiden: Brill, 2007), esp. 165–69. The demon of the roof is quite common in Babylonian incantation bowls, but this is its only attestation in Palestinian lamellae of which we are aware.

below) and from לִיזָּי.”⁴⁵ Moreover, it is also found in an unpublished magical text from the Cairo Genizah, New York, JTSL ENA 2752.32, in a request for salvation from various dangers, including וּמִן לִיזָּא וּמִן מַלְלָחָא, “and from לִיזָּא and from an (evil) utterance.” In a Syriac amulet published by Joseph Naveh, we find a similar list, with ܠܝܙܐ ܠܝܙܐ ܠܝܙܐ, which Naveh translated as “all the demons and dēvs [and] sticking and whispering [spirit]s, and Sheshnašar the educator.”⁴⁶ Naveh, following a suggestion by Sebastian Brock, took ܠܝܙܐ as being derived from the verb ܠܝܙܐ, “to speak, sing, whisper,” and as modifying the noun ܠܝܙܐ, whence the translation “whispering spirits.”⁴⁷ This suggestion is supported by the appearance of ܠܝܙܐ ܠܝܙܐ in another Syriac amulet, written on leather, that was bought by Cambridge University Library.⁴⁸ However, a derivation from ܠܝܙܐ, “to disturb, annoy, cause distress” is also possible, and compare the Syriac Tob 6:8, ܠܝܙܐ ܠܝܙܐ ܠܝܙܐ, “If a person is distressed by a demon or an evil spirit, these (i.e., the heart and liver of the fish) are fumigated in front of a man or a woman, and he (or she) will no longer be distressed.”⁴⁹ The verb ܠܝܙܐ also appears in the Cambridge Syriac amulet, in the expression ܠܝܙܐ ܠܝܙܐ, “and do not afflict.”⁵⁰ We have therefore translated לִיזָּי as “affliction,” but we assume it is a demonic affliction.

⁴⁵ The reading was prepared by the late Ada Yardeni; we have used her reading and her line-drawing, but had no access to the amulet itself, or to images thereof.

⁴⁶ See Joseph Naveh, “A Syriac Amulet on Leather,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 42 (1997): 33–38 (repr. in Naveh, *Studies in West-Semitic Epigraphy: Selected Papers* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2009], 236–41), at 34 and 36.

⁴⁷ See Naveh, “A Syriac Amulet,” 38.

⁴⁸ See Erica C.D. Hunter, “Another Christian Syriac Amulet on Leather? Ms Or. 2480,” *The Syriac Annals of the Romanian Academy* 3 (2023): 69–121, l. 3, and her comments on p. 95.

⁴⁹ See J.C.H. Lebram, “Tobit,” in *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version, Part IV Fasc. 6 (Canticles or Odes; Prayer of Manasseh; Apocryphal Psalms; Psalms of Solomon; Tobit; I(3) Esdras)* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 15. The Greek text of this verse speaks of ἀπάντημα δαιμονίου ἢ πνεύματος πονηροῦ, “an encounter with a demon or an evil spirit,” and the pertinent Aramaic fragment from Qumran (4Q197 = 4QTob^b ar) speaks of גְּבֵר אוֹ אִנְחָא נִגְיַעִי שֶׁד אוֹ רוּחַן בְּאִישָׁא, “a man or a woman who has been afflicted (or, touched) by a demon or an [evil] spirit.”

⁵⁰ See Hunter, “Another Christian Syriac Amulet,” l. 22, and her comment on p. 106.

9–10 ששנצר מרוביה This demonic figure also appears as ששנצר מרוביה in the Syriac amulet cited above and in an unpublished Aramaic incantation bowl from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, and it reappears as שלאצר מרוביה and ששנצר מרוביה, שנאצר מרוביה in several published and unpublished bowls. מרוביה appears as a demon on its own in a few bowls, where it is sometimes mentioned in the plural: מרובין.⁵¹ It is also found in other magical texts, including the *Sword of Moses*, where one recipe is titled: “For (i.e., against, or, for the treatment of) מרוביא.”⁵² The term מרוביא, which literally means “one who causes something to grow,” can refer to an educator or to a wet-nurse, and in this case, we would opt for the former sense, since the following verbs are all masculine. However, it is, we assume, a rather ominous title, given to an evil demon. The Cambridge Syriac amulet refers to this demon several times as Mrwby’ (ܡܪܘܒܝܐ), as “the evil blast-demon (ܡܪܘܒܝܐ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ) whose name is Šntšr Šnššr Mšyntšr Šmšr and Mrw[by]’ (ܡܪܘܒܝܐ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ),” as “Šnššr who is called Šmmšr Mrwb[y]’ (ܡܪܘܒܝܐ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ ܡܫܝܢܬܫܪ),” and as “the demon Mrwby’, and any name you might have

⁵¹ See Shaul Shaked’s appendix to Gideon Bohak, “From Qumran to Cairo: The Lives and Times of a Jewish Exorcistic Formula,” in *Ritual Healing: Magic, Ritual and Medical Therapy from Antiquity until the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ildikó Csepregi and Charles Burnett (Florence: SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012), 31–52, where he offered a preliminary edition of bowl MS 2053/236, including (48) ששנצר מרוביה (Shaked’s reading was מרוביה). See further Siam Bhayro, James Nathan Ford, Dan Levene, and Ortal-Paz Saar, *Aramaic Magic Bowls in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin: Descriptive List and Edition of Selected Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 72 (bowl VA 2180), and Matthew Morgenstern and James Nathan Ford, “On Some Readings and Interpretations in the Aramaic Incantation Bowls and Related Texts,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 80 (2017): 213. For the מרוביה demon, see further *ibid.*, 209–13, and Tatyana Fain, James Nathan Ford, and Alexey Lyavdanský, “Aramaic Incantation Bowls at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg,” in *Babel und Bibel 9: Proceedings of the 6th Biennial Meeting of the International Association for Comparative Semitics and Other Studies*, ed. L. Kogan, N. Koslova, S. Loesov, and S. Tishchenko (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 293. For its appearance in Syriac incantation bowls, see Marco Moriggi, *A Corpus of Syriac Incantation Bowls: Syriac Magical Texts from Late-Antique Mesopotamia* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 239 (s.v. mrbyn’).

⁵² For the text, see Yuval Harari, *Harba de-Moshe (The Sword of Moses): A New Edition and a Study* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Academion, 1997), 41. As noted there, n. 217, the Judaeo-Arabic glossator of MS Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, Comites Latentes 145 (olim Sassoon 290), p. 79, glossed למרוביא as למרציע, “for a wet-nurse (مُرْضِع),” perhaps without realizing that this word also had a more sinister meaning.

(ܬܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ).” Erica Hunter translated ܬܝܚܝܬܐ as “the quarreler.”⁵³

10–11 ܬܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ We assume that this phrase is meant to keep the demon away and hence propose that it originally contained the word ܠܐ—which was omitted by the scribe, probably due to its similarity to the second half of the word ܬܝܚܝܬܐ (via haplography). This obscure phrase is unparalleled in other Jewish magical texts, and its meaning is uncertain. The combination of the verb ܫܪܝ, “to loosen,” and the noun ܫܪܝܬܐ, “loin,” already appears in Dan 5:6, referring to Belshazar’s reaction after witnessing the divine hand writing on the wall: ܐܕܝܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܘܗܝ ܫܢܘܗܝ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܝܒܗܠܘܢܐ ܝܩܬܪܝ ܫܪܝܬܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢ “Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against the other.” The loosening of the loins probably reflects great fear, perhaps the fear that the scribe who produced this amulet wished to arouse in Sheshazār the demon. Similarly, one might see ܫܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ as an opposite phrase to ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ (see, e.g., Job 38:3, literally “gird your loins,” but understood as “gather strength,” “ready yourself to battle,” etc.); following this line of interpretation, we may understand this phrase as being intended to pacify the demon.⁵⁴ The noun ܐܘܪܝܬܐ (or ܐܘܪܝܬܐ) usually means “finger,” but the term “(leather) bedcover” is also attested and seems more appropriate here.⁵⁵ In such a case, we may assume that a shadow appearing on a child’s bed was seen as a sign that Sheshazār was near.⁵⁶ However, we know of no parallel to this specific imagery.

⁵³ See Hunter, “Another Christian Syriac Amulet,” ll. 3–5, 13–14, and 38, and her comments on pp. 94–95.

⁵⁴ For a similar formula (ܠܫܝܐ ܫܪܝܬܐ) in a Mandaic amulet, see Ohad Abudraham and Matthew Morgenstern, “‘As Dry Trees That Have No Fruits’: A Mandaean Spell against Childlessness from the Schøyen Collection (MLSC 18, 19),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 144 (2024): 347 and 358.

⁵⁵ For this sense of the word, see Y. Ma’as̄ Š. 4:12 (55c), where various elements that appear in a dream recounted by a sneaky Samaritan are interpreted as being related to the bed in which he will lie, half-living and half-dead. Among these parts of the bed, the cow that appeared in the dream is interpreted as the leather bedcover. See also DJPA3 49.

⁵⁶ Shadows were suspected as potential places of residence of demons, and see, for example, B. Pesah̄. 111a, and cf. AMB 58–60, for the well-attested demon ܬܝܚܝܬܐ (and cf. l. 22 of our amulet), whose name is derived from the Aramaic root ܬܝܚܝܬܐ, “shadow.” Alternatively, we can take ܐܘܪܝܬܐ as “finger,” meaning “the

Another possibility, suggested to us by Ohad Abudraham, is to read *וַעַל אֲצַבְעָה דִּינְקָא טוֹלָא מִתָּח*, “and on the bed of a child stretch a (protective) shadow,” as a command addressed to Sheshazar Merubia, with an allusion to “YH the Great God, who stretched the heavens with His right hand”; in this case, the letters *מי* are redundant and are probably a false start of the next word, *מומינא*. A third possibility, suggested to us by Shlomi Efrati, is to understand *דינקא* as a noun, probably related to *דונק*, “tormentor,” in which case the translation would be “and on the finger of the tormentor(-demon) a shadow is seen.” However, we know of no parallel to such imagery.

12 *בשמה דעזריי בחילה דיה אלהא רבא* For a similar formula, see the adjuration *בחילה דרבה ובמימרא דמלאכי ובישמיה דמריא בגדנא אזיזא רבה דאיליה*, “By the power of the Great One, and by the command of the angels, and by the name of the lord Bagdana Aziza (or, “the mighty”), the great one of the gods,” which is found in one of the Babylonian incantation bowls.⁵⁷ The name *עזריי* is thus far unattested in Jewish magical texts, but the cognate name *עזריאל* is found in numerous ancient Jewish magical texts.⁵⁸ Both are derived from the verb ‘ZR, “to help, assist.”⁵⁹ Another possibility is to separate the words slightly differently, reading *בשמה דעזריי רב חילה דיה אלהא רבא*, “by the name of Ezri, the commander of the army of YH the Great God.” The name Ezri is documented in a sequence of holy names in a silver amulet from Aleppo, *רמיאל מפאר יה עזריי אהיה א אחמה אהיה אחמה*, possibly alluding to Ps 121:2, *עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ*, “My help is from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” The description of an angel as a “commander of the army of God” is found in Josh 5:14, *וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא כִי אֲנִי שָׂר צֶבָא יְהוָה עִתָּה בְּאֵתִי*, “And he said, ‘No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come’”; it can also be found in later Jewish sources, such as the *Book of Zerubbabel*, which mentions “Metatron the commander

shadow is seen on the finger of the child.” For *טלניתא*, see also Morgenstern and Ford, “On Some Readings,” 221–22.

⁵⁷ AMB B13, 198.

⁵⁸ For *עזריאל*, see, for example, Kotansky, “Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets,” 275 and 279, or Shaul Shaked and Rivka Elitzur-Leiman, “‘By These Holy Names I Adjure and Invoke’: An Amulet for the Health of Nonos Son of Severa” [Hebrew], in Ahituv, Cotton, and Morgenstern, “Ada Yardeni Memorial Volume,” 176.

⁵⁹ Note the *vox magica* *עזריי* in an amulet published in Roy Kotansky, Joseph Naveh, and Shaul Shaked, “A Greek-Aramaic Silver Amulet from Egypt in the Ashmolean Museum,” *Le Muséon* 105 (1992): 5–26, l. 12 (our reading is based on new photographs of the amulet).

of host of YY,” as well as in two silver amulets, where the title is attributed to Michael the angel, מִיכָאֵל יְהוֹה “the commander of host of YHWH, Michael.”⁶⁰ Compare *T. Hul.* 2:18: לשׁוֹם לְשׁוֹם חֲמָה... לְשׁוֹם: “One who slaughters (an animal) in the name of the Sun ... in the name of Michael the great commander ... lo, this is the meat of sacrifice to dead beings.” The expression “in the name of the great YH” also occurs in the Syriac leather amulet from Cambridge.⁶¹

14 בשם זיו יופיו The last two words could be taken as *voces magicae*, but they are in fact attested in Hekhalot literature, where we read how the angels who serve God are smitten by מַלְכָם של יופיו של מלכם, “the glories of the splendor of the beauty of their king.”⁶²

זוע זועין We have taken these two words as *voces magicae*, but they could be related to the verb זוע in the previous line. זועין could also mean “earthquakes, tremors,” and compare the formula רַעֲמִים וּמִרְעָעִים, “He who causes tremors and produces thunder and sends lightning,” which is attested in one of the amulets from the Cairo Genizah.⁶³

15 צור שדי אברך We have taken the third word as a *vox magica*, but the entire sequence could also be translated as “I will bless the Rock of Shaddai.”

16 אל מיש The scribe first wrote *mem*, probably mistakenly copying the beginning of the next word, then corrected himself and wrote the *aleph* over it.

17–18 אגירות מרהותיף ללזבא This is a magical formula found in several ancient and medieval magical and mystical texts, in both Aramaic and Greek, each time in a slightly different form.⁶⁴ It seems to be made up of four different “words,” and its appearances that are currently known to us may be tabulated as follows:

⁶⁰ See Ohad Abudraham, “Duplicate Jewish Lamellae,” 105.

⁶¹ Hunter, “Another Christian Syriac Amulet,” ll. 14–15.

⁶² See Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981), §159, MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 8128, and cf. *ibid.*, §189.

⁶³ HAITCG, no. 4.

⁶⁴ For an earlier discussion of this magical formula, see Gideon Bohak, “Remains of Greek Words and Magical Formulae in Hekhalot Literature,” *Kabbalah* 6 (2001): 126–29.

Our amulet	ללוחבא		מרהותף	אגירות
An amulet for Marten, daughter of Qoriel ⁶⁵	זיבה	ללא	מרתפ	אגירת
An amulet for Cassianus, son of Domitia ⁶⁶	זיבה	לאלא	מר]	אוגירת
An amulet for Klara, daughter of Kyrana ⁶⁷	זיבה	ללוס	מבגסתי	סגירת
An amulet for Kyra Marian, daughter of Marat-Nashaia ⁶⁸	ללוחבה	ללוחבא	מאכת	אוגר
A bronze ring with a Holy Rider image and a Greek inscription ⁶⁹	ζεββε	ζεζου	μαρσεουφ	ογυρακ
A magical gem with a Hand of God image and an inscription ⁷⁰	זיבה	לל	מרתפ	אגירת
A Geniza copy of <i>The Seven Blessings of Elijah</i> ⁷¹	ללוו בה בה		מראות פה	אירגת אורגת
Another Genizah copy of <i>The Seven Blessings of Elijah</i> ⁷²	ללוו בה בה		מראות פה	אירגת אורג

⁶⁵ AMB A8; for the correct reading, see MSF 107. Naveh and Shaked (ibid.) understood Marten daughter of Qoriel as a demoness against whom the amulet was written.

⁶⁶ MSF A31.

⁶⁷ MSF A18 (our reading differs from that of the editors and is based on the line-drawing in their edition).

⁶⁸ Yardeni and Bohak, "Five Amulets," amulet no. 5.

⁶⁹ This ring was published by Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), no. 323, and briefly discussed on p. 221. The text upon it is ογυρακμαρσεουφζεζουζεββε, without any division, and we have divided the text into four "words" and arranged them from right to left so as to parallel the Hebrew versions.

⁷⁰ Adolf Reifenberg, *Ancient Hebrew Arts* (New York: Schocken, 1950), 143; Jeffrey Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), no. 956 (and see the discussion on p. 166).

⁷¹ MTKG 2, no. 22, p. 35.

⁷² MTKG 2, no. 23, p. 81 (our reading is based on the image of the Genizah fragment).

In addition to these examples, several other magical texts preserve fragments and echoes of this formula.⁷³ However, its origins and meaning remain unknown. If we assume the second word to be מרתי, “my mistress,” it could be an old invocation of some female deity, but three of our textual witnesses insist that this word ends with a *peh*, which makes this interpretation more difficult.

18 חי חי יה יה For similar sequences, see, for example, *The Seven Blessings of Elijah*: חיי יהיה יהוה חיי, or an unpublished Genizah fragment that includes the names יהוה יהוה יהוה חי חי חי חי חי חי חי חי.⁷⁴ This sequence might be related to a formula documented in a number of incantation bowls and in some Hekhalot texts: חי חי מן. As חי חי מן reflects the divine name יה in *Atbash* (a system of letter substitution where *aleph* is replaced by *tav*, *beth* by *shin*, etc.), our sequence could reflect the “original” form of this formula.⁷⁵

טור ונטר The scribe seems to have misplaced the space between the two words, and we assume he intended to write טורו נטרי, literally, “guard (pl.) a guarding.”

20 קאטי This word is unattested in published Jewish magical texts, but it is likely to be a variant spelling of the קתיה found in the amulet for Yehudah son of Ḥamudah, and in the Cambridge Syriac amulet, both of which were cited above. Moreover, in one of the amulets published by Philippe Gignoux, which was produced for the same client as the Cambridge Syriac amulet, it appears as ܩܬܝܬܐ ܩܬܝܬܐ ܩܬܝܬܐ, which Gignoux rendered as “mauvais œil et regard fixe.”⁷⁶ In the Syriac

⁷³ For example, AMB A1: באגונית ולין דפת וליזפת ומרהפתים, (our reading differs from that of the editors and is based on the line-drawing in their edition); AMB A4: ללופת אננוס ארבת in an incantation bowl from the Hilprecht Collection: see Ford and Morgenstern, *Aramaic Incantation Bowls in Museum Collections*, no. 14, p. 72. In an unpublished fragment from the Cairo Genizah, T-S Ar. 42.122, a list of seven holy names supposedly written on the chest of Aaron the priest states that “the fifth name is אוגירה, the sixth name is מראות, the seventh name is ללון בה.” For later attestations of this formula, see Gideon Bohak, *A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of Jewish Magic: MS New York Public Library, Heb. 190 (Formerly Sassoon 56)—Introduction, Annotated Edition and Facsimile* [Hebrew], 2 vols. (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014), 1:217 and n. 6.

⁷⁴ See MTKG 2, no. 22 (pp. 34 and 41) and Budapest, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Kaufmann 224.2, respectively.

⁷⁵ For חי חי מן, see Morgenstern and Ford, “On Some Readings,” 203–6. For מן, see Klaus Herrmann, “Die Gottesnamen כויו ומנץ in der Hekhalot-Literatur,” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 16 (1988): 75–87.

⁷⁶ See Philippe Gignoux, *Incantations magiques syriaques* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987), amulet II, ll. 45 and 52, and his comments on p. 42. Hunter, “Another Christian Syriac Amulet,” 78 and 86, translated מלל as “the one gulping down sobs,” and see also her comments on p. 95.

amulet published by Naveh it appears as רוּחַ הַמַּלְאָכִים, which he translated as “sticking [spirit]s.” Earlier in the same amulet, it appears once again, this time as רוּחַ נִשְׁכָּה הַמַּלְאָכִים, which he translated as “the spirit of breathing that is stuck.”⁷⁷ In both cases, Naveh took קִיחָא as stemming from הָלַח, “to be stuck,” but as in the case of לִיידִי, which appears alongside קִיחָא / קִחָה / קִחָא in all three amulets, we seem to be dealing with a kind of demonic harm. The etymology of this type of demon is not clear, but it may be connected with מַלְאָךְ, “to wander about,” or קָטַט, “to quarrel,” and we have chosen the latter option for our tentative translation.

22 מִיָּא Here, we once again witness the similarity between our amulet and Naveh’s Syriac amulet, where we find רוּחַ הַמַּלְאָכִים הַבְּעִיחִים, “the spirit(s) of evil water.”⁷⁸ “Water” alone is not documented elsewhere in magical texts, but we assume that it is referring to some kind of evil water spirit, such as the demon Shabriri, who causes temporary blindness to those who drink river or lake water at night (see *B. Pesah.* 112a and *B. ‘Abod. Zar.* 12b).⁷⁹ The idea of evil spirits emerging from the water is also reflected in the formula of “the angels who sit,” and see also our discussion in the Appendix below.

צָרָה DJPA3 520 gives the meaning of צָרָה as “desolation,” but *DSA* 2: 723, has “disquiet, fear,” as well as “affliction,” both of which would fit the context here. In another amulet, a list of dangers includes כָּל אֲשֶׁה וְעִרְאִי, וְכָל צָרָה וְכָל לִילִין וְכָל פְּגָעִין, “every fever and shivering, and every fright, and all lilis, and all harmers.”⁸⁰

25–29 בְּשֵׁם דִּיקוּמִיָּאֵל וִיתָב... על תוקפה דארעא The adjuration in the name of a series of angels who sit upon, or are in charge of, different spaces or natural phenomena is very well attested in ancient magical texts. For a fuller discussion of this motif and of the formula that appears here, see the Appendix below. It is, however, worth noting that the very notion that angels are even capable of sitting stands in marked contrast with the claim found in rabbinic literature that angels have straight legs (as in *Ezek* 1:7) and therefore cannot sit.⁸¹ In this case, as

⁷⁷ Naveh, “A Syriac Amulet,” 34 and 36.

⁷⁸ Naveh, 34 and 36.

⁷⁹ One of the incantation bowls in the British Museum collection (BM 91766 [= CAMIB 014A]) possibly mentions מִיָּא עִירִי, “bad water,” in a list of evil spirits. We are grateful to the anonymous reader of this paper for suggesting this reading.

⁸⁰ See Elitzur-Leiman, “Jewish Metal Amulets,” 61.

⁸¹ See especially *B. Hag.* 15a.

in many others, we can see that the rabbis supported an angelology that was different from that of many Jews in late antiquity.⁸²

26 דמנהון This is likely to be an error for דמנהון, “from which (pl.),” but it could also be דמן + הין, “from where.”⁸³

27 אויריא The plural form of this Greek loanword, ἀήρ, is also attested in *Gen. Rab.* 34:15 (327 Theodor-Albeck), where R. Assi asks one of his disciples about the nature of his hometown, מה הינון אוירייה דהתם, “What are the airs like over there?” According to *B. Menah.* 39a, the Hebrew form of this word, אוירים, refers to the spaces between the seven upper heavens: שבעה רקיעים וששה אוירים שביניהן “the seven heavens and the six airs between them.” This cosmological description may be connected to the formula discussed here. This form might also be attested in another Aramaic amulet, in which a demon is described as being מפרח... באויריא, “made to fly ... in the airs.”⁸⁴

28 פרמואיה דלעל “The upper PRMW’YH” or “the PRMW’YH that are above.” In another amulet, which we have edited below, this word reappears as [ט]לנית פרמואינה, and in the third amulet edited below, it is only partly preserved, [פרוןמאיה?]. The meaning of פרמואיה, probably a Greek word, still eludes us.⁸⁵

דיתב ותומיאל וקומיאל The grammar is awkward, since two angels are mentioned, but the verb is singular. The easiest solution would be to assume that the words דיתב על תהומא (l. 32) belong here and that תומיאל is a phonetic spelling of תהומיאל, a name made up of the word תהום, “abyss,” + el, with the aspirated /h/ lost in pronunciation. In the parallel formula in MSF, Amulet 19, he appears as דיתב על תומיאל, “Tomiel who sits upon,” with the rest lost in a lacuna. However, in the parallel in the amulet edited below, he is identified as תהומיאל מלאכה, דיתב על [תה]ומיה דארעה [א]ב[י]ססות דארעה.

⁸² For fuller discussions of this point, see Mika Ahuvia, *On My Right Michael, On My Left Gabriel: Angels in Ancient Jewish Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), and Gideon Bohak, “I Beg You: Appeals to Angels in the Talmudic and Gaonic Periods” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 89 (2022): 39–72.

⁸³ See DJPA3 164.

⁸⁴ See Ada Yardeni and Gideon Bohak, “A Pregnancy Amulet for Marian, Daughter of Esther” [Hebrew], in “Joseph Naveh Memorial Volume,” ed. Joseph Aviram, Shmuel Aḥituv, Israel Eph’al, Ada Yardeni, and Anat Mendel-Geberovich, special issue, *Eretz Israel* 32 (2016): 103; the *editio princeps* reads באַפֿירייה.

⁸⁵ The closest Greek word would be παρόμοια, “closely resembling, similar to,” as suggested to us by Michael Zellmann-Rohrer and Emmanouela Grypeou, but we are unaware of the application of this adjective to demons.

29 תוקפה דארעא For this expression, compare Targum Jonathan to Hos 10:11: אֲשַׁרְיָתִי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל תְּקוּף אֶרֶץ אֲמֹרִיטָה, “I have let Israel dwell on the highest point of Amorite land.”

31–33 אא בב הה For this formula, compare אא בב הה (voces magicae), this is the strong and frightful name,⁸⁶ and similarly in the silver amulet for Theoneis (Amulet B) edited below: שמה רבנה ודחילה וקדישה [די אא בב]: ה, אא זי או חי חי [אנר וזו חח אא [מ]יכאל אבהמון and holy name (voces magicae and angel names).”

32 דיתב על תהומא This phrase is out of place here; compare our note to line 28.

35 אמן אמן סלה הללויה Both “Amen Amen Selah” and “Hallelujah” are common ending formulae on ancient Jewish amulets, and the text could have ended here.⁸⁷ However, the scribe probably saw that there was still some writing space left and decided to add two more biblical verses so as not to leave any blank space on the writing surface.⁸⁸

36 אל נא רפא נא לו The modification of Num 12:13, which originally referred to Miriam (אל נא רפא נא לה, “O God, please heal her”), to fit an amulet’s client is also attested in a long trilingual (Greek-Aramaic-Hebrew) amulet, where it appears as אל נא רפא נא יואניס בן בנהנאטא, “O God, please heal Iohannes son of Benenata,” and in a Hebrew amulet (which also has one word in Greek), where it appears as אל נא רפנא לבנינאטא בת ליונטינא, “O God, please heal Benenata daughter of Leontina.”⁸⁹ In our amulet, the scribe was satisfied with merely changing the pronominal suffix from feminine (לה) to masculine (לו).

36–37 אא יהוה הצליחה נא Ps 118:25 does not appear in other ancient Jewish amulets, but it is often cited in other Jewish magical texts,

⁸⁶ Kotansky, “Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets,” 270 (we have slightly modified his reading in light of the online images of the amulet available at <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/15237/unknown-maker-tablet-lamella-with-a-prayer-for-healing-roman-3rd-century-ad/>).

⁸⁷ For the former see, for example, MSF A17; MSF A29; Walid Atrash, Rivka Elitzur-Leiman, Gabriel Mazar, Débora Sandhaus, and Tamar Winter, “Nysa-Scythopolis: An Enigmatic Tunnels Complex,” *Liber Annus* 70 (2020): 436. For the latter, see, for example, Ohad Abudraham, “Joshua Son of Nun and the Seven Angels: A Hebrew Lamella from the Wolfe Collection,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 72 (2021): 49, for a Hebrew amulet ending with a Greek αλληλουια. For both together, see MSF A16.

⁸⁸ This is a recurrent phenomenon on ancient Jewish amulets; see Bohak, “Scribal Overkill,” for additional examples.

⁸⁹ For the first amulet, see Kotansky, Naveh, and Shaked, “A Greek-Aramaic Silver Amulet,” 8; for the second, see Abudraham, “Joshua Son of Nun and the Seven Angels,” 49.

usually in its entirety: אנא יהוה הצליחה נא, אנא יהוה הושיעה נא, “Please, O Lord, deliver; please, O Lord, grant success.”⁹⁰ In this case, the scribe—reaching the end of the text—may have decided that citing half the verse would suffice. However, he may also have been influenced by the liturgical use of this verse, since while reading the Hallel it was (and still is) chanted in two halves: see *B. Sukkah* 37b: הוּא אומ' אנא יי הושיעה נא והן אומ' כמותו אנא יי וגו'... הוּא אומ' אנא יי הצליחה נא והן אומ' אנא יי הצליחה נא, “He (the cantor) says: Please, O Lord, deliver, and they (the congregation) say likewise: Please, O Lord, etc., ... He says: Please, O Lord, grant success, and they say: Please, O Lord, grant success.”

Amulet B



⁹⁰ See, for example, Gershom Scholem, “*Havdala de-Rabbi Aqiva*—A Source for the Tradition of Jewish Magic During the Geonic Period” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 50 (1980/81): 243–81, at 280 (repr. in Scholem, *Devils, Demons and Souls: Essays on Demonology* by Gershom Scholem, ed. Esther Liebes [Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2004], 145–82, at 181). Further examples may be found in the unpublished Genizah fragments Cambridge, T-S K 1.14 and Cincinnati, HUC 1082.

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The second amulet we wish to present here is a silver lamella (11.9 cm x 3.3 cm). It is owned by Lenny Wolfe and its provenience is unknown. Unfortunately, it is not as well preserved as the first amulet—its top part is missing, and it is also broken on both the left- and right-hand sides, with only the bottom margin fully preserved (apparently, it was rolled from bottom to top). Its verso is blank, and the writing on the recto is more cursive and less professional than that of Amulet A. The average height of the letters is ca. 3 mm, and its overall textual density is ca. 8.1 letters per square centimeter. Our tentative reading of the extant text runs as follows:

[]...and in the n[am]e of Yeqo[miel]	[] וְבִשְׁמֵהּ דִּיקָן מִיָּאֵל	1
the [an]gel, who sits in the air[s]	[מ]לְאִכָּה דִּיתֵב בְּאֵירִיָּה	2
[fro]m which satan[s] emerge,	[ד]מְנַהֵן נִפְקִין שְׁטַנִּין	3
[and] in the name of Nahari[el]	[ר]בִּשְׁמַה דְּנַהֲרִיָּאֵל	4
the [a]ngel, [who] sits upon	[מ]לְאִכָּה דִּיתֵב עַל	5
the [ri]vers from which emer[ges]	[נ]הֲרִיא דְּמְנַהֵן נִפְקִין	6
the shadow-spirit PRMW'Y[H]	[ט]לְנִית פֶּרְמוּאִיָּה	7
[that is] above Nahariel, ⁹¹	[ד]לְעַל מִן נַהֲרִיאֵל	8
[and by] the name of Tehom[iel]	[וּב]שְׁמַה דְּתַהוּמִּיאֵל	9
the [a]ngel, who sits upon	[מ]לְאִכָּה דִּיתֵב עַל	10
the [aby]sses of the earth,	[ת]הֲוִמִּיה דְּאַרְעָה	11
[and in] the name (of) every angel	[וּב]שְׁמַה כָּל מְלָאכָה	12
[of he]aven, that there will be driven away from	[דַּע]לִיתָה דִּיגְעֵרוֹן מִן	13
[Theo]neis, son of Sabin[a],	[ת]אַוּנִיאִיס בְּרַה דְּסַבִּינִיָּה	14
[all] evil pains and [all]	[כָּל] מַכְאוּבִּין בִּישְׁתִּין וְ[כָל]	15
evil (pl.f.) [spi]rits. And Theoneis shall be	[רִו]חִין בִּישְׁתִּין וְיִשְׁתִּין	16
deli[vered and assu]red, fr[om]	[וּ]תְּכַל טַאוּנִיאִיס מִן	17
[all] these ev[il]	[כָּל] אֵלִין מַכְאוּבִּיה	18
pains. They will move away and f[ear]	[בִּי]שִׁיה יִזְעוֹן וְיִדְחֵלִין	19
[from] before the gre[at],	[מִן] קֹדֶם שְׁמַה רַבָּה	20
[fri]ghtful and holy name	[וּד]חִילָה וְקִדִּישָׁה	21
[] DY " BB HH 'I'	[] דִּי אַא בְּב הַה אָא	22
[] " ZY 'W HY HY []	[] אַא זִי אָו חִי חִי	23
[] 'NR ZZZ HH "'	[] אָנֹר זִזוּ חַח אַאא	24
[M]ichael 'B HMWN H[]	[מ]יכָאֵל אָב הַמוֹן חֵן	25
[]...Theoneis,	[] אָהָא תַאוּנִיאִיס	26
[s]on of Sabina, from	[ב]רַה דְּסַבִּינָה מִן	27

⁹¹ Or: "above the rivers of God."

[every] trouble and evil	[כל] עקה ובישה	28
[] ...bad (?)... save (?) []	[] י רעין מלטן []	29
[a]ngels of evil. Ame[n,]	[] לאכלי ביש אמנן]	30
[Amen] Selah.	[אמן] סלה	31

Given its poor state of preservation, the structure of the text on this amulet is not very clear. Its beginning is missing, and the text starts (I) in the middle of the adjuration in the name of the angels who sit in different places (ll. 1–11) and moves to (II) an adjuration in the name of all the angels (ll. 12–13). This is followed by (III) a statement of the amulet's aim (ll. 13–21), which flows smoothly into (IV) a spelling out of the fearful Name that should scare the pains away (ll. 22–24). This seems to be followed by (V) an invocation of Michael to help the amulet's owner (ll. 25–30), and the amulet ends with (VI) a standard ending formula (ll. 30–31).

1–11 דארעה וומיה דארעה ... [תה]ומיה דארעה For this long formula, see the Appendix below.

1 ובישנמ[ה] דיקוןמיאל For יקומיאל see above, Amulet A, line 25.

7 [ט]לנית פרמואיה For פרמואיה see Amulet A, line 28. Here, it is accompanied by another word, probably טלנית, meaning “shadow-spirit.” We may understand this either as a sort of classification, marking פרמואיה as belonging to a certain group of evil spirits, or as an adjective, describing the טלנית demon. Similarly, one can recognize a close parallel in Amulet C, שטיני פרוןמאיה?, suggesting that we should understand PRMW'YH as a type of “satan” or as an adjective describing it (or its activities). These two examples might hint that the scribes themselves were not sure about the exact meaning of פרמואיה.

13 [דע]ליתה for עליתה in this meaning see *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 58.2: איפשר דאנה עבד כלום דלא מתאמר לי מן עליותה “Is it possible for me to do anything not said to me from the upper region?”

14 [תא]וניאס ברה דסבינ[ה] The name is spelled either תאוניאס (l. 26) or טאוניאס (l. 17). It might be Θεωνίς, but the spelling seems to indicate a longer name. The mother's name is a common Latin name, Sabina, which is also attested for some Jewish and Samaritan women.⁹²

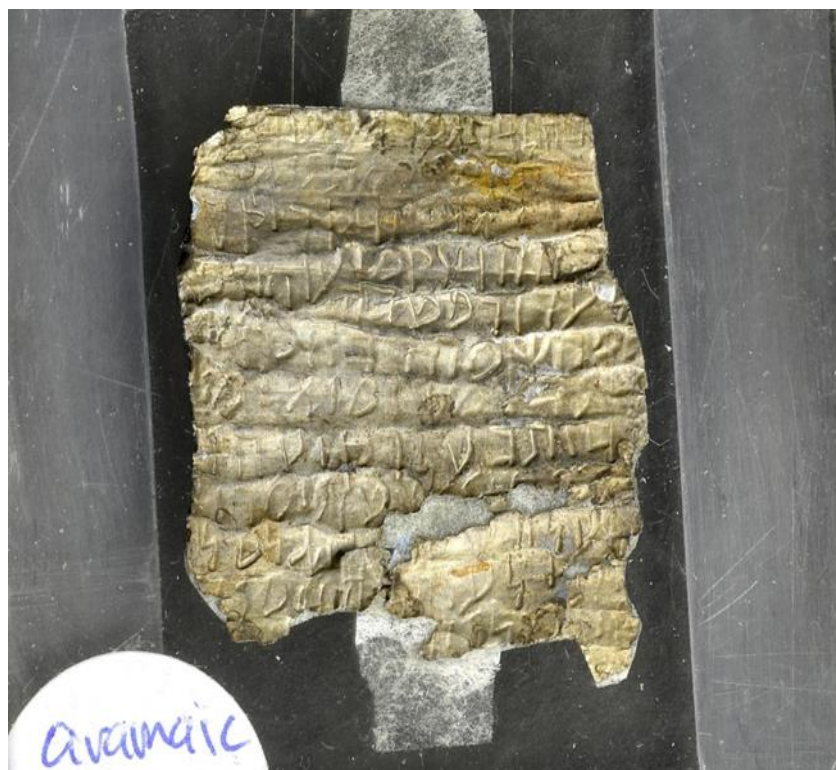
25 אבהמן This may be an allusion to Gen 17:5: ולא יקרא עוד את שמך אברהם: “No longer will your name be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations”). This combination can also be a part of a group of

⁹² See Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names*, 2:307 and 3:612–13.

magical names such as *אל המון*, *בא במון*, which is found in a few metal amulets.⁹³

30 [*לאכי ביש*] the *kaf* and *yod* are ligatured. A possible reconstruction is *מלאכי ביש*, “angels of evil.” This term, which is rarely found elsewhere, would be equivalent to expressions such as *מלאכי חבלתא*, “Angels of Destruction,” and *מלאך מותא*, “Angel of Death.”⁹⁴ The idea of angels who are in charge of evil things corresponds to the main theme of the formula of “the angels who sit,” which is focused on the evil spirits emerging from the various locations dominated by the angels (and see our discussion in the Appendix below).

Amulet C



⁹³ MSF A18, l. 11; A21, l. 10.

⁹⁴ For *מלאכי ביש וחקיפי*, “evil and powerful angels,” see CAMIB, bowl 044A. For angels of destruction, see, for example, Cyrus H. Gordon, “Aramaic Incantation Bowls,” *Orientalia* 10 (1941): 127; Ford and Morgenstern, *Aramaic Incantation Bowls in Museum Collections*, 25, and cf. Kobi Kabalek and Nimrod Zinger, “Angels of Destruction (*Mal’akhei Ḥabalah*): Two Millennia of Jewish Horror,” *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 18 (2024): 1–26, which entirely ignores the many magical texts in which these angels appear.



Only a small fragment of the third amulet we wish to publish here is extant. It is a silver lamella (2.8 cm x 2.5 cm) and it is broken on the right and left-hand sides, as well as at the bottom. Its provenience is unknown, and it is currently owned by Lenny Wolfe.⁹⁵

The script is consistent, but the inscription is less elegant than that of the other amulets and seems to have been written by a much less experienced scribe. The average height of the letters is ca. 2 mm, and judging from the extant section, the overall textual density is ca. 22 letters per square centimeter. The scribe did not leave spaces between words and did not use final *mem* and *nun*. Our tentative reading runs as follows:

[By your name and] by your power, may you drive away the fever and shi[vering]	[בשמך ו]בחלך תגער אשה וע[ריתה]	1
[and the i]dol-spirits from the two hundred and for[ty eight]	[ופת]כרתה מן מאתן וארב[ען ותמניה]	2
[limb]s that are in the body of Kyriakos, [that]	[אבר]ין דבגופה דקריקס [דאית?] ⁹⁶	3
this amulet [is on his b]ody, and (he) will gua[r]d [?]	[בגופה הדן קמיעה וינט[ור?]]	4
[] 'RWR MṬBH	[] ל ערור מטבה	5
[] this great (and) ho[ly]	[] מה שמה רבה ק [א] ד[י]שה[]	6

⁹⁵ For a preliminary description of this amulet, see Joan Goodnick Westenholz, ed., *Three Faces of Monotheism* (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 2007), 63.

⁹⁶ Or: [דמחלי], "that this amulet [is hung on his b]ody."

Name, by the name of Shumiel [the an]gel,	[ה]דן בשם שומיאל מל[אכה]	7
who sits upon the heaven, from	דיתב על רקיעה ד[מן]	8
where emerge satans PRW[M'YH]	[ה]ין נפקין שטנין ⁹⁷ פרוןמאיה? ⁹⁸	9
[of] above, and in the name of [Naḥa]liel [the an]gel,	[ד]לעל ובשם [נח]ליאל מל[אכה]	10
[who] sits upon the streams from [where]	[ד]יתב לע ⁹⁹ נחליה דמן[הון]	11
the shadow-spirits em[erge], [and in the name of]...[]	[נפ]קין טלני. []...[]	12
...	...	13

1 [בשמך ו]בחלך For a similar opening formula, note a Geniza amulet (AMB G8; also published as HAITCG, no. 11) that begins with על שמך ועל חילך מרי דעלמא, “By your Name and by your power, Master of the universe.” Another possible reconstruction of the beginning of the amulet is [ב]חלך, “by the greatness of your power,” which may have been conceived as analogous to Exod 15:7, וברכ גאוןך תהרס קמך, “And by the greatness of Your majesty You will destroy Your enemies.”¹⁰⁰

2 [ופת]זרתה—This is a type of hazard that is well documented in the Babylonian incantation bowls. Its literal meaning is “idols,” and it was considered a harmful spirit.¹⁰¹ פתכרי is mentioned in the unpublished amulet for Yehudah son of Ḥamudah cited above, but this term is generally rare in Jewish metal amulets from late antiquity.

2–3 The exorcism of the fever from all 248 limbs of the client’s body is very common, and compare, for example, the address to a demon in one amulet: אגער מן גופה דמרין ברתה דסתר מן, “Be exorcised from the body of Marian daughter of Esther, from the 248 limbs which are in her.”¹⁰² The

⁹⁷ Lege: שטנין?

⁹⁸ The first letter of this word could also be a *mem*.

⁹⁹ Lege: על.

¹⁰⁰ For the anti-demonic application of this verse, see, for example, AMB B13, where the whole verse is written at the center of the bowl, next to a bound demonic figure.

¹⁰¹ See Shaul Shaked, “Bagdāna, King of the Demons, and Other Iranian Terms in Babylonian Aramaic Magic,” in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, ed. H.W. Bailey (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 512.

¹⁰² AMB A9.

medical assumption that the human body consists of 248 limbs is also attested in rabbinic literature (e.g., *M. Ohal.* 1:8).

3 קריקס The second yod was added above the line. This Greek name, Κυριακός, was a typically Christian name, given to children born on the Lord's day—that is, Sunday—and it is frequently attested, especially in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹⁰³ It is paralleled by the Aramaic names ברחבשבא (“Son of Sunday”) and בתחבשבא (“Daughter of Sunday”), which occasionally appear in the Babylonian incantation bowls.¹⁰⁴ If the client indeed was a Christian, he would fit into a well-known pattern of Christian clients turning to Jewish amulet-writers in late antiquity.¹⁰⁵

4 קמיעה הדן References to “this amulet” are attested on other ancient Jewish amulets, and compare an amulet that begins with the phrase על שמך רחמנה יעלה הדן קמיעה דנונוס ברה דסוירה, “Upon your Name, the Merciful One; may this amulet of Nonnos son of Severa rise (i.e., succeed)”; later in the same amulet, we find a reference to כל אנש דהדן, “every person upon whom this amulet is hung.”¹⁰⁶ Similar expressions are documented in the incantation bowls.¹⁰⁷

7–13 טלני [נפ]קין ...[נפ]קין טלני For this long formula, see the Appendix below.

7 שומיאל מל[אכה] As he is said to sit upon the heaven, this angel's name clearly is derived from שומייה, “sky, heaven.”

¹⁰³ See the online Lexicon of Greek Personal Names: http://clas-lgpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/lgpn_search.cgi?name=%CE%9A%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%8C%CF%82 (accessed April 2021), and cf. Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names*, 3:321.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, ABS 1:183 (bowl JBA 36): ברחבשבא בר חתי, and additional examples in Ohad Abudraham, *A Grammar of Early Mandaic* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2022), 155, n. 269.

¹⁰⁵ For this pattern, see Giancarlo Lacerenza, “Jewish Magicians and Christian Clients in Late Antiquity: The Testimony of Amulets and Inscriptions,” in *What Athens Has to Do with Jerusalem: Essays on Classical, Jewish and Christian Art and Archaeology in Honor of Gideon Foerster*, ed. Leonard V. Rutgers (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 393–419.

¹⁰⁶ Shaked and Elitzur-Leiman, “By These Holy Names,” 175, 177.

¹⁰⁷ For example, ABS 2, bowls JBA75:1, JBA89:10, JBA92:7.

Appendix: Lists of Angels Who Sit in Ancient Magical Texts

As noted above, lists of angels who sit in different locations are extremely common in ancient magical texts. They may broadly be divided into two groups. On the one hand, there are numerous lists that demonstrate a general resemblance to the formula found in the three Aramaic amulets studied in the present paper, but these should be seen as conceptual parallels rather than variants of a single list. On the other, there are cases where the formula closely parallels the one found here and may be seen as a variant thereof.

Beginning with the more distant parallels, we may note that most such lists specify the angels' names and where they sit but provide no further details. Note, for example, the following invocation, found at the beginning of a Greek amulet written on papyrus:

I invoke you, the one who sits upon the abyss, Bythath; I also invoke the one who sits in the first heaven, Marmar; I invoke you, the one who sits in the second heaven, Raphael; I invoke you, the one who sits in the third heaven, Souriel; I invoke you, the one who sits in the fourth heaven, Iphiaph; I invoke you, the one who sits in the fifth heaven, Pitiel; I invoke you, the one who sits in the [sixth] heaven, Mouriatha. I invoke you, the one who sits over the snow, Telze; I invoke you, Edanoth, the one who is upon the sea; I invoke you, Saesechel, the one who is upon the serpents; I invoke you, Tabiym, the one who is upon the rivers. I invoke you, Bimadam; I invoke you, Chadraoun, the one who sits in the midst of the Chadrallou, between the two Cherubim and Seraphim, as they praise you, the lord of the whole host which is under heaven.¹⁰⁸

This catalog of angels is closely paralleled in two other Greek amulets written on gold and silver lamellae, which have been the subject of detailed discussions.¹⁰⁹ In this catalog, each angel is characterized

¹⁰⁸ PGM XXXV.1–14; translated in Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 268, with minor modifications. For another list, which unfortunately is badly preserved, see PGM XXIIb.

¹⁰⁹ GMA, no. 52; Thomas Gelzer, Michael Lurje, and Christoph Schädlin, *Lamella Bernensis: Ein spätantikes Goldamulett mit christlichem Exorzismus und verwandte Texte* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1999).

either as “the one who sits upon” (ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ) or as “the one who is upon (ὁ ἐπὶ or ὁ ἐπάνω)” —that is, in charge of—a certain thing, whether one of the heavens or a certain natural phenomenon, be it snow, serpents, rivers, and so on. These lists of angels who are in charge of certain phenomena have a long history in the Jewish world, and they are already attested in the Second Temple period.¹¹⁰ However, the description of these angels as “sitting” on natural phenomena is probably due to the influence of the Greek descriptions of gods and angels who sit in various locations, or to the confluence of these descriptions with the biblical imagery of God sitting on His throne, in heaven, on the Cherubim, and so on.¹¹¹

Looking at the detailed catalogs of angels, we note that the number of things on which angels can sit is potentially endless and that even when the things on which they sit are the same as those found in the Aramaic magical texts, the names do not overlap. For example, in PGM XXXV.1, the angel who sits upon the abyss is called Bythath, but in the Aramaic ones, he is called Tehomiel (on whom see below), while the angel who sits upon rivers is called Tabiym, not Nahariel or Naḥaliel as in the Aramaic texts.¹¹² The closest we get to a possible parallel between the Greek lists and the Aramaic ones is the invocation in one of the Greek amulets of “the one who sits upon rivers, Bēdlia,” which sounds quite like the angel Badaliel, who in the Aramaic text is described as the one “who sits in the airs.”¹¹³ And as in the parallel Greek text that we already cited the angel who sits upon

¹¹⁰ See, for example, *1 En.* 20, and cf. *1 En.* 69:1–15.

¹¹¹ For the biblical descriptions, see, for example, the characterization of the Jewish God as יושב בשמים, “the one who sits in heaven” (Ps 2:4), יושב הכרובים, “the one who sits on the Cherubim” (1 Chr 13:6), יושב על כסא, “sitting on his throne” (2 Chr 18:18), and numerous other examples. For the appearance of such formulae in Greek amulets, see Louis Robert, “Amulettes grecques,” *Journal des savants* (January–March 1981): 6–27.

¹¹² It is, of course, possible that Bythath was derived from the Greek word ἄβυσσος, “abyss,” just as Tehomiel was derived from the Hebrew תהום, “abyss,” but Tabiym seems unrelated to any Greek word describing rivers or streams. Similarly, an incantation on a Syriac bowl mentions “the seven angels who have been given domination over the heavens and over the earth, over the sun and over the moon, over the winds and over the air, over the fire and over water.” See James Nathan Ford and Ohad Abudraham, “Syriac and Mandaic Incantation Bowls,” in *Finds Gone Astray: ADCA Confiscated Items*, ed. Dalit Regev and Hananya Hizmi (Jerusalem: Antiquities Department of the Civil Administration, 2018), 81–85.

¹¹³ For βηδλια, who is described as ὁ ἐπὶ τοῖς ποταμοῖς καθέμενος, see GMA 278.

rivers is called Tabiym, it is possible that in some other version, the name Bēdlia was identified as that of the angel who sits upon the airs. This, however, is not a very promising avenue, given the absence of other overlaps between the Greek and Aramaic texts.

The same pattern emerges when we examine other lists in Greek and Coptic where each angel is described as “the one who is upon” or as “the angel of” a certain domain.¹¹⁴ There is little consistency in the domains listed and almost none in the angel assigned to each domain. Thus, it is not impossible that further research will discover closer parallels between the many lists of angels and the things upon which they sit, but thus far we have not found them.¹¹⁵

This, however, should not obscure the fact that there is a fundamental difference between the Greek and Coptic catalogs of angels and the list that interests us here, for in the Aramaic spell found in all three amulets edited above, the focus seems to be not on the angels who sit upon various locations, but rather on the demons and evil spirits that might emerge from these locations. Thus, the basic structure of this list seems to be “in the name of the angel X, who sits in location Y, from where the demons Z emerge.” To our three amulets, one can add two parallels in published Aramaic amulets, which reflect close versions of the same basic list, or fragments preserving one or two of the components of the formula.¹¹⁶ The first one is found in a gold amulet published by Roy Kotansky, where we find an adjuration בשם ישרומיאל וישמיאל ונהריאל דלעל מן נהריאל ויהומיאל ויאקימאל, “in the name of Yishromiel and Yeshimiel and Nahariel who is above Nahariel, and Tehomiel and Yaqimael.”¹¹⁷ Here, we can find several parallels to our three amulets—including the angels Tehomiel, Nahariel, Yaqimael (cf. Yequmiel, Amulet A, l. 25 and

¹¹⁴ For such lists, see GMA 273–75, 286–91, and cf. P. Oxy. 5312, published in N. Gonis, F. Maltomini, W.B. Henry and S. Slattery, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXXII* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2016), 97–103, and Michael Zellmann-Rohrer, “Two Greek Amulets,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 207 (2018): 107–13.

¹¹⁵ It should be mentioned that the verb יתב is also used with respect to demons. See Christa Müller-Kessler, “Dämon + YTB ‘L—Ein Krankheitsdämon: Eine Studie zu aramäischen Beschwörungen medizinischen Inhalts,” in *Munuscula Mesopotamica. Festschrift für Johannes Renger*, ed. Barbara Böck, Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, and Thomas Richter (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 1999), 341–54.

¹¹⁶ For the angelology of these amulets, see also Ahuvia, *On My Right Michael*, 57–59 and 82.

¹¹⁷ Kotansky, “Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets,” 270 (our reading differs slightly from Kotansky’s, and see above, n. 86).

Amulet B, l. 1), and Yeshimiel (cf. Shumiel, Amulet C, l. 7), and the reference to being “above Nahariel” (cf. Amulet B, l. 8). However, here the reference to the demons that emerge from under the rivers or from the abyss is missing. In another amulet, we find the adjuration *בשם[יה] דתהומיאל מלאכה דממנ[י] על אסכפא דארעה* Tehomiel, who is appoint[ed] over the threshold of the earth.”¹¹⁸ Once again, we seem to hear a distant echo of our list, but the crucial reference to the demons that emerge from the threshold of the earth is simply not there.¹¹⁹

A closer match is found in an amulet for Simon son of Kattia, which includes an adjuration:

בשם ישר טמנואל דיתב על נחלה דמנה נפק כל רוחתא בישתה ובשם יקומיאל דיתב על אורחתה [נ]הריאל דיתב על נ[ו]ה[ר]נא תומיאל דיתב על [...] ובשם...

In the name of YŠR ṬMNW’L, who sits upon the river from which all evil spirits emerge, and in the name of Yequmiel, who sits upon the road, (and) [Na]hariel, who sits upon the [ri]ver,¹²⁰ (and) Tomiel who sits upon [the abyss?], and in the name of....¹²¹

Unfortunately, the rest of the amulet is broken, so we cannot tell whether the list extended to other angels or whether it mentioned any other evil spirits who emerge from the domains upon which these angels sit. However, the fact that the first part of this adjuration fits the pattern “in the name of angel X, who sits in location Y, from where the demons Z emerge,” as well as the names of the angels *יקומיאל*, *נהריאל*, and *תומיאל*—all of which appear in other versions of our list—tells us that we are dealing with yet another version of the same basic list.

¹¹⁸ See M.J. Geller, “More Magic Spells and Formulae,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60 (1997): 331–34. Geller’s reading was corrected in Joseph Naveh, “Some New Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Amulets,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 26 (2002): 232. Both Geller and Naveh read the angel’s name as *תהומיאל*.

¹¹⁹ For another example, see Yardeni and Bohak, “Five Amulets,” amulet no. 2: *בשם דאמראות רבתה [ד]יתבה על תרעי לזהנמ וב... [א]ה דייטב על יסודיה דארעה* “In the name of ‘MR’WT the great, who sits upon the gates of Gehenna, and in [], who sits upon the foundations of the earth.”

¹²⁰ The word *נהרא* means “light,” but we have taken it as an error for *נהרא*, “river,” in line with the parallels in our three amulets.

¹²¹ MSF A19.

However, the most surprising parallel of all is found in a much later source; namely, the writings of Yaakov bar Shimshon (ca. 1070–ca. 1140), the disciple of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yizḥaki, Northern France, 1040–1105).¹²² In his book on the Jewish calendar, Yaakov mentions the old Jewish habit of not drinking water on the *tekufah*, that is, at the moment when one season changes into the next (or, in our terminology, the two solstices and the two equinoxes).¹²³ He then explains that “the demons (המוזיקים) who stand on channels of water constantly pour libations of death and madness for all living creatures, in order to harm them with illnesses and evil afflictions,” and that because there are no protective angels in attendance at the moment of the *tekufah*—this being the time for the “changing of the guard” between the angels of the previous season and those of the next one—“this is the beginning of the illness of bad water sources, which is called *hydropicus* (אֵידְרוּפִּיקוּס).” He then adds a sentence that is of great interest for our inquiry: “And this is why the masters of amulets (בעלי הקמעות) write in their amulets, ‘In the name of the SRYMY’,¹²⁴ who is in charge of all the streams (דהוא ממונה על כל נחלייא), because from there the spirits emerge (דמן תמן נפקין רוחתא).”¹²⁵ We do not know the identity of the “masters of amulets” whom Yaakov consulted, and we have not yet found similar formulae in medieval Ashkenazi manuscripts of magical recipes, but the fact that part of this magical formula was still in circulation more than half a millennium after the ancient amulets were written is quite revealing. It is worth noting that Yaakov mentions the specific goal of healing bad water when citing the part of the formula that deals with the rivers. This might reflect an oral tradition that saw different parts of the formula as useful for specific needs, according to their content.

¹²² For Yaakov bar Shimshon, see Ilana Wartenberg, “The Hebrew Calendrical Bookshelf of the Early Twelfth Century: The Cases of Abraham bar Hiyya and Jacob bar Samson,” in *Time, Astronomy, and Calendars in the Jewish Tradition*, ed. Charles Burnett and Sacha Stern (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 97–111.

¹²³ For this Jewish custom, see Israel M. Ta-Shma, “The Danger of Drinking Water during the *Tekufah*: The History of an Idea” [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 17 (1995): 21–32.

¹²⁴ This could be translated as “ministers of water,” but the subsequent description (דהוא ממונה) makes it clear that this is a single angel. SRY might be connected to YSR ṬMNW’L mentioned in MSF A19, see above.

¹²⁵ See MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. 614, f. 50a. We are grateful to Ilana Wartenberg for bringing this text to our attention.

Looking at all these examples, we can probably conclude that our list circulated both orally and in written manuals, in many different locations and over several centuries, and thus could take on many different forms. Under such conditions, it may be quite futile to attempt to reconstruct its “original” form, but two observations seem in order. The first is that as far as we can presently see, our list was not as long as the catalogs of angels found in the Greek amulets and consisted of only a few angels. Their names apparently varied from one version of the list to another, but their locations remain fairly stable and include the air(s), water streams (or rivers), the earth, and the abyss(es). This impression may be due to accidents of preservation, but it is more likely the reflection of an attempt to cover all types of demons; namely, those who emerge from the air, from water, from the earth, and from the underworld. Such classifications of supernatural beings were very common in antiquity, and note, for example, the explanation in Artemidorus’s dream interpretation manual that the gods are commonly divided into five categories according to their place of residence—the Olympians, who are also called the aethereal gods, the heavenly gods, the terrestrial gods, those of the seas and rivers, and the chthonian gods.¹²⁶ Similarly, in the *Testament of Solomon*, a sea demon explains that Beelzeboul is “the ruler of all the spirits of the air, the earth, and the underworld” (ὁ τῶν ἀερίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων πνευμάτων δεσπότης) and that the sea demon is also subservient to him. Moreover, in the Greek magical papyri, one finds an adjuration of a demon to tell whether it is “heavenly or aerial or terrestrial or subterranean or chthonian” and a wish to subjugate every demon, whether “heavenly or aethereal or terrestrial or subterranean or earthly or aquatic.”¹²⁷ Our spell probably reflects the same assumptions about the different locations where demons may be found and therefore invokes the angel who sits upon—or is in charge of—each location in order to make sure that the demons who reside in that location will not emerge and inflict their harm upon innocent human beings.

Our second and final observation has to do with the social locations in which such spells were transmitted. As we noted above, the rabbis of late-antique Palestine and Babylonia insisted that angels cannot sit, since their legs are straight and cannot be bent. Possibly in

¹²⁶ Artemidorus, *Oneir.* 2.34.

¹²⁷ *Test. Sol.* 16.3; PGM IV.3038–3039 and V.165–167.

alignment with this perception, although the rabbis often shared the belief that specific angels are in charge of different activities, and even different nations, they often used different terminology, speaking about such angels as “the ministers of (a certain domain),” whether *שר של ים*, “the angel (in charge) of the sea,” *שרה של ארומ*, “the angel (in charge) of Rome,” and so on. Moreover, the rabbis were quite averse to the mentioning of “idolatrous” deities, and they certainly would not have approved of an adjuration “in the name of Tyche.” And yet, such non-rabbinic elements are quite common in ancient Jewish magical texts and can therefore serve as a corrective to the image that might emerge from rabbinic literature.¹²⁸ Given the paucity of non-rabbinic Jewish texts from late antiquity, such evidence is of great historical significance.

¹²⁸ The classic treatment of this issue is found in Mordecai Margalioth, *Sepher Ha-Razim: A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Acharonot, 1966), esp. 1–28.