

NIPPUR AND ARAMAIC INCANTATION TEXTS

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The language of Aramaic incantation bowls has been the subject of much debate and discussion amongst scholars,¹ following the first such study which was undertaken by James Montgomery in 1913.² Many of the distinguishing features which he identified, including the high incidence of isoglosses from Syriac and Mandaic, were reiterated in William Rossell, *Handbook of Aramaic Magical Texts* (New Jersey, 1953) that was the first dedicated effort to analyse the language of the Aramaic incantation bowls.³ Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked also included in their first volume *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1985) a short summary of the language of incantation bowls which they considered to be clearly Babylonian Jewish Aramaic.⁴

¹ Scholars have used various epithets to describe the language of the incantation bowls. J. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia, 1913), 26 used Rabbinic although he acknowledged that this term was potentially misleading, implying that the Jews of Babylonia had a special dialect or, that there was "a unity in the language of the Talmud". S. Kaufman, "A unique magic bowl from Nippur", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32 (1973), 170 and W. S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto, 1976), xi preferred the epithet Jewish whilst J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1985), 17 used Judaeo-Aramaic. The epithet, Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, first employed by C. Gordon, "An Aramaic exorcism", *Archiv Orientalní* (1934), 466 has continued to be used widely by scholars including W. Rossell, *A Handbook of Aramaic Magical Texts* (Ringwood, NJ, 1953) and H. Juusola, *Linguistic Peculiarities in the Aramaic Magic Bowl Texts* (Helsinki, 1999), specifically 16 where he discusses the term. D. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity* (London, 2003) opts for Jewish Aramaic. The simple term, Aramaic which has been employed by B. A. Levine, "The Language of the Magic Bowls". Appendix in J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews of Babylonia* (Leiden, 1970) V, 343 and by J. B. Segal, with a contribution by Erica C. D. Hunter, *Catalogue of Aramaic and Mandaic Incantation Bowls in the British Museum* (British Museum Publications) (London, 2000) is perhaps most appropriate for the present.

² Montgomery, *op. cit.*, 30–31.

³ Rossell, *op. cit.*, 11.

⁴ Naveh and Shaked, *op. cit.*, 31–32.

Arising from his studies on the language of incantation bowls, Tapani Harviainen proposed in 1983 the emergence of an Eastern Aramaic *koiné*.⁵ He pointed out that the idiom of incantation texts was neither identical with Targumic and Gaonic Aramaic nor with Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic, although some preferences were shown towards the former group.⁶ Harviainen maintained that the many idiosyncracies which mark the incantation texts probably stemmed from their being the product of the scribes who translated their oral, vernacular dialects into writing.⁷ Hannu Juusola's book, *Linguistic Peculiarities of Aramaic Magic Bowl Texts* (Helsinki, 1999) has continued Harviainen's work. On the basis of conservative traits retained by the texts, Juusola has suggested that incantation texts derive from literary as opposed to living dialects of Late Antiquity, yet also include features of the spoken dialects of the scribes. Thus he has concluded that incantation texts cannot be considered to be one single dialect, maintaining instead that they "leave the impression of being a mixed type of language".⁸

In recognition of the outstanding contributions of Prof. Tapani Harviainen to the field, this paper investigates the question of the "mixed language" of incantation texts. It focusses on a select group of three Aramaic incantation bowls that were excavated in 1989 from a courtyard in the WG area of Nippur during the excavations conducted by Prof. McGuire Gibson of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago. These incantation bowls command our particular attention for several reasons.⁹ Firstly, they have a known archaeological context which is dated to the Early Islamic period and thus provide details of provenience and chronology. Secondly, the cross-examination is facilitated by the fact that two of the bowls, 18N18 and 18N98, are paralleled by duplicates.¹⁰ Thirdly, despite their very

⁵ T. Harviainen, "Diglossia in Jewish Eastern Aramaic", *Studia Orientalia* 55 (1983), 97–113.

⁶ T. Harviainen, "An Aramaic incantation bowl from Borsippa. Another specimen of East Aramaic *koiné*", *Studia Orientalia* 51 (1981), 23.

⁷ *Idem.*

⁸ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 247.

⁹ The respective numbers of the Aramaic bowls are: 18N18 (I.M. 114980), 18N20 (I.M. 114982) and 18N98 (I.M. 114981). The Nippur numbers will be used in this article. For discussion of the archaeological context of the incantation bowls and the transmission histories of these two texts, see Erica C. D. Hunter, "Combat and conflict in incantation texts", in M. J. Geller, J. C. Greenfield and M. P. Weitzman (eds.), *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches* (Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplement, 4) (Oxford University Press on behalf of the University of Manchester, 1995), 61–75.

¹⁰ Five incantation bowls duplicate the text of 18N98: (1) HS 3003, that was found during Hilprecht's campaign in 1900, that was published by Joachim Oelsner following its partial translation by Cyrus Gordon in *Orientalia* 10(2) Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem: Heb. 4 6079 (3) Vor & Frühgeschichte Museum, Berlin: XI c 5178, (4) Metropolitan Museum, New York: 86.11.259 (5) Uncatalogued specimen in a private collection in Berlin. A partial duplicate is also found in an amulet 69.3.146. from the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. No less than six duplicates to 18N18 are extant: (1) & (2) Montgomery, Texts 11

different texts, palaeographic and chirographic investigation shows that 18N18 and 18N98 were written by the same scribe.¹¹ An investigation of these two bowls, together with the fragments of 18N20, may enable patterns and traits to emerge that cannot be detected from “one-off” bowls which lack provenance and/or chronology, hence adding some comment to the debate on the language of incantation bowls.

THE PHYSICAL TYPOLOGY OF 18N18, 18N98 AND 18N20

The physical typology of the incantation bowls is typical of the genre.¹² *Form*: 18N98 is hemispherical, i.e. having a combination of a simple rim and rounded base.¹³ 18N18 offers a subtle variation, having a rounded-flat base, whilst 18N20 is flat-based. *Dimensions*: 18N18 and 18N98 range between 16.4 cm–17.4 cm (diameter) and 6.6 cm–7.0 cm (height) whereas 18N20, with dimensions 13.4 cm x 4.8, is typical of smaller incantation bowls. *Manufacture and fabric*: All specimens are wheel-thrown, with a medium-fine texture with a dense black grit inclusion, that is evenly distributed. The fabric of 18N18 and 18N98 is distinguished by its micaceous content and a white grit inclusion could also be detected in 18N98. The fabric colors correspond to the two varieties of ware from Kish that Harden recorded, i.e. “buff or brownish ... the other reddish”.¹⁴ *Decoration*: 18N98 has a female figure, wearing a 7-scalloped head-dress and with hands folded in prayer in the interior centre of the bowl. The base fragments of 18N20 have some type of drawing, possibly a head-dress and an eye, perhaps a Lilith. 18N18 is undecorated with an ovoid circle in the interior centre and, like 18N98 and 18N20, its text is enclosed by a single hand-drawn line, that has been applied in black ink with a reed pen, on the interior walls of the bowls.

and 18 (3) British Museum 91710 (4) & (5) Iraq Museum 5497 and 9377 (6) M. Lidzbarski in *Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik* (Giessen, 1902–05) Text V which is a Mandaic version.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64–65 discusses the common authorship of these (and other) duplicate bowls.

¹² For further discussion see, Erica C. D. Hunter, “The typology of incantation bowls. Physical features and decorative aspects” in Segal, *op. cit.* 163–180.

¹³ D. B. Harden, “Pottery from Kish” in “Excavations at Kish and Barghuthiat 1933”, *Iraq* 1 (1934), 124. R. McC. Adams, “Tell Abu Sarifa. A Sassanian-Islamic sequence from South Central Iraq”, *Ars Orientalis* 8 (1970), 99 defines this shape as “rounded or flaring thin ware bowls”.

¹⁴ Harden, *loc. cit.*

THE PALAEOGRAPHY OF 18N18, 18N20 AND 18N98

The incantation bowls from Area WG belong to the same palaeographic genre, but exhibit the difficulties which Lacau already recorded in 1896 and which have been reiterated by Montgomery, Rossell as well as by Harviainen.¹⁵ He and Heth are not differentiated. Similarly Waw and Yodh are often undistinguishable, although Yodh may be shorter and frequently more rounded than Waw. Dalath is distinct from Resh, and Beth and Kaph are also clearly differentiated, but in 18N18 and in 18N20 the Semkath is triangular. Chirographically 18N20 can be distinguished from 18N18 and 18N98. The squarer form of the Kaph in 18N20 contrasts with the letter-form in both 18N18 and 18N98 that resembles the rounded shape of the Kaph in Syriac. Similarly, the Lamadh in 18N20 is typically written, with a long vertical stroke leading into a half-bowl forming its lower part. In both 18N18 and 18N98 the character has been straightened to produce a line, or an almost straight line, culminating in a left-hand foot that is suggestive of the Lamadh in Mandaic. These differences, perhaps indicating influence from the Syriac and Mandaic scripts, not only point to a cursive trend present in 18N18 and 18N98, but also intimate that they were written by a common hand.

THE LANGUAGE OF 18N18, 18N20 AND 18N98

Shewa denoted by Yodh

Montgomery, Rossell, Naveh and Shaked, Harviainen and Juusola have observed that, as in Mandaic, the Shewa in incantation texts is frequently denoted by a Yodh.¹⁶ Harviainen considered this trait to be one of the hallmarks of Eastern Aramaic *koiné* but, as Juusola has pointed out, there is no consistency in the

¹⁵ R. Lacau, "Une coupe d'incantation", *Revue d'Assyriologie* 3 (1896), 49 commented on the confusing similarity between the characters He and Heth, also Waw with Yodh and final Nun. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, 14 notes the difficulties in identifying the characters Waw and Yodh, viz.: "the y being then represented by a short stroke or sometimes by a small angle, the w by a long stroke; but there is no consistency in differentiation, and the y is easily prolonged into a stroke like w; within the same text or line the y may be written both ways". W. Rossell, *A Handbook of Aramaic Magical Texts* (New Jersey, 1953), 13 notes the problem of distinguishing between Kaph and Beth. Harviainen, *op. cit.* (1981) 4 has also noted that He and Heth are indistinguishable, as are Dalath and Resh and reinforces Montgomery's observation, by stating that the distinction between \$w\$ and \$y\$ (and sometimes \$n\$) usually has to be made on the basis of the context rather than the outer shape. Additionally, he draws attention to the hardship in distinguishing Beth from Kaph and even Semkath from Mem.

¹⁶ Montgomery, *loc. cit.*; Rossell, *op. cit.*, 14, 21; Naveh & Shaked, *op. cit.*, 32; Harviainen, *op. cit.* (1981) 4, 23; Juusola, *op. cit.*, 44–45.

application of the Yodh which led him to the conclusion that “some BJA [Babylonian Jewish Aramaic] dialects had a vowel of *i* type as the counterpart of a vocal *shwa* in some other Aramaic traditions”.¹⁷ Juusola has designated the representation of vocal Shewa by Yodh as one of the linguistic markers of incantation texts¹⁸, but claims that the “distribution of *yod* as a counterpart of *shwa* is greater in the bowl texts than in the other BJA [Babylonian Jewish Aramaic] traditions”.¹⁹

The incantation bowls use Yodh with the prepositions Beth and Lamadh *viz*: 18N18 I.1 byšmwk “in your name”, I.7 lyky “for you”, I.8 lynšyhw n “to their wives”; 18N20 II:7 lyh “to him”; 18N98, I.5 lybrh “to her son”, lyh “to him”. Usage with the relative pronoun d is more restricted, but occurs in 18N98 I.2 dymyhd “that is unique”, I.3 d ynḥšh “of copper”. No instances are attested with the conjunction “and”. Montgomery already noted the internal usage of Yodh representing Shewa stating that this was “throws light upon many minor vocalisations”.²⁰ Yodh standardly occurs in Imperfect prefixes *viz*: 18N18 I.6 dtymḥy “that you should be struck”; I.10 tyḥṭyn, “you might injure”; 18N20 I:2 tyqrbwn, “you (m.pl.) might approach”, I:5 tyštšṭm, “may you be sealed”, II:7 tyqrb, “you might approach”; 18N98 I.7 myštb’n’, “I am swearing to you”; I’ yqtwl “I shall not kill”; I.8 I’ yhnyq, “I shall not strangle”.

Apocopation of masculine plural absolute nouns

Harviainen noted that Yodh could represent masculine plural nouns where it indicated either the vowels [i] or [e], as well as corresponding to Shewa.²¹ In this vein, Naveh and Shaked suggested that the Yodh ending of masculine substantives is reminiscent of the ē in Syriac.²² However, in his pioneering study of the language of incantation bowls Montgomery already observed that Yodh could appear alongside ʔ in an apparently indifferent association to indicate the masculine plural absolute. In his recent publication of incantation bowls from the Moussaieff collection, Levene also observes a seemingly random application.²³ Commenting on this situation, Juusola has opined that the ending ʔ accords with

¹⁷ Harviainen, *op. cit.* (1981) 23; Juusola, *op. cit.*, 50–51.

¹⁸ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 250.

¹⁹ *Idem*, 49.

²⁰ Montgomery, *loc. cit.*; Naveh & Shaked, *loc. cit.*

²¹ Harviainen, *op. cit.* (1981) 4.

²² Naveh and Shaked, *loc. cit.*

²³ Montgomery, *loc. cit.*, Levene, *op. cit.*, 8.

Aramaic dialects of earlier periods, whilst Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic and Mandaic show a tendency to apocope the final Nun.²⁴

The three incantation bowls from Nippur display a variety of patterns. A mixed occurrence of Yodh and ʾ occurs in 18N20 I: 1.ʾ zyqy byšy [wmzy]qyn “wicked blast-spirits and injurers”. The Yodh ending is preferred by 18N18 *viz*: II. 3, 6, 7 šydy, “demons”; 1.4 dyny judges”; 1.5 drdqy ... mrmyšy “children ... infants”; 1.7 gyṭy “divorce-writs”.²⁵ On the other hand, 18N98 prefers the more conservative ʾ ending *viz*: 1.8 bnyn, “sons”; hršyn “sorceries”, with a single usage of Yodh only in the final line of the incantation text *viz*: 18N98 1.9 dyny “judges”. In light of the common authorship of 18N18 and 18N98, these patterns suggest that, over and above internal emanation, the transmission of texts was the conservative and lasting factor.

He designating status determinatus

The designation of final \bar{h} by either Aleph and He was already observed by Rossell identified this feature, with the latter remarking that whilst He was more conservative than Aleph “no apparent significance” may be attached to the ways in which these characters alternated.²⁶ However, Müller-Kessler categorizes *status emphaticus* final \bar{h} and He as characteristics of Koiné Babylonian Aramaic and Standard Literary Babylonian Aramaic respectively.²⁷

Both He and Alaph are used to express *status emphaticus* in the incantation texts. He is largely restricted to nouns in the opening clauses *viz*: 18N18 1.1 qmyʾh “charm”, 18N98 1.1 ršyʾh “wicked”, thus upholding Juusola’s suggestion that the trait was connected with the conservative reproduction of incantation texts.²⁸ Examples of *status emphaticus* He also occur mid-text in 18N20, *viz* II:5 mlʾkh “angel” and 18N20 II: 7 bʾrʾh wbrqwʾh “on the earth and in the firmament”, although these may be generically determined nouns as Harviainen has suggested.²⁹ Generally, Alaph predominates in the incantation texts, *viz*: 18N18 1.2 bʾzyqtʾ “signet-ring”, 1.4 ptkrʾ “idol-spirit”, byštʾ “wicked”; 18N98 1.3 ṭwrʾ “mountain”, 1.4 dprz1ʾ “iron”. Mixed patterns also occur with He and

²⁴ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 143.

²⁵ *Idem.*

²⁶ Naveh and Shaked, *loc. cit.* who note its occurrence in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. Harviainen, *op. cit.*, 4; Juusola, *op. cit.*, 30-31.

²⁷ C. Müller-Kessler and T. Kwasman, “A unique Talmudic Aramaic incantation bowl”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120(2) (2000), 159.

²⁸ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 31.

²⁹ *Idem.*

Alaph occurring side by side *viz*: 18N18 I.3 'r'' wšmyh “earth and heaven”; 18N98 I. 6 ym' rbh “great sea”.

Masculine singular pronominal suffixes attached to plural nouns.

The occurrence of h instead of why as the 3 masculine singular pronominal suffix attached to plural nouns is considered by Harviainen to be one of the hallmarks of “a general trend of development in Eastern Aramaic”.³⁰ Whilst Harviainen observed this in Syriac incantation bowls, Montgomery noted that it was common in Mandaic and also appeared in the Talmud.³¹ Naveh and Shaked have differentiated between the older form of the suffix -why, and the younger form -yh³², while Juusola has commented on the common usage of yh (plene spelling) in later who commented that it “was unique in late Eastern Aramaic” but had been retained in Samaritan.³³ Harviainen, Naveh and Shaked as well as Juusola have also Eastern Aramaic texts as well as why which he considered was retained as a historical spelling³⁴.

The later yh suffix occurs in all of the incantation texts, *viz*: 18N18 I.9 bytyh ... dwrtyh ... h̄ykl̄yh ... 'yšqwptyh “house ... dwelling ... homestead ... threshold”; 18N20 II: 1.6 gysyh “his sides”; 18N98 I.5 lybrh “her son”, 18N98 I. 7 šmyh “his names”. By contrast, the application of the suffix why is only found in 18N98 where it occurs as a prepositional suffix, *viz*: 1.2 qdwmwhy, “before him” 1.5 'lwhy “against him”.

Vowel letter ʾ indicating qameṣ

Rossell observed that “[t]he vowel letter ʾ often indicates qameṣ, showing that the latter was pronounced ô in Babylonia, with â > ô”.³⁵ Naveh and Shaked as well as Harviainen also endorsed this as a common phenomenon in incantation texts, the latter deeming it to be one of the characteristics of Eastern Aramaic *koiné*.³⁶ Juusola considers that the pattern is much less frequent than previously

³⁰ Harviainen, *op. cit.* (1981), 20.

³¹ Montgomery, *loc. cit.* Juusola, *op. cit.*, 89 notes the occurrence of yh in Syriac bowl texts, speculating that some of the texts may be based on Babylonian Jewish Aramaic originals.

³² Naveh and Shaked, *op. cit.*, 32.

³³ Rossell, *op. cit.*, 20.

³⁴ Juusola, *loc. cit.*

³⁵ Rossell, *loc. cit.*

³⁶ Naveh and Shaked, *op. cit.*; 32. Harviainen, *op. cit.*, 24.

thought, but does include the use of Waw as a counterpart of /ā/ amongst the developed linguistic features of incantation texts.³⁷ He points out the occurrence of Waw representing qāmeš in a *historiola* text which was published by Naveh and Shaked.³⁸

It is not surprising to find occasions where Waw indicates qāmeš in 18N98 which is both a duplicate text to Naveh and Shaked and written by the same scribe *viz*: 1.2 qdwmwhy, “before him”; 1.4 w’wl, “and entered”; 1.5 wḥnq ywtyh “and strangled him”, wqwmw “they got up”. Juusola has opined that the scribe had “added the *waws* as if to make the text more familiar to his/their client(s)” since the basic version of the text was purported to be of Palestinian origin.³⁹ As the pattern is not reproduced in 18N18 which was also penned by the same scribe as 18N98, the phenomenon appears to be inherent to the transmission of the text, and has not been subject to editorial processes.

3 masculine Imperfect preformatives Yodh and Nun

Montgomery, Rossell and Harviainen have emphasised the occurrence of the 3 masculine Imperfect preformatives Yodh and Nun in incantation texts.⁴⁰ No examples occur in 18N18, 18N20 and 18N98 where the Imperfect is otherwise regularly expressed: 1 singular 18N98 1.7 ’yqtwl “I shall kill”, 1.8 ’yḥwq w’yḥbw1 “I shall strangle and injure”; 2 masculine singular 18N20 I:5 tyštštm “may you be sealed?”; 3 feminine singular 18N18 1.2 tyḥtm wtytnr “may she be sealed and protected”. The single occurrence of a plural Imperfect form occurs in 18N18 1.10 tyḥwn “you might [not] injure”. As may be expected, the Perfect tense occurs relatively rarely *viz*: 18N18 ll. 5, 9 ’šb’yt “I adjure”, 1. 7. ktbyt ... ptryt “I have written ... I have banished” since active participles and the Imperative (feminine singular) are generally preferred.⁴¹ The fragments of 18N20 use concatenations of participles to express present, on-going action.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

A cursory examination of the language of the incantation bowls from the WG area at Nippur brings to light a mixed pattern, embracing both archaic and

³⁷ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 250.

³⁸ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 54–68, specifically 60 n. 273, 63–64.

³⁹ Juusola, *op. cit.*, 63.

⁴⁰ Montgomery, *loc. cit.*; Rossell, *op. cit.*, 49; Harviainen, *op. cit.*, 22.

⁴¹ See Rossell, *op. cit.*, 46–47; Juusola, *op. cit.*, 174–187.

developed linguistic features, and in doing so endorse Juusola's overall observations. 18N18 and 18N98 have a contemporaneous archaeological matrix and a common authorship, but their language shows considerable divergence, but also some over-riding similarities, as does 18N20.

18N98 is an unusual and atypical incantation text. Compared to 18N18 and 18N20, its linguistic features are conservative and are similarly reproduced in the five duplicate texts that are extant. Their presence shows that scribe reproduced the "tried and trusted" contents of a prototype text, retaining archaic language. Presumably this produced minimal tension with the vernacular Aramaic dialects; in the same way the *Book of Common Prayer*, written in sixteenth century, is recited in English churches, despite the retention of obsolete words or archaic forms, such as *thou*.

18N18 and 18N20 are typical of incantation texts in both their terminology and genre. Their language patterns, such as the preference for the apocopated masculine plural ending and the *status determinatus* Alaph are indicative of later language. But vestiges of earlier language, including *status determinatus* He and the masculine plural ending 𐤀, have also been retained. The incidence of both characteristics reveals the dimension of the "human factor" that introduced contemporary features into the transmission of texts which were inherently conservative.

The mixed nature of incantation bowls has been identified by Juusola. However, his comment, "we have practically no possibility of dividing bowl texts into dialect groups" can be redressed.⁴² Seminal comment would emerge from the comparison of duplicate texts, especially where these can be quantified by provenance. Such studies, which would collaterally highlight the process of transmitting of texts, will shed significant insight onto the complex, fascinating question, of the place of Aramaic incantation bowls within the wider scope of East Aramaic to which Tapani Harviainen has made such an outstanding contribution.

APPENDIX: TRANSLITERATED & TRANSLATED TEXTS

18N18: Transliteration

1. byšmwk 'ny 'wšh hwdyn qmy'h lḥtymh
2. wlnḥrt' lḥwrmw<z>dwk bt m'rwy tly]ḥtm wtytnḥr
b'zyqt'

⁴² Juusola, *op. cit.*, 247.

3. dḥtymyn bh 'r'' wšmyh mn šydy wmn [dywy w]mn
lylyt' wmn dnḥyš
4. wmn dyny wmn zky' wmn ptkr' wmn kl mydy'm byš
wm[n lylyt'] byšt' wmn mlwyt'
5. ḥṣypt' dmḥyḥ wšqp' wṭrp' drdqy wdrdq't' wmrmysy
wmrmysyt' 'šb'y't {'lt}
6. 'lyky dtymḥw bṭrps lybyky bmwrnytyh dsqrwt' gybwr'
[dhwl] š[ly]t' 'l šydy w'l dywy w'l lylyt' byšt'
7. h' ktbyt lyky gyṭ' wṭryt ytyky mn nypr' br m'dwy
wmn ḥwrmyzdwk bt m'dw<y> km' dk<t>byn š[yd]y gyṭy
8. lynšyhwn bqwšt' wṭwb l' hdryn 'lyhwn k'n šqwl
gyṭyky wqbyly mwmtky 'qyry mdwrtyky wšny mlkwtky
9. qrḥy tb'ry pwqy w'ytrḥqy mn bytyh wmn dwrtyh wmn
ḥykylyh wmn 'yšqwptyh dnypr' br m'[rwy] 'šb'y't 'lyky
b'bd 'brhm
10. bṣwr yšḥq bšdy y'[qb] dl' tyḥṭwn bḥwrmyzdwk bt
m'<r>wy

18N18: Translation

1. By your name I made this amulet for the sealing,
2. And guarding of ḤWRMY<Z>DWK daughter of M'RWY. May she be sealed and protected by the signet ring.
3. By which earth and heaven are sealed from demons [devils], lilitu, Danahiš,
4. The judges, the acquitted one, the image-spirit, all evil things, the wicked [Lilith] and from the impudent companion
5. Who strikes, smites and claws male and female children and male and female infants. I adjure
6. You that you should be struck in the membrane of your heart by the lance of the mighty SQWRṬ who rules over demons, devils and the wicked Lilith.
7. Behold, I have written for you a divorce-writ and I have banished you from NYPR' son of M'RWY and from ḤWRMYZDWK daughter of M'RW<Y>. As the demons write divorce-writs

8. For their wives in truth and they do not return to them again. Now, take your divorce- writ, receive your exorcism, uproot your dwelling and depart your kingdom.
9. Razed, shattered, go and be far away from the house, dwelling, homestead, threshold of NYPR' son of M'RWY. I adjure you by the servant of Abraham,
10. By the rock of Isaac, by the Shaddai of Jacob, that you might not injure HWRMYZDWK daughter of M'<R>WY.

18N20

The two rim fragments, Fragment I consisting of 5 sherds and Fragment II, consisting of 8 sherds, do not join to form a whole. However, the text of Fragment I appears to precede that of Fragment II.

Base centre & fragment I: 1-5.

The relationship of Fragments I: 1-5 to the Base Centre cannot be identified, hence the given listing is only arbitrary.

Base centre

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. mzymn hydñ k'[s'] | 1. Designated is this bowl |
| 2. lhtmt' dg. | 2. For the sealing of g. |
| 3. 'qh'd. | 3. 'qh'd. |

Base fragment 1

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. stn['] | 1. Satan |
| 2. tyqrbwn l | 2. You might approach |
| 3. m' | 3. m' |

Base fragment 2

- | | |
|---------|----------------|
| 1. '. | 1. '. |
| 2. bšwm | 2. In the name |
| 3. šmš | 3. šmš |

Base fragments 3 and 4 only consist of 3 lines each of random characters that are, on the whole, indecipherable.

Fragment II

Fragment I only has 5 lines of text, hence no reading is supplied corresponding with Fragment II ll. 1, 2.

- II : 1 wmbkl't[']
 II : 2 gyšy gyšy
 I : 1 ... s' ... l
 II : 3 ym ... 'hwry dmrw
 I : 2 bd'n wmn 'ydh
 II : 4 rwh wmht.' wpwh dstw ... [']srw wħtym b'.m.
 I : 3 'qw 'mn 'myn 'myn w'myn ... w w'l šm
 II : 5 sm ml'kh 'r[...]t d[...]q wq̄tyl 'šyp w's[yr] šydy[n]
 I : 4 wmbkl't' wmšmtt' wk l zyqybyšy [wmzy]qyn wmn
 II : 6 mn gysyh dbtyd br ħ't'y 'mn 'mn slħ dbr ħzw'l hw
 l[...]lhdyn ks'
 I : 5 t'q[...] ' [...] dbtrhwn 'ydh tyštštm btrhwn br
 II : 7 'wsrh wštmh b'r'h wbrqy'h dl' tyqrb lgh ... d'ddn br
 ħ't'y 'mn '[mn]
- II : 1 tormentors
 II : 2 gyšy gyšy '
 I : 1 ... s' ... l
 II : 3 ym ... behind (?) dmrw
 I : 2 doing (?) and from his fate
 II : 4 rwh wmht.' wpwh dstw ... bound and sealed by '.m.
 I : 3 'qw Amen. Amen. Amen. ... w w'l šm
 II : 5 sm angel (?) 'r[...]t d[...]q and kills. Enchanted and bound
 are the demons
 I : 4 Tormentors, the ban-spirits, all the wicked blast-spirits,
 injurers and from
 II : 6 From the sides of BTYD son of Ĥ'T'Y. Amen. Amen. Selah.
 I : 5 t'q [...] ' [...] that after them his fate. May you be sealed
 after them br
 II : 7 Bound and banned (?) on earth and in the firmament lest you
 might approach D'DDN son of Ĥ'T'Y Amen. Amen.

18N98: Transliteration

1. smwmyt glydt try 'šr bnyñ wkwlhwn qłl ythwn sdrws ršy'h
2. wqmt w'rqł mn qdwmwhy w'złt lhd țwr' dymyğd b'lm' šmyh
w'bdł lhršyn
3. dynğšh w'bdyn dprzł' w't' s'wny wss'wny wsngrw
w'rtyqw w'mrw lh pth ln' w'mrt
4. lhwn lyt 'n' pth' lkwn w'mrw dwkt' dn'br wny'wl 'lh
wqmt wptht lhwn w'wl 'ymhwn sdrws
5. wqłlyh lybrh whnq ywtyh wqmt wšwhł 'lwhy 's'wny
wss'wny wsngrw w'rtyqw m' 'bdw lgh wqwmw wrdpw
btryh
6. w'drykw ywtyh lgw plgws ym' rbh wb'w mynhwn lmyqłl
ywtyh wlmynq ywtyh w'mr lhwn šbwqw myny w'n'
7. myštb'n' lkwn bm<y> šmdd{mdd} bš'wlw mym dkl 'tr
ddkryn šmyh ds'wny wss'wny wsngrw w'rtyqw 'n' l'
'yqłwl wl'
8. 'yğnwq wl' 'yğbwł bnyñ d'yt lhwn wdhwñ lğwrmzdwk bt
m'rwy wlnypr' br m'rwy 'syr' lylyt' 'syr' mbklł'
9. 'syr šyd' 'syr dyw' 'syr dnyš 'syr dny 'syr zky' 'syr
ptkr'

18N98: Translation

1. Smamit bore twelve sons. All of them were killed by the wicked Sideros
2. She got up and fled from him, and went to a mountain whose name is unique in the world. She performed sorceries
3. Of copper and magic acts of iron. S'WNY, SS'WNY, SNGRW and 'RTYQW came and said to her, "Open for us". She said
4. To them, "I shall not open for you". They said, "This is a place for us to pass (through) and enter into". She got up and opened for them and Sideros entered with them

5. And killed her son, strangling him. She got up and cried at him, "'S'WNY, SS'WNY, SNGRW and 'RTYQW! What have they done to him". They got up and and chased after him
6. And found him in Pelagos the great sea and sought to kill and strangle him. He said to them, "Let go of me and I
7. Swear to you by the name of He who measured out the water in the palm of his hand, that wherever the names of S'WNY, SS'NWY and 'RTYQW are commemorated, I shall neither kill nor
8. Strangle nor injure the sons of HWRMYZDWK daughter of M'RW[Y] and NYPR' son of M'RWY. Bound is the Lilith, bound are the tormentors,
9. Bound is the demon, bound is the devil, bound is Dənaḥiš, bound are the judges, bound is the acquitted one, bound is the image-spirit.