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ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*
MMJ *Metropolitan Museum Journal*

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

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Radiance and the Power of Erasure in an Obsidian Lamaštu Amulet

MIRIAM SAID

Among the various figurines, pendants, and fragments of cuneiform ritual tablets in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection of ancient Near Eastern art is a nearly pristine obsidian amulet of the first millennium B.C.¹ This amulet, small enough to fit in the palm of one's hand, provides protection from the Mesopotamian demon Lamaštu. On one side is a representation of the demon surrounded by various ritual paraphernalia (fig. 1), and on the other, a ritual incantation carved in cuneiform script (fig. 2). In its current display—mounted flat against a beige cloth support—the opacity of the obsidian's dark color makes it difficult to see the image and also precludes any observation of the text. When the amulet is examined at close range, however, one is able to see how brilliantly light reflects off the surface and gets a

fig. 1 Amulet with a Lamaštu Demon.
Mesopotamia or Iran,
ca. early 1st millennium B.C.
Obsidian, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{13}{16} \times \frac{3}{8}$ in.
(5.7 × 4.7 × 0.9 cm). The
Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Purchase, James N.
Spear Gift, 1984 (1984.348)





fig. 2 Back view of Amulet with a Lamaštu Demon (fig. 1), showing the incantation

better sense of the inherently luminescent qualities of this material.

In 1994, Irene Winter published a seminal article identifying radiance as an important aesthetic attribute in Mesopotamian art, one that not only reflects the outer quality of a material form, but also is inherently linked to notions of divine power, and thus capable of engendering positive, affective responses to works of art characterized by this radiance.² Many cuneiform texts describe such an aura, one controlled by the gods and transmitted to the realm of man, as being imbued with vitality and purity and having transformative agency. These texts indicate that both people and objects could be in possession of radiance—kings and princes; physical structures such as temples, processional roads, and palace gateways; and various cultic paraphernalia.³ There are several words in Sumerian and Akkadian that describe radiance and luster, most notably as a divinely bestowed power that emanates, halo-like, from the head of Neo-Assyrian kings. Winter also notes that, despite these rich descriptions from textual sources, radiance is not paired with any direct iconography as we might expect to find in visual culture.⁴

There are, for example, no halos in Neo-Assyrian iconography. Instead, Mesopotamian craftsmen skillfully exploited the natural properties of materials to manifest this radiance in visually arresting art.

To date, the Metropolitan Museum's Lamaštu amulet has been the focus of iconographic study,⁵ but little attention has been given toward articulating how the materiality of the obsidian itself facilitated magical protection on behalf of the amulet's user. This article addresses a fascinating aspect of the object, namely, the transformed appearance of black obsidian into translucent glass, thereby enabling an erasure of the visual image and thus reframing the discussion of this amulet as an *apotropaion*, an object or image that averts evil.⁶ Light, as both material quality and divine power (*melammu*), weaponizes the obsidian against Lamaštu, altering the essential nature of the image and allowing a form of material exorcism to occur.

Although Lamaštu amulets have been examined since the mid-nineteenth century,⁷ a substantive study addressing their ritual function and magical materiality has yet to be made. Asking materially and sensorially situated questions of this amulet, its iconography, and its text—both the content of the inscription and the text *as* image—makes room for a more complex interpretation, one that examines the choices made by artisans or ritual specialists to create an object with potent magical agency.

LAMAŠTU AND THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM AMULET

Among the many beings in the Mesopotamian pantheon of gods, demons, and monsters, Lamaštu occupies a unique position as both a daughter of the sky god, Anu, and, upon her expulsion from heaven, an archetypical force of chaos. The specifics of Lamaštu's crimes are still uncertain, but she is believed to have requested to feed on the flesh of babies. It is possible she was thrown down to earth as punishment for acting outside the normal parameters of divine cosmic order; that is, willfully and without cause attacking mortals. Alternatively, her expulsion may be understood as a divine method of population control in the ancient world.⁸ Unlike other demons of the ancient Near East, Lamaštu has a strikingly clear mythology with an attendant iconography and pattern of destruction, thanks in large part to a series of incantation and ritual texts surviving from the second and first millennia B.C.⁹ These texts describe her primary targets as pregnant women and infants; however, nearly all members of society could fall victim to Lamaštu's destructive ways, as the following excerpt from the canonical first-millennium B.C. incantation series indicates:

When she has seized an old man, they call her
 “The Annihilator.”
 When she has seized a young man, they call her
 “The Scorcher.”

When she has seized a young woman, they call
 her “Lamaštu.”
 When she has seized a baby, they call her “Dimme.”¹⁰

In addition to the literature that provides remedies for victims of Lamaštu is an associated and intertwined tradition of amulet production. An abundant number of these amulets survive from antiquity and have been extensively published, although many more likely exist in public and private collections than are currently accounted for in the scholarship.¹¹ Those that have archaeological contexts indicate that Lamaštu amulets had vast geographic distributions, from sites in northern and southern Mesopotamia, Iran, and Syria, to Kaneš (Kültepe) in modern-day Turkey and as far west as Poggio Civitate in Italy.¹² They range in date from roughly the seventeenth century B.C. through the Hellenistic period.¹³ Known to modern scholars since the mid-nineteenth century, these amulets primarily have been studied for their inscriptions, while art historical and visual investigations have focused on corroborating descriptions found in textual sources.¹⁴

Archaeological studies have analyzed the movement and production locations of the amulets, but such analysis is often fraught, since the portability of the objects

often precludes secure contextualization.¹⁵ Some excavators, however, have been successful in this regard. In 1994, archaeologists discovered an amuletic-shaped tablet at Kaneš (Kültepe), in the home of an Assyrian named Šalim-Aššur, proving that incantation literatures could be found in domestic contexts in the ancient Near East, and also pushing the earliest known reference to Lamaštu back to the nineteenth century B.C.¹⁶ Unfortunately, the vast majority of these amulets remain unexcavated.

Lamaštu amulets are typically square or rectangular and could be either small enough to wear pinned to a garment or threaded onto a necklace, or produced in larger plaque-sized amulets to hang on walls. They were made in various materials, including bronze and copper; black, brown, and green stones, such as steatite and hematite; and other stones such as yellow sandstone and pink limestone, all materials likely chosen for perceived magical, mythical, or folkloric associations.¹⁷ Although prescriptive texts organizing stones for amulet production survive and clearly indicate arrangement into groups according to magical characteristics, it is difficult to match ancient stones by culturally constructed type to the modern mineral designations used in the field today.¹⁸

Iconographically, Lamaštu is always represented as a monstrous composite of various animal parts, usually with the head of a lion or dog, or occasionally a bird of prey. She is often shown with a gaping mouth filled with sharp teeth and stippling on her body to signify a hairy form, one that incorporates bared breasts and feet ending in talons. Often she is depicted suckling a dog and pig, her traditional companions, owing to their associations with the wild and uncleanness, or in combat with ritual priests and the wind demon Pazuzu, her most powerful and primary mythological adversary (fig. 3).¹⁹ Finally, she tends to be surrounded by ritual paraphernalia used to propel her return to her underworld abode, such as a traveler’s cloak, a pair of sandals, and provisions of food and drink—everything one might need on a long journey. She is also bribed with jewelry, a spindle, a flask of oil, and other markers of domesticity, reminding us that she is a demon who longs for a home, always on the margins looking inward.

One of the key markers of divinity in Mesopotamia was the presence of a cult and temple on earth, but as a demon, Lamaštu was no longer privileged to these amenities. Provisioning her with items that would be part of a domestic context, which for a god would be the actual temple (Akkadian, *bītum*, or “house”), provides additional appeasement in the rituals and on apotropaic amulets. In addition to the presence of these



fig. 3 Pendant with the Head of Pazuzu. Neo-Assyrian, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. Bronze, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (4.3 × 2.7 × 2.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Norbert Schimmel and Robert Haber Gifts, and funds from various donors, 1993 (1993.181)

By the sixth millennium B.C., the manufacture of personal adornment, vessels, and mirrors from obsidian flourished at several Neolithic sites in northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia. Reserving obsidian for such prestige objects—for example, an elaborate necklace made with double conoid-shaped obsidian pendants and cowrie shells excavated from the Burnt House at Tell Arpachiyah (fig. 4)—capitalized on the material's luminescence and exoticism, helping individuals to distinguish themselves at a time when leadership roles were developing within a relatively egalitarian culture.²⁷ As with nearly all precious and semiprecious materials found in Mesopotamia, obsidian's value was magnified because it did not occur naturally in the Tigris-Euphrates river valley and had to be imported across great distances to reach Assyria proper. Likely sources of obsidian are known in Ethiopia, Sudan, southern Yemen, southwest Arabia, the Red Sea islands, and Lake Van in Anatolia.²⁸ Recent analysis with portable X-ray fluorescence reveals that the obsidian used for the Museum's amulet was sourced from the Kömürcü outcrops of the Göllü Dağ volcano complex in Anatolia.²⁹

The advent of metalworking technologies at the end of the fourth millennium B.C. meant that obsidian was in large part phased out of use for tools and reserved almost exclusively for prestige goods, such as cups and vessels, amulets, pendants, and beads.³⁰ Various textual references record the use of obsidian in elaborate jewelry assemblages, alongside other precious materials such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and carnelian. By the end of the third millennium B.C., material evidence of obsidian becomes sparse, likely due to its fragility, but texts suggest its continued use for jewelry production, and that it retained a material value similar to lapis lazuli.³¹ The material record is even sparser for the first millennium B.C., making the Museum's amulet a rarity.³²



fig. 4 Necklace. Halaf, Tell Arpachiyah, Iraq, 6th millennium B.C. Obsidian, cowrie shell, limestone, clay, and traces of pigment, L. 10 1/8 in. (25.8 cm), W. of largest obsidian bead 1 1/2 in. (3.8 cm). British Museum, London (1934.0210.547; AN432112001)

While the Akkadian term for obsidian, *šurru*, may refer to the stones themselves, analysis of the word from various contexts shows that it could also act as a qualifier for specific colors of certain stones.³³ Stones referred to as *šurru* could be black, green, or white, and *šurru* could be applied adjectivally to describe the appearance of these colors in other media (for example, “bricks enameled in lapis lazuli and *šurru*-color”).³⁴ Obsidian is recorded in inscriptions of the Middle Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (r. 1114–1076 B.C.), in which he is described as bringing *šurru* stone down from the mountains of Na’iri, probably Lake Van, and then dedicating them in a temple to the storm god, Adad.³⁵ Similarly, administrators to the Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II (r. 722–705 B.C.) recorded obsidian in a list of precious stones dedicated to the god Marduk.³⁶

Although the Museum's obsidian Lamaštu amulet is broken at the top, based on comparanda, it almost certainly originally had a flange for suspension where this break occurs. No ancient literature survives on the production and subsequent use of Lamaštu amulets, but textual evidence on the various uses of obsidian allows us to infer that it could have been worn on a necklace or pinned to the body, both in ritual contexts and possibly as part of a daily ensemble.³⁷ One passage from a Neo-Assyrian anti-witchcraft text includes ritual instructions for the fabrication and consecration of a protective necklace. Following a poetic prayer to Marduk and his consort Zarpanītu, the text instructs that the necklace should incorporate a pendant of an *urdimmu*, a dog-man figurine, and that it must be adorned with obsidian:

DÙ.DÙ.BI urdimmu ša erēni teppuš ina ṭurri ḫurāši
tašakkak
ṭurri kitī (var.: kaspi) ina kippat ḫurāši talammi ḫulāla
šurra šalma (var.: kunuk
ḫulāli; kunuk šubī) tašakkak [ina mu]ḫiḫiḫi tašakkan

Its ritual: You make the figurine of a dog-man of cedar wood, you string it on a cord of gold, you wrap a cord of flax (var.: silver) with a golden loop, you string *hulalu*-stone (and) “dark obsidian” (var.: a seal of *hulalu*-stone; a seal of *shubu*-stone) (on it); you put it [o]n it (i.e., the figurine)³⁸

The above description confirms the presence of obsidian in prophylactic jewelry and, by extension, provides one explanation for its use in Lamaštu amulets. Several other texts provide additional descriptions of obsidian being made into beads to be worn on a necklace, occasionally to touch one's forehead, or to be carried in a leather bag.³⁹

If figurines embodying ritual change, like the *urdimmu* pendant described above, were adorned with obsidian to facilitate appeals to the gods, it is not unreasonable to imagine that amulets made of the same material were similarly conceived. Such an inference, however, still leaves a lacuna in the discussion—namely, how the material itself, situated within a framework of ritual and mythological associations, constituted the apotropaic effect ascribed to it. By its very nature, obsidian’s materiality facilitated a type of human–object intimacy: while large blocks of the stone were cultivated for use in architecture or statuary, it was generally traded in small blocks meant for jewelry or amulets.⁴⁰ The body itself thus became an essential component of the formula. Indeed, it has been argued that amulets, or at least amuletic texts inscribed on clay, stone, or metal tablets, required proximity to the spaces they were intended to protect in order to function properly.⁴¹ By extension, amulets such as the Museum’s Lamaštu amulet are necessarily dependent on their proximity to the body and on the body’s sensory responses to be effective.

Careful observation of the Museum’s amulet reveals a highly luminous refraction of light at the break in the upper right corner. Its smooth, polished surface yields varying degrees of luster, depending on how the amulet is held or moved. From a frontal position, the amulet appears opaque. The density of the obsidian’s darkness from this position makes it challenging to see Lamaštu and the surrounding items, since they are carved in the negative. It becomes necessary to handle the amulet to see each with more clarity. Both the luster and the darkness of the obsidian thus contribute critically to the variable occlusion and revelation of text and image.

What is more significant for its use as a magical ornament is its transformed appearance from a nearly opaque black stone to a translucent one when held to

the light (fig. 5). Doing so reveals several inclusions in its material fabric, which, along with its now diffused translucence, nearly obscure the figure of Lamaštu and the incantation text. One can imagine ancient artisans deliberately exploiting the natural properties of the stone, both its brightness and its murky striations, to enhance the very nature of the fearsome demon being kept at bay.⁴² As the incantation literature expressively describes, “The small of her back is speckled like a leopard, her cheek is yellowish and pale like ochre.”⁴³

This phenomenon is not unique to the Museum’s amulet: recently published scholarship from the Yale Babylonian Collection at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History (YBC) includes photographic evidence of a similar effect occurring in one of its own obsidian Lamaštu amulets (fig. 6).⁴⁴ Only two centimeters wide and about twice that in height, the YBC amulet depicts a more schematically executed Lamaštu—accompanied by many of her standard accoutrements, composed from a series of geometric shapes. On the reverse is a five-line inscription, although its quality is worse than that of the Metropolitan Museum amulet, and not all the sign forms are legible.⁴⁵ When the YBC amulet is exposed to light, the sign forms and figural imagery lose their clarity and articulation. Flow bands cut across the image and text at thirty-eight degrees from the horizontal axis of the amulet, rendering both unclear.⁴⁶ In addition to these natural bands, the object’s thinness allows the guidelines organizing the inscription to become visible and to cut across the image of Lamaštu on the opposite side. The bright illumination, appearance of inclusions, and coalescence of incised details on both sides of these obsidian amulets facilitate a fundamental shift in the character of the carved images.

LAMAŠTU AS *ŠALMU*, AND TEXT AS VISUAL IMAGE

Representation in Assyria of the first millennium B.C. was concerned less with mimetic veracity to nature—a construct in art historical scholarship resulting from a long history of prioritizing Western theories of image production and aesthetics—than with an overriding interest in the power and efficacy vested in representational forms. The Akkadian term *šalmu* is generally understood as “image” by modern art historians without referencing specific types of monuments.⁴⁷ However, its application to nonfigural forms complicates the meaning of *šalmu*, which may be better understood as “manifestation.” Visual representations were linked intrinsically to their referent in reality, and the term *šalmu* “maintains the connotation of a physical rendering of unique and essential identity.”⁴⁸ Thus, images of



fig. 5 Amulet with a Lamaštu Demon (fig. 1) illuminated by a light source

fig. 6 Amulet with a Lamaštu Demon. Neo-Assyrian(?), early 1st millennium B.C. Obsidian, approx. H. 1¾ in. (4.5 cm), W. 1½ in. (2.8 cm). Yale Babylonian Collection, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven (YPM BC 011147)



Lamaštu on amulets were not merely representational, and did not function simply to identify from whom or what the amulet protected a wearer. The inclusion of Lamaštu sought to effect change on the demon goddess herself. Indeed, images in Mesopotamia do not simply represent, they make things happen.

Looking at its components and how they interact with the *šalmu* of Lamaštu, it is possible to produce a plausible interpretation of how the Museum's obsidian amulet functioned. The content of the Sumerian incantation both placates Lamaštu and invokes the names and powers of beneficent gods to mitigate her activities. The content of the text, however, is not the only significant aspect of the inscription in operation here. The bold and precise lapidary style underscores the apotropaic purpose of the amulet, as the clarity of the signs makes the incantation vividly present, both in terms of legibility and in materializing the text on the obsidian.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the amulet's overall form constitutes a recognizable field of importance. According to Nils Heessel, square-shaped tablets with a protruding flange act as a formal signal that draws one's attention to the locus of the text.⁵⁰ The space within the "square and flange" orientation signals that magically efficacious words "lie here." This visual-spatial technique sidesteps the need to read the inscription if one lacked the ability to do so, and it emphasizes the material manifestation of the text and its inherent power.⁵¹



Ritual instructions in several passages of the incantation series describe making a clay figurine of Lamaštu, binding her, and enclosing her within a "magic circle." She remains captive until the figurine is buried or otherwise destroyed, indicating that bounding or binding was a critical aspect of Lamaštu's expulsion process.⁵² Given this information, the orientation of the text on the front of the amulet, framing the image of Lamaštu, can be regarded as a deliberate, not arbitrary, strategy. The inscription begins on the back and is read from top to bottom, left to right. To move to the next "side" of the text, as is typical when reading cuneiform tablets, one turns the tablet on its horizontal axis (as opposed to its vertical axis, in the way we turn the pages of modern books). Thus flipped, the text is properly oriented for reading, with the image inverted. The inscription continues onto the left side of the amulet, which necessitates turning it ninety degrees to the right. The final two lines of the inscription appear in parallel, one above Lamaštu and one below. To then orient the image properly, with Lamaštu standing upright, one must turn the amulet once more, ninety degrees to the right. This clever arrangement of text and image not only acts as a frame that situates and binds Lamaštu to the visual plane, but it effectively forces the bearer of the amulet to turn the object in a manner that mimics the ritual binding practices described in the text. The arrangement produces a magical square that surrounds the

demon and operates as an equivalent to the “magical circle” mentioned in rituals.

MELAMMU AND THE POWER OF RADIANCE

Within a constellation of Mesopotamian aesthetic phenomena, radiance was by no means just an attractive quality of specific valuable materials. Certainly, it enhanced the value and status of objects and of the people associated with them. However, a deeper understanding of radiance is possible when considering the selection of obsidian as the material support onto which an image of Lamaštu was incised. Once the powerful demon was confined to this magically charged plane through representation and incantation, her image could be erased through the luminescent qualities inherent in the obsidian, a burst of radiance that would have been recognized as the manifestation of divine power—the *melammu*.

As mentioned above, references to methods of production are not available in the cuneiform record. A connection between radiance, obsidian, and amuletic power, derived from visual analysis, is, however, plausible within broader scholarly contexts of Mesopotamian art and literature. *Melammu* was understood in antiquity as a radiance of divine origin, sometimes conceived of as a dazzling nimbus or crown, and it was often paired with the Akkadian term *puluhtu*, “terror.”⁵³ *Melammu* is described as emanating from everything touched by divine power, so weapons, symbols, temples, and other sanctified spaces were also believed to be in possession of *melammu*. A critical aspect of *melammu* lies in its ability to be manipulated: it was a power that could be given as well as taken away. Textual evidence reveals that the gods bestowed this radiance upon the king as one of the many markers of his rule.⁵⁴ Monsters and demons could, and did, possess *melammu*, and the presence or absence of this power played an important role in bolstering or impeding their strength. In the Babylonian creation myth *Enûma Eliš*, Tiamat, the primordial goddess of chaos and mother of creation, bestows divine radiance upon her monstrous children and essentially turns them into gods.⁵⁵ In early versions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Humbaba, the monstrous, divinely appointed guardian of the cedar forest, has seven terrifying auras that he uses as weapons to impede the hero Gilgamesh from cutting down a tree. It is only after Gilgamesh and his companion, Enkidu, trick Humbaba into giving up these auras that the monster becomes vulnerable to death.⁵⁶

Mythological narratives and royal inscriptions make clear that the presence of *melammu* is correlated

with more power, and its absence or usurpation, with less. The resulting vulnerability facilitates the vanquishing of monsters, rebellious deities, and enemies.⁵⁷

Lamaštu is similarly susceptible to the effects of *melammu*. Her place in the heavens as a daughter of Anu was taken from her, along with many of its attendant rights and capabilities. As an entity that has been subject to limitations on her power, she is more closely positioned, cosmically, to the class of monsters in Mesopotamian literature most directly affected by the usurpation or gifting of *melammu*. It is thus plausible that radiance as it appears in concrete form could be used as a weapon against her, especially when Mesopotamian image theory and notions of *šalmu* are brought to bear on the results of exposing the visual image to light. Apprehending the material form is no longer just about deciphering the image; rather, the light changes its fundamental state of being.

It is not unreasonable to imagine that, in the ancient imagination, obsidian’s capacity for transmitting light and inducing visual erasure resulted from a quality bestowed upon the material by divine powers at work. In the case of the Museum’s Lamaštu amulet, radiance can be present in certain conditions, but it should be noted that these conditions are within the control of the wearer of the amulet, not the creature represented therein. In this case, Lamaštu lacks the agency to claim the radiance for herself. She will always be subjugated by the phenomenal power of radiance, the *melammu*, inherent in the obsidian itself. The anchoring principle of the framing incantation, meanwhile, ensures the continuance of this state of perpetual exorcism. The intersection of representational strategies that physically locate Lamaštu within the visual plane; the entrapping texts; the materiality, luminosity, and erasing properties of obsidian; and an understanding of radiance as a divine endowment that can transform the capabilities of demons and monsters all coalesce in a reading of this amulet, specifically, the *how* of its efficacy. It is an extraordinary amount of information to glean from a single object.

Scholars of Mesopotamian magic often look to such objects as a means of analyzing information contained in the cuneiform literature. Even within a museum context, these pieces are displayed in glass cases, engendering a practice of seeing magical items at a remove from their intended use and outside their cultural networks, making it difficult to conceptualize how they functioned. Although there is an unbridgeable gap between modern and ancient engagement with the material world, heuristic analysis led to several of the insights discussed

above. Although Lamaštu amulets have always been spoken of as a coherent group, differences in material, scale, depth of carving, and weight, among other properties, variably and significantly influence an object's agency and possible interpretations of its ancient functionality. This study highlights the need for focused, individual object study. The Museum's Lamaštu amulet embodies a form of Mesopotamian magical technology only partially accessible while on display, and reveals the deliberate choices made by Near Eastern artisans in their efforts to produce highly concentrated objects of magical power.

NOTES

- 1 Farber 2014, p. 258, fig. 21; Harper 1985.
- 2 Winter 1994.
- 3 Ibid., p. 124.
- 4 Winter 2012, p. 160.
- 5 Farber 1983.
- 6 The term *apotropaion* has its roots in the Greek verb *αποτρέπειν*, "to turn away from," or "to avert." See Faraone 1992, p. 4.
- 7 Farber 2014, p. 39.
- 8 Assyriologists infer this latter interpretation from tablet II of the Atra-hasis myth, in which the god Enlil regularly decimates the human population through famine, drought, and other calamities. One of the destructive forces is referred to as the Pāšittu, "The Exterminator," an epithet ascribed to Lamaštu in first-millennium B.C. incantations. For further discussion, see Lambert and Millard 1969.
- 9 See Farber 2014, pp. 67–342, for most recent text editions.
- 10 Ibid., p. 153.
- 11 To date, ninety-seven amulets are catalogued in various publications. See Klengel 1960; Klengel 1961; Farber 1983; Farber 1989; Wiggermann 1992; Farber 1997; Green 1997; Farber 1998; Wiggermann 2000; Götting 2011; Farber 2014; and Iasenovskaia 2019.
- 12 Graff 2014, p. 265.
- 13 Wiggermann 2000, p. 219.
- 14 Ibid., p. 241.
- 15 Götting 2011, pp. 442–46.
- 16 Barjamovic 2015, p. 68.
- 17 Horowitz 1992, p. 114. See also Van Dijk 1983.
- 18 Yalvaç 1965, p. 330.
- 19 For an overview of Pazuzu, see Heessel 2002.
- 20 Translation and transliteration by Wilfred Lambert, as noted in the curatorial file for this object, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, MMA. This transliteration sometimes deviates from that provided in Farber 2014, pp. 114–16. The difficulties with the text, as noted in Farber's commentary on pp. 243–44, may account for these differences in reading.
- 21 Farber 1995, pp. 1901–7.
- 22 Mirelman 2018, p. 356.
- 23 Rapp 2009, p. 85.

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- 24 Moorey 1994, pp. 63–64.
- 25 Healey 2013, p. 251.
- 26 Cassin 1968, pp. 3–4.
- 27 Healey 2013, p. 252. For the Tell Arpachiyah necklace, see Mallowan and Rose 1935, p. 97.
- 28 Moorey 1994, p. 64.
- 29 Frahm, Lassen, and Wagensonner 2019, p. 984.
- 30 Woolley 1934, pp. 73–91.
- 31 *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (CAD), vol. 16, § (Chicago, 1962), pp. 257ff.
- 32 Moorey 1994, p. 71. In commenting on the rarity of worked obsidian objects from the first millennium B.C., Moorey cites the Museum's Lamaštu amulet as an exceptional survivor from antiquity. There are two additional examples in the British Museum, London (BM 127371, BM 132520), one in the Yale Babylonian Collection, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven (NBC 08151), and one in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 8184). One amulet previously in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago is now in a private collection, and another was last photographed in 1982 in Tehran, but its current location is unknown; see Farber 2014, p. 338, fig. 22, and pls. 91 (Lam. Amulet no. 95) and 90 (Lam. amulet no. 94).
- 33 In addition to its designation of obsidian, the word *šurru* could also refer to flint.
- 34 *Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD), vol. 16, §, p. 259.
- 35 Grayson 1991, p. 29.
- 36 Winckler 1889, pp. 125–26.
- 37 Reiner 1995, p. 128.
- 38 Abusch and Schwemer 2016, p. 226.
- 39 *Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD), vol. 16, §, p. 258.
- 40 Sparks 2001, p. 96.
- 41 Heessel 2014, pp. 70–71.
- 42 Patrick Crowley proposes a similar and compelling description of the so-called Getty Aphrodite (formerly J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 88.AA.76), wherein the materiality of rock crystal signified the goddess's liquid origins, and operated to further enhance a notion and experience of her that had been formed from the crystal. Crowley notes the presence of cloudy striations on her thighs, what gemologists call "fluid inclusions,"

- and argues that these trapped bands of tiny bubbles may in fact have been a *prized* asset to the sculpture, acting like small birthmarks that “dramatized the titular epiphany of the goddess in her imagistic form.” See Crowley 2016, pp. 238–39.
- 43 Farber 2014, p. 169. Lam. II, Inc. 7: “*kima nimri tukkupā kalātūša / kima kale lēssa arqat.*”
- 44 Frahm, Lassen, and Wagensohn 2019, p. 982. This effect appears limited to amulets made from obsidian. It should be noted that Lamaštu amulets were made from a variety of materials, but it is this author’s position that art historical interpretation should be conditional upon the specific parameters of objects as individual case studies. Analysis of metals and other stones through phenomenological frameworks could potentially yield different and fruitful results.
- 45 Farber 1989, pp. 96–97.
- 46 Frahm, Lassen, and Wagensohn 2019, p. 982.
- 47 Winter 1997, pp. 364–69.
- 48 Feldman 2009, p. 46.
- 49 The topic of literacy in ancient Mesopotamia is expansive in contemporary scholarship, and beyond the scope of this article. For an overview, see Wilcke 2000; Charpin 2004; and Veldhuis 2011.
- 50 Heessel 2014, p. 73.
- 51 Although touched upon briefly in this article, the complexities of magical writing in antiquity—including but not limited to audience literacy, visibility and access, and pseudo-scripts—are vast and numerous, as is the attendant scholarship. For an overview of magical texts and writing in both antique and medieval contexts, see contributions in Abusch and van der Toorn 1999; Boschung and Bremmer 2015; and Frankfurter 2019. See also Skemer 2006.
- 52 Farber 2014, p. 151: Rit. 3, line 56: “You bind her to a *baltu* (and/or) an *ašāgu* thorn bush. You surround her three times with a magic circle.” *Circle* in these instances simply means “enclosing ring (of any shape),” rather than being geometrically defined.
- 53 Oppenheim 1943, p. 31. See also *puluḫtu* in the *Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD), vol. 12, P (2005), pp. 505ff.
- 54 Oppenheim 1943, p. 31: “they (the gods) give him sceptre, throne and the *palū*-symbol and they adorn him with the royal *melammu* (*ú-za-a’-nu-šu-ma me-lam šarru-u-ti*).”
- 55 Lambert 2013, pp. 58–59.
- 56 George 1999, pp. 149–66.
- 57 Ataç 2007, pp. 306–8.

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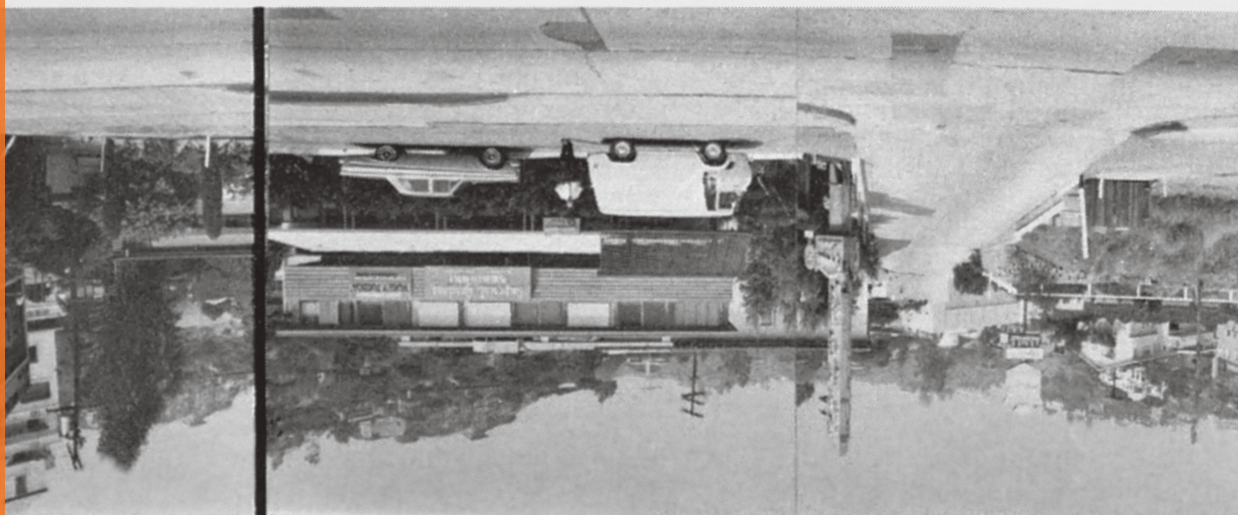
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