

101) The BM object 1883-1-18, 752: a scrap of cuneiform about beads for keeping the baby-snatcher at bay, duplicating Farber, *Lamaštu*, ms. “FsL” (BM 42612+) — The British Museum fragment with registration number 1883-1-18, 752 is a mere flake of clay representing the middle part of the upper half of the reverse of a small excerpt tablet.<sup>1)</sup> A year ago the present author identified what scanty text has been preserved in it as a duplicate to BM 42612+, ll. 10-16, which itself is an extract tablet, too, inscribed with a ritual involving amuletic beads that derives from canonical *Lamaštu* III, 49-63.<sup>2)</sup> The two excerpts would appear to have the same format and they also share their graphic typicalities, with the signs leaning to the left.

BM 42612<sup>+</sup> was first edited by I. Finkel<sup>3)</sup>, dubbed “Stones for right and left,” and has recently been re-edited under the siglum “FsL” by Farber, *Lamaštu*, pp. 52 — there put in the list of “Non-canonical rituals against *Lamaštu* not containing specific *Lamaštu* incantations” —, 276 (transliteration), 306-307 (bound text and translation), and 333-334 (commentary).

It was Farber who established the true nature of BM 42612<sup>+</sup>, renaming it “A school tablet with a ritual related to ‘Lam. III’ 49-63” (*Lamaštu*, p. 276). Unlike this duplicate, 1883-1-18, 752 not only employs no subdividing rulings, but it has blurred the lines between sections to the point of starting a new one halfway down a line (observably so in l. 5).

Although the artefact has ended up in the basically Ninevite batch of the Museum’s 1883-01-18 consignment of tablets rather than its Babylonian AH 1883-01-18 counterpart, the evidence enshrined in the duplicate as well as its writing characteristics firmly point to a post-Assyrian date and a Babylonian provenance.<sup>4)</sup> Despite the absence of any further information it may safely be assumed that our fragment dates to Neo-Babylonian/Persian times and its likely place of origin is either Sippar, Babylon or Borsippa.

Transliteration; restorations based on “FsL”.

Obv.

About ten lines missing

Rev.

- 1 [tara-kás NA<sub>4</sub>.ZÚ] ṛGI<sub>6</sub> ṛina DUR<sup>a</sup> SÍG GI<sub>6</sub> ṛÈṛ-[ak SÍG GI<sub>6</sub>]  
 2 [tála-pap 4<sup>b</sup>NA<sub>4</sub>.I]GI.MEŠ<sup>b</sup> 4<sup>lc</sup>NA<sub>4</sub>pa-re-e ina Š[U GÛB-šú]  
 3 [tara-kás NA<sub>4</sub>ka-p]a-ša<sup>d</sup>ina DUR<sup>a</sup> SÍG<sup>e</sup> SA<sub>5</sub> Èṛ-[ak]  
 4 [SÍG SA<sub>5</sub>tála]-pap 4<sup>b</sup>NA<sub>4</sub>.IGI.MEŠ<sup>b</sup> 4<sup>f</sup>NA<sub>4</sub>p[a-re-e]  
 5 [ina GÌR 15-šú tara]-ṛkásṛ NA<sub>4</sub>AN.BAR ṛinaṛ D[UR<sup>a</sup> SÍG.ZA.GÌN.NA]

Four to five lines missing

Notes

<sup>a</sup>“F<sub>s</sub>L”: GU.

<sup>b</sup>“F<sub>s</sub>L”: IGI<sup>II</sup>.MEŠ.

<sup>c</sup>Four verticals in a row; did the scribe intend to correct a wrongly copied 3?

<sup>d</sup>“F<sub>s</sub>L”: -ši.

<sup>e</sup>“FSL” (l. 13) accordingly to be restored ‘SÍG’, confirming Farber, *Lamaštu*, p. 276.

<sup>f</sup>“F<sub>s</sub>L”: ‘4’<sup>1</sup>, *pace* Farber, *Lamaštu*, p. 333f., remark ad l.i.

Translation of reconstructed text

<sup>1</sup>... you tie. You string a bead of obsidian on a thread of black wool (and) wind it in black wool. <sup>2</sup>You tie four eye-beads (and) four beads of *parû*-stone to his left hand <sup>3</sup>You string a bead of *kapāšu*-stone on a thread of red wool (and) wind it <sup>4</sup> in red wool. You tie four eye-beads (and) four beads of *parû*-stone <sup>5</sup> to his right foot. You string a bead of iron (ore) on a thread of blue wool...

**1** On view at <http://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P452756.jpg>.

**2** As edited by W. Farber, *Lamaštu: An Edition of the Canonical Series of Lamaštu Incantations and Rituals and Related Texts from the Second and First Millennia B.C.*, Winona Lake 2014.

**3** As Text 53 (pp. 210-211) in his study “On Late Babylonian Medical Training,” in A. George and I. Finkel (eds.), *Wisdom, Gods and Literature - Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W.G. Lambert*, Winona Lake 2000, pp. 137-223.

**4** For essentials of this bipartite collection see J.Reade, “Introduction” (apud E. Leichty, *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, VI (Sippar 1), London 1986), p. xxxiv; C. Walker, “Introduction” (apud E. Leichty, *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, VIII (Sippar 3), London 1988), p. xii-xiii. It is common knowledge that from the onset cataloguers have been keenly aware that the 1883-1-18 and like ‘Kuyunjik’ collections had got contaminated with objects of Babylonian provenance [and that conversely Kuyunjik objects had accidentally gone astray in Babylonian collections, e.g.: Walker, “Introduction,” p. xiib (bottom)]. C. Bezold, *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum*, IV (London 1896), p. 1952, lists 1883-1-18, 752 under the heading “(...) inscribed fragments and tablets which were not found at Kouyunjik; and miscellaneous objects found at Kouyunjik and at other sites in Mesopotamia.”

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