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## A SYRIAC MAGIC BOWL<sup>1</sup>

(MAV. 2463)

### Introduction:

Magic bowls bear inscriptions and spells meant to disable an malevolent demons, preventing them from hurting humans an their families, or causing damage to their property. They ar usually positioned face down. In some cases, two bowls are foun one on top of the other, one opening facing the other. It seems the these bowls are demon traps, as illustrated by the images of boun demons which adorn the bottom of the bowls. The spell is writte in a spiral form beginning at the image on the bottom moving up t the bowl's rim, and ending with a continuous circular line. The are buried upside down under the floor so that spirits would not b able to leave it (they use often the verb ܥܡܕܐ: to press or ܥܡܕܐܝܬ: to overturn). Any change in the positioning of these bowls woul allow the evil spirits to come out: because of this position th script was well preserved.

The magic bowls, called ܕܡܝܬܐ "cup", ܕܡܝܬܐ "amulet" or ܕܡܝܬܐ "mystery" were frequently found in Mesopotamia, and especially in it southern part. Scholars date them roughly between the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9 centuries A.D. They are inscribed in one of the Aramaic dialect spoken in several sites in Mesopotamia:

- 1- The Mandaic, proper to a special community based in th southern part of present Iraq near the Euphrates and Tigris river: Their script and their beliefs are different from other Jewish an Christian groups.
- 2- The Jewish-Aramaic, proper to the Jewish community an written in the square Hebrew letters. Most of the magic bowl were written in the Jewish-Aramaic and Mandaic scripts.
- 3- The last one is the Syriac, a dialect generally, proper to th Christian community: the Syriac magic bowls are written in thre kinds of script: Manichean, Estrangelo and Serto. The number c bowls written in this dialect is less than the other two.

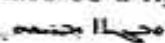
<sup>1</sup> This bowl belongs to the Main Library of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik i









These bowl texts, with their singular literary genre, contain prayer and protection formulae for their clients: to protect their bodies and spirits, their houses, women, children, incomes, harvest possessions and animals... to protect them from all kinds of evil spirits, from the evil eye, from the turbulent mind and dreams in the night or in the day... these bowls with their texts were a kind of magic healing from bodily and spiritual illness.

#### Description of the Bowl and the Inscription:

The bowl is yellowish white earthenware, inscribed in brownish black ink, and contains 6 spiral lines. It measures 6 cm in height with a circumference of 18 cm. The script is clear and easily read except for some letters because of cracks. There is a small horizontal line before naming the angels (line 3). There are some stains resulting from gums used by merchants to glue the broken parts. The text is finished with a continuous circular line, in certain places barred because of cracks or abrasion.

In the bottom of the bowl there is a mask-like figure, surrounded by a cogline: perhaps it is a symbol of the demons and the spirit mentioned in the texts. It might also be a figure, complete with halo, as inferred from the text  "the radiance of his head".

#### Paleographic remarks:

I begin by making a few general observations about the script which will enable us to obtain a good reading, and therefore more accurate translation of the text. The script seems to be generally in cursive *estrangelo*, except the *serto* which is used 2 times for certain letters, and always for the *dolat* and *rish*. These two letters are at times with dotting, at other times without dotting. For example: The word  in the first line, is without dotting yet it appears with dotting later (lines 5 and 6). The case is similar with regard to the word , and others. Likewise *syoneth* which at times are added, as in  (line 2),  (line 3),  (line 5) and sometimes omitted as in the following words  (line 3)



- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. This mystery and this protection are appointed                    | 1. .ܡܕܥܝܢܐ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 2. for the house and the threshold of Forukazad.                     | 2. .ܠܒܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 3. And Lord calls the angels who stand in His presence:              | 3. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 4. Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Azaziel,                           | 4. .ܓܝܒܪܝܐܠ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ      |
| 5. angels who do the will of the Lord.                               | 5. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 6. And he sent them to kill the demons, devils, and liliths.         | 6. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 7. I adjure you,   | 7. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 8. by the word of our Lord,  | 8. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 9. and by the radiance that is on His head,                          | 9. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ        |
| 10. to be guardians  | 10. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 11. of the house and the threshold of Forukazad, son of Kumi.        | 11. .ܠܒܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ |
| 12. Tremble malicious demons.  | 12. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 13. I adjure you by the Word,  | 13. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 14. not to come near the house of Forukazad, son of Kumi;            | 14. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 15. for I seal him   | 15. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 16. by the seal by which heaven and earth are sealed.                | 16. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 17. And as the Sun and the Moon declare God's will,                  | 17. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 18. so let this sealing and protection, and stability, and strength  | 18. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |
| 19. establish the house and the threshold of Forukazad, son of Kumi. | 19. .ܠܒܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ |
| 20. Verily.  | 20. .ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܝܢ       |



### Division of the Text:

For a better understanding of the text, I have divided it into several paragraphs; I will make remarks on some important expressions.

#### I- Line 1:

Opening formula: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ : It is a classical formula found almost at the beginning of incantation texts. It is inscribed in Syriac magic bowls from Nippur<sup>2</sup>, and in some Syriac incantation bowls in the Iraq Museum<sup>3</sup>. There is also another similar version ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ. Some texts add to it several words, such as seal, strength, victory...health and security<sup>4</sup>. The expression ܐܠܗܐ indicates the bowl and the inscription as having a magic power against evil spirits. This is shown in another magic bowl ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ "this mystery buried inside the (house)"<sup>5</sup>. The word ܐܠܗܐ usually means mystery, i.e., that which is hidden and obscure, a talisman or an exorcistic formula, a spell. It is with this meaning that it is used in magic writings.

ܐܠܗܐ / ܐܠܗܐ : the reading of this word is difficult because of its writing. In the first part, we can see three connected letters (*waw nun* and *olaf* both of whose both legs interpenetrate), as if we read the following word: ܐܠܗܐ which is actually written below, in the text, without *olaf*. It is possible that what appears in the form of an incomplete circle is the letter *qaf* connected to the letter *waw* from the right side (as in other words), followed by the letters *tet* (not connected from the left side), *rish* (without dotting), *taw* and *olaf*, the latter two interpenetrating. As such, our reading would be ܐܠܗܐ "and the tie/and the knot/and the binding..." which is a word

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery, J. A. J. A., *Aramaic Incantations texts from Nippur*, Philadelphie 1913, (no 31, 32, 34, 35, 36).

<sup>3</sup> J. Teixidor, "The Syriac Incantation Bowls in the Iraq Museum", *Sumer* 18, p. 51-62.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 3, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> Maria Gorea, « Trois nouvelles coupes magiques araméennes », *Semitica* 51 2001, p. 74, 79.

<sup>6</sup> M. J. Geller, « Eight Incantation Bowls » (Aaron bowl C), *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 17, p. 111.

used in incantations texts from Nippur to tie demons and evil spirits, and control them by magic power.<sup>7</sup> I think the first reading is more acceptable.

## II- Line 2:

Client name: (ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ) is an Iranian name. Persian names are commonly found in many magic bowls. Usually in Mandaic and Aramaic Babylonian bowls the name of person is linked to his mother's name; rarely do we find the name linked to the father's name.<sup>8</sup> We find a similar name in (Naveh 2(3. 6. 7) with one different letter: ܕܢܚܝܐ. Another name is attested with *aleph* in place of *any*: ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ. He is a client of a bowl published by Müller-Kessler.<sup>9</sup>

## III- The content: 3-19:

A- Lines 3-6: the general mission of God's angels is the killing of demons.

### Line 3:

ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ: This sentence echoes the angel Gabriel's answer to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, as is mentioned in the translation of Peshitta: ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ.

ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ: "I am Gabriel who stand in God's presence, and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news" (Luke 1:19).

We find another similar sentence in a bowl published by Lacau (Pl. 1): ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts*, text n° 7. 1 (ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ).

<sup>8</sup> H. Pognon, *Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khoubir*, Paris, 1898, (Reprinted in Amsterdam 1979), p. 98; Maria Gorea, « Trois nouvelles coupes... », p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> Tapani Harvainen "A Syriac Incantation Bowl in the Finnish National Museum Helsinki. A specimen of Eastern Aramaic Koiné", *Studia Orientalia* 51: 1, 197: p. 6, l. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Christa Müller-Kessler, "The Story of Buzan-Lalit, Daughter of Zanay-Lalit", *JAOS* 116, 1996, pp. 185-195.

<sup>11</sup> P. Lacau, "une coupe d'incantation", *RA* 3, 1894, p. 50.

Line 4:

ܐܡܪܐܢ ܡܝܚܐܝܠ ܡܝܚܐܝܠ ܡܝܚܐܝܠ ܡܝܚܐܝܠ The angels Gabriel, Michael and Raphael, are often mentioned together. In magical bowls, sometimes we find a long series of angel names (see, for example, Aaron bowl B<sup>12</sup>).

**Gabriel:** He appears in the Book of Daniel as an interpreter of visions (8:16; 9:21); and it is he who inspires Chapter 10 thereof. His name is "the man Gabriel" (8:15). In the New Testament, he appears as the messenger of the Virgin; he has a substitute name, "the Angel of the Lord" (Luke 1:11; 26). The name means: The man of God, or God is my strength and hero<sup>13</sup>. The name also appears in the Koran as Gibril. Gabriel and Michael figure in a list of the four princes of angels, along with 'Sharael' and 'Ramael' (1 Enoch 9:1); in Qumran, he appears as a warrior (QM 9:14-16). He also figures on a list of seven angels: Uryael, Rajaeel, Michael, Sharael, Ramael (1 Enoch 20). Gabriel's essential role is preaching, interpreting, and inspiring, as it is mentioned in the Book of Daniel, and in the Gospels. But in magic bowls, he appears, along with other angels, as a good spirit standing against demons and evil spirits.

**Michael:** He appears in the Gospel as a proper noun (Nb 13:13; Ezr 8:8; seven times in 1Ch, and twice in 2Ch). Besides the traditional interpretation of Michael as "Who-is-like-God?", there is another that links the name to the Canaanite god, 'Mikal', whose roots are 'yekal' which means "he is able, he can."<sup>14</sup> He is also one of the leading princes who came to Daniel's assistance against the guardian angels of the foreign nations (Dn 10:12). In addition, he is one of the angels who punish the degraded and sinner angels (1 akhnoukh 10, 54). He is also in a constant conflict with the demon-dragon in the Book of Revelation (12:7-9) and the Letter of Jude

<sup>12</sup> M. J. Geller, « Eight Incantation Bowls », p. 109.

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX*, Anchor Bible 28, Garden City, 1981, p. 328.

<sup>14</sup> M. Mach, "Michael", in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, éd. Karo van der Toorn and al., Brill, 1995, col. 1065.





known phenomenon in the magical text literature and in the late Aramaic texts. If we adopt this interpretation, we have a good parallel with Syriac ܪܠܝܬ and Hebrew ܠܝܬ.

Line 6:

ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ: These are the demons and evil spirits that kill people in the magical texts<sup>16</sup>. The author asks the angels to kill them. I would like to shed some light on one of the demons: Lilith.

Lilith: is referred to as a female demon in Isaiah (34:14, the only Biblical reference). The ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ comes along with the deity 'Esterta Ashtoreth'<sup>17</sup>, or with a ghost image. Often her name is associated with night, but it is preferable to associate it with the Akkadian word "lilitu" which derives from the Sumerian word "li". In Akkadian, three demons appear under the name ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ: *lilī*, *lilitu wardat lilī* which indicates violent wind. *Lilitu* is a nocturnal ghost that appears in the form of wind; it enters homes through windows and people imagine her able to fly like a bird.

From a sexual point of view, she appears, in the Akkadian texts, as immature: She lures men to her who are unable to make love to their women; she is also pictured as an infertile female<sup>18</sup>. She is a legendary creature, a mixture of female and male (*shakar* ܫܟܪ in Lebanese dialect, ܫܟܬ in Arabic). This is why she appears in the magic texts at times in the feminine form, at other times in the masculine form:<sup>19</sup> ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ and at times in the form of both female and male: ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܢ. We find

<sup>16</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 3, 2, 4, n° 36, 4...

<sup>17</sup> M. J. Geller, « Eight Incantation Bowls », p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> M. Hutter, "Lilitu", in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, col. 973-976.

<sup>19</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 8, p. 154.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. for example, J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 6, p. 141; M. J. Geller, « Eight Incantation Bowls », p. 111, (Aaron bowl C); J. Teixidor, "The Syriac Incantation Bowls...", text n° 44107, pp. 54-55.

also the masculine form ܐܠܗ in one bowl published by Geller<sup>21</sup>. We find also two plural forms: ܐܠܗܐ et ܐܠܗ. This is attested in one text (M101, l. 27<sup>9</sup>, Levene 2003).<sup>22</sup> An other form is attested: ܐܠܗܐ (Müller-Kessler no 7 HS 3033, ligne 2)<sup>23</sup>.

B- Lines 7-11: the scribe's oath that the angels will grant protection to Forukazad's house:

Line 7:

ܐܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ : The equivalent expression of ܐܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ in Jewish Aramaic is ܐܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ.<sup>24</sup>

Line 8:

ܐܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ : The word ܐܡܢܐ means the magic text written on the bowl. It is similar to: ܐܡܢܐ - ܐܡܢܐ - ܐܡܢܐ used to expel demons and evil spirits in magic talismans and the Christian liturgies (baptism, mass, healing prayers, etc.)<sup>25</sup>. It may also be indicative of Jesus Christ known as the "Word" or "the Word of God" ܐܡܢܐ, if the text concerns the Christian community. The expression ܐܡܢܐ "our Lord" refers in general to God, the "Lord of the Healers" as we find in another Syriac text<sup>26</sup>: ܐܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ. And he is the Lord who holds absolute power over all angels and spirits, as we find in the word of warning given to the Liliths and spirits that rebel against their master: ܐܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ "woe unto those who rebel against and disobey the order of their Lord".<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> M. J. Geller, « More Magic spells and Formulae », *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* vol. 60, part 2, text A. l. 17, p. 329.

<sup>22</sup> Dan Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, Kegan Paul, London, New York, Bahrain, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Christa Müller-Kessler, *Die Zauberschaltentexte in der Hilprecht-Sammlung, Jena, und weitere Nippur-Texte anderer Sammlungen*, Texte und Materialien Hilprecht Collection 7, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2005, p. 30.

<sup>24</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 1, p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, p. 52.

<sup>26</sup> J. Teixidor, « The Syriac Incantation Bowls... », text n° 23776, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 1, p. 117.



Line 9:

ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ: the equivalent (in unpublished parallel texts, private collection) is ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ. This expression may be indicative of the figure at the bottom of the bowl.

ܕ- Lines 12-14: A warning given to the demons not to come near Forukazad's house:

Line 12:

ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ. The verb ܕܡܢ means "to preach, to advise, to correct, to refine...". The use of the imperative mode in the incantation texts has the power to expel demons, and to make them obey the words and comply with the orders.

ܕ- Lines 15-16: the sealing of Forukazad's house.

Line 15-16:

ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ. Magus: we have a similar sentence in one bowl published by Naveh<sup>28</sup> (26, 10): ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ, and another one in an amulet published by Gignoux (II, 5): ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ. The sealing is also by ܕܡܢܐ as in magical text published by Geller<sup>29</sup>: ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ. "You are sealed by the seal-ring of syr 'lt. In the same article Geller published an amulet in which we find also the word ܕܡܢܐ: ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ. "You are sealed evil troubles by the seal-ring of Salomon"<sup>30</sup>. In Levene M101 9 and Müller-Kessler (11d 7): ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ is equal to ܕܡܢܐ (Müller-Kessler 11d 10); also in Müller-Kessler (3, HS 3001, 3; 3a parallel), Nippur 32/45 3): ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Naveh – Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, Jerusalem, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> M. J. Geller, « More Magic spells and Formulae », part 2, text A. l. 15, p. 329.

<sup>30</sup> M. J. Geller, « More Magic spells and Formulae », *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* vol. 60, part 2, text C verso, l. 6-9, p. 332 (327-335).

"sealed by seven seal-rings and sealed by seven seals". The bowl from the Louvre (Louvre AO 17.284) published by Müller-Kessler<sup>31</sup>, in the line 10, we find *ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* "by the binding of the seal-ring of heaven and the seals of the base of the earth". In one magical bowl, published by Geller, the heaven and the earth are pressed by seven words<sup>32</sup>: *ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* "in the name of the seven words that the heaven and the earth are pressed with". Both *ܠܝܠܝܬܐ* and *ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* are equally used in magical texts.

E- Lines 17-19: Call to the stability and protection of Forukazad's house.

Lines 17:

*ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* The sun and the moon indicate, in the Psalms, stability, immortality and survival:

"Like sun and moon he will endure, age after age... (Ps 72:5)

*ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ*

*ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* "Blessed be his name for ever, enduring as long as the sun" (Ps 72: 17);

*ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* "His dynasty shall last for ever, I see his throne like the sun" (Ps 89:37).

This sentence, *ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ*, reminds us of the opening of Psalm 19: *ܠܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ* "The heavens declare the glory of God, the vault of heaven proclaims his handwork". Also, the disappearance of the sun and the moon indicate destruction, death, and end, as is shown in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament: "In my vision, when he broke the sixth seal, there was a violent earthquake and

<sup>31</sup> Christa Müller-Kessler, "Aramäische Koine: Ein Beschwörungsformular aus Mesopotamien", *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 29, 1998, p. 334.

<sup>32</sup> M. J. Geller, "Four Aramaic Incantation Bowls", in: J. Rendsburg et al. (eds.), *The Bible World. Essays in Honour of Cyrus H. Gordon*, New-York, 1980, Bowl B. 1.7-8, n. 52.

the sun went as black as coarse sackcloth; the moon turned red a blood" (6:12).

As the sun and the moon are unchanging and announce the Glor. of God and His orders, so too the writer asks that the house of Forukazad be made stable, and be established firmly by his sea against demons and liliths.

Line 18: ܕܠܗ ܕܡܝܢ : It is the imperfect of the verb ܡܝܢ. Sometime the word ܕܠܗ means "this" as in the Jewish Aramaic tense ܕܠܗ ܕܡܝܢ.<sup>33</sup>

Line 18: ܕܠܗ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ: These words are found in most of the magic bowls in different combinations<sup>34</sup>. A similar formul concludes a text in Naveh-Shaked 26.12: ܕܠܗ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ.

ܕܡܝܢ means also "body, backbone, entity"<sup>35</sup>.

ܕܠܗ is indicative of "admonition, binding up".

#### IV- Line 20:

Concluding formula:

ܕܠܗ: Means verily, right, suitable, graceful...It is a liturgical expression corresponding to "silah" and "Amen" in Mandaic and Aramaic and Syriac bowls.

#### Conclusion:

Many magical bowl formulae bear similarities with Syria liturgical texts: baptism, for example, (especially the exorcism formulae) and healing prayers, or prayers for blessing water, oil or religious articles in the Christian tradition. Formulae in the book of daily Syriac prayers ܕܡܝܢ: the evening prayer ܕܡܝܢ (to have

<sup>33</sup> J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations texts...*, text n° 8, p. 154.

<sup>34</sup> Maria Gorea, « Trois nouvelles coupes... », p. 74, (73-93)

<sup>35</sup> M. J. Geller, « Eight Incantation Bowls », p. 110, 110.



quiet night), the protection prayer ܕܡܢ ܒܝܫܐܢܐ and the midnight prayer ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ (to be protected from all kinds of devils, bad dreams and ideas).

The field of Syriac magical literature, although modest and sometimes unknown, may interest Syriac classical and biblical scholars, especially those in Peshitta studies, for it often involves biblical quotations. It may be of importance for liturgical research, because of the similarity of many protection and prayer formulae... It might also be of interest in the study of popular magical traditions in antiquity and in the present in the Middle East.

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