

Demons 101

A Comparative Understanding of Ancient Near Eastern Demons

Henry Dykes



Purpose

- “Abominations of those nations” “witchcraft,” “soothsayer” or “sorcerer” (Deut 18:9-11)
- Extra-biblical context
- Ancient Near Eastern World View and Medicine
- Modern vs. Ancient



Methodology

- Udug-Hul Incantation Tablets
 - Bilingual
 - Third Millennium BC
 - Treat illness by general demons
- Leiden Magical Papyri
 - Middle to Late Egyptian language
 - Ramesside Period (1292-1069 BC)
 - Treat illness by specific demons (Sāmān and Akhu)

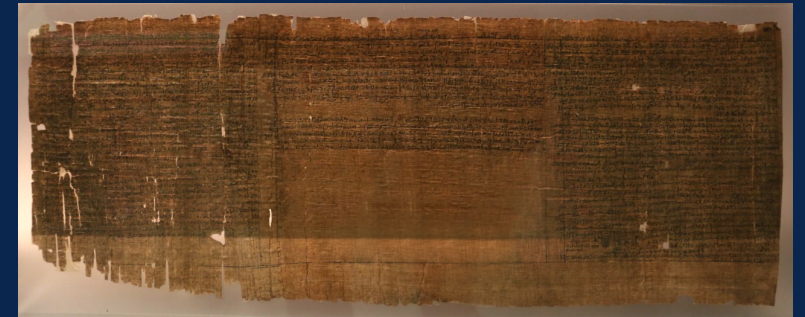


The Trustees of the British Museum. 2023. *Udug-Hul Tablet 11*.

<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/17136/udug-hul-tablet-11/>.

Saliko. 2017. *Antiquities in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egitto_ellenistico_papiro_con_testo_magico_in_greco_\(papiro_X_di_leida\)_da_tebe,_200-300_ac_ca.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egitto_ellenistico_papiro_con_testo_magico_in_greco_(papiro_X_di_leida)_da_tebe,_200-300_ac_ca.jpg).



Case 1: Exorcist Attitudes

- Mesopotamian
 - Defensive, Repellent
 - Attack Guilty and Innocent
- Egyptian
 - Negotiating, Confronting
 - Different threat to mankind



Alsuliman, Ayman. 2016. *Model of a House in the Third Millennium BC. Middle Euphrates Basin.* https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Model-of-a-house-in-the-third-millennium-BC-Middle-Euphrates-Basin_fig2_297032255.



Ismoon. 2020. *Ramses II Killing a Libyan Leaders.* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egypt_Abou_Simbel6.jpg#filehistory.



Case 2: Geographical Boundaries

- Mesopotamian
 - Wandering, mountains
 - Separated from Civilization and Order
- Egyptian
 - Desert home
 - Set in the cosmic order



Renette. n.d. *the Basira (or Deleuzhe) Pass through the Qara Dagh Range*. Accessed April 1, 2024.

<https://peoplingthepast.com/2021/01/15/mountain-peoples-of-the-zagros/>.



Egypt Tours Plus. n.d. *Western Desert, Egypt*. Accessed April 1, 2024.
<https://www.egypttoursplus.com/western-desert-egypt/>.



Case 3: Special Afflictions

- Mesopotamian
 - Sleep
 - Wandering
 - Behavior issues
- Egyptian
 - Daily disruptions
 - Natural processes
 - Demon orders themselves



Eternal Space. 2022. *Winged Maat, Depicted in the Tomb of Nefertari (1255 BCE)*.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maat_\(Goddess\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maat_(Goddess).png).



Conclusion

- Why Deut 18:9-11?
 - Chaos and Order
 - Liminal Stages
- A people set apart (Deut 18: 12-14)
- Learning to Trust God rather than own ways.

