

Centrum judaistických studií Kurta a Ursuly Schubertových

Filozofická fakulta

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci

Adam Nezval

Jewish Protection Magic – Amulets

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Supervisor:

Doc. Tamás Visi, Ph.D., M.A

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I attest I have written this bachelor thesis on my own and I have quoted all used sources and bibliography in prescribed manner.

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Podpis

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Content

Introduction	1
1. Introduction to the Jewish Magic and Rituals	3
1.1 What is Magic?	3
1.2 Jewish Magic and its History	4
1.3 Kabbalah and Abraham Abulafia	8
2. Jewish Amulets	11
2.1 Hasidism	15
3. Analysis of Amulet 501/b//1933	16
3.1 Description	16
3.2 Content of the Amulet	17
3.3 Analysis of the Amulet 501/b//1933	23
4. Amulet 501/1//933	24
4.1 Description	24
4.2 Content and Analysis	25
4.2.1 Bordering Lines	25
4.2.2 Menorah Writing	28
4.2.3 Writing Encircling the Name שדי	28
4.2.4 Text under the Star	30
4.2.5 Text at the Bottom of the Amulet	30
4.2.6 Five-armed Candlestick	32
4.2.7 Writing inside the Candlestick and under it	32
4.2.8 Magical Square	33
4.2.9 Stars of David	34
Conclusion	36

Sources and Bibliography	39
Sources.....	39
Bibliography.....	39
Internet Sources	41
Annotation/Anotace	41
Appendix.....	43

Introduction

Jewish mysticism, magic, and superstition is vast and complex field of study which spans as far as to Biblical times and through Talmudic Aggadah, Heikhalot literature toward Hasidism, Kabbalah and other branches throughout the history. Numerous texts written especially in the late middle ages under Kabbalistic and Hasidic influence supplies us with immense material to study – such as innumerable names of angels, Divine Names of God, symbolism, concepts of other realms. Not only do these texts provide the reader with theoretical mystical concepts, they also tackle more practical matters as the guidelines for usage of parts of the Hebrew Bible, mainly Psalms, and of Holy Names, psalms, and basic outlines of amulet-making. The last is probably the most important as on one hand it encompasses all aforementioned themes, as usage of Psalms and Angelic and Divine Names, but also on the other, it delivers these teaching, nonetheless in basic and often implicit way, to the ordinary Jewish people, as in the times of famines, crusades, expulsions, diseases and deaths caused by small injuries or at labour, the common folk looked for any kind of protection it could get. Thus, Hebrew amulets were widely spread, and they left abundance of information about Jewish ideas about world, their mythology, and at last but not least about ordinary Jewish people, their most common fears and aims. And it is mainly Jewish amulets and the study of two written on parchment what is the main focus of this theses.

Many Jewish amulets were and still are being found all across the Europe and Middle East, amulets of all shapes and kinds – metallic, formed into symbols, written on parchment; of Mizrachi, Ashekenazi, and Sfaradi origins; simply using excerpts from Old Testament, or complex ones utilising many Divine and Angelic Names, symbols, magical squares, and many other tools. The most common form of amulets, especially in Ashkenazi tradition is the one written on parchment, be it simply appropriate Psalms and Divine Names to given purpose, or larger works combining such Biblical excerpts and names with symbols, magical quadrates, stars of David and other common tools used. Such written Amulets were found in Bratislava in State Archives of Bratislava (Slovenský Národný Archív: Štátný Archív v Bratislave), among the unsorted collected writings of former Jewish community in Bratislava desolated during WWII. This discovery was a

work of colleague student of Palacky University of Olomouc Jana Turanská and it was brought to my attention by professor Ph. D Tamás Visi. No study of these recently found amulets was performed so far, which provides great scholarly occasion to work on a new material, through which we might get a better understanding of Jewish life, and mystical and folk-tale culture in Bratislava region in times the amulets were created.

The first written documented mentions of today's Bratislava Jewry are dated to the second half of 13th century. After the First Crusade the community lived there quite peacefully except the expulsion from Hungary, of which was Bratislava part in the days, in 1360 and 1526, after which they returned in 1692. Small at start, the community counted 772 Jews in 1736, however in 1776 with loosening the restrictions concerning them the community grew until 1930s when it reached about 15 000 capita. In the year 1913 most of the Jewish quarter, to which they were confined until 1840, burned down and the Jews had to move closer to the centre. Bratislava was an important centre of Jews up to the WWII, most of the surviving Jewry emigrated to Israel after. With rise of communism in the 60s remnants of Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia became oppressed yet again, thus making a renewal of the Jewish communities and lifestyle virtually impossible. During its glory the city witnessed many important and famous rabbis as leaders of the community, among others Akiva Eger, Isaac Landau, Moses Hatam Sofer, and Elijah Katz.¹

Main concerns of this thesis are two of these amulets from Bratislava, their description and analysis with a goal being to try specifying the time of their creation, as well as mystical schools influencing their content and form. Before focusing on the amulets themselves, there is theoretical part of the thesis outlining main concepts of Jewish magic and mysticism in general, and in diachronic point of view. Part of thesis concerning the study of given amulets approaches one amulet at a time, firstly giving the description of the amulet and transcription of the texts, following by the analysis of these writings and other tools described and used in the amulets. The analysis will try to specify the time of

¹ KULKA, Erich et JELÍNEK, Yeshayahu. Bratislava. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 13*. 2nd edition. United States of America: Thomson Gale. Vol. 4, p. 132-133 ISBN 0-02-865933-3

origin and influences of mystical teachings on their content, while mainly uncovering the purpose of these amulets.

1. Introduction to the Jewish Magic and Rituals

1.1 What is Magic?

First question we need to answer is: What is magic? Under this term are hidden thousands of years, many different cultures and reasons, creating countless forms and traditions of magic, or mystical schools, each having its unique rituals and ideas underlying them. The words 'rituals' and 'ideas' are the most important here. Magic at its basis consist of rituals – a feat or set of feats supposedly imbued with power to change, destroy, or protect something in physical or spiritual world, which can be performed both on personal and communal level. Sometimes simple rituals kept long through history become more of a habit, often losing their magical power. This is based on a weakening of underlying ideas of ritual, ideas of why and how doing something – performing a ritual – affects the world and also which world. Thus, magic can be seen a conjunction of ritual and idea; it is logical that idea without means to express it becomes a simple part of beliefs or religion and when ideas underlying the ritual are forgotten, ritual loses its power and becomes a habit or cease to exist completely.

Magic is very much connected to theology, to religion. Where theology focuses on themes, ideas – establishing and narrating a story, if you will; magic is more set on practical functions and on personal, domestic approach. Magic in its practicality can be viewed as all-pervading power comparable to the laws of nature and using these power and laws in personal sphere.² The boundary between the religion and magic can also be seen as magic being theological rites used in private house and for the personal gain as

² ASSMAN, Jan. *Magic and Theology in Ancient Egypt*. In: SCHAFER, Peter, KIPPEBERG, Hans. *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*. Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997. *Study in the History of Religions*, 75th edition, p. 1-18. ISBN 9004107770 9789004107779

opposed to religion being based in the temples and aiming its rites on level of whole society. As such a single text – as for example hymns, prayers, and psalms – can be both theological and magical dependant on its usage, whether it is used as a mean of communication between humanity and all-present divine or as an incantation to summon or coerce the power of this divine – often for healing and protection.³

1.2 Jewish Magic and its History

Magic has its indisputable place in Judaism since the beginning of this religion and it has been a part of life of people living in the region of Canaan much sooner. In the Bible, namely in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles we read about Josiah's religious reforms and his fight with many smaller pagan cults and their rituals. Josiah aimed to introduce one monotheistic religion, that is early Judaism, to all of Judean kingdom and he forbade worship of any other deities. However older traditions did not disappear and were practiced in secrecy and in the outskirts; religions of surrounding nations managed to influence some of Judean regions. This surviving marginal traditions later adopted ideas of official religion of Judaism, however they never became its part and it was continually condemned by leading personas of state and religion as a heresy or as magical practices and rituals which were also condemned but since they could not be completely rooted out, they were mostly tolerated. Thus, the first cornerstone of Jewish magic was laid, magic built on ancient traditions and spirits from older religions. As example we can mention one spirit, which is prominent in Jewish magic even today – Lilith. Lilith, although introduced only as late as in 3rd to 5th century through Babylonian Talmud and through a mention in Isaiah, is taken from much older traditions of ancient Mesopotamia, different forms of the name being found in cuneiform texts of ancient Summer, Assyria, Babylonia, or Akkadian Empire. She also appears in the Epic of Gilgamesh.⁴ Her role

³ ASSMAN, Jan. *Magic and Theology in Ancient Egypt*. In: SCHAFER, Peter, KIPPEBERG, Hans. *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*. p. 5

⁴ HESCHEL, Susannah (2nd ed.). *Lilith*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 13*. 2nd edition. United States of America: Thomson Gale. Vol. 13, p. 342-352. ISBN 0-02-865941-4

was changed and demonised to fit Jewish, specifically Talmudic, religious tradition. The second cornerstone is Jewish religion and its Scripture. Importance of this mother of demons prevailed and in Kabbalistic tradition she became very prominent, being given not only a role of spirit harming mother and the infant and stealing man's semen, but she also took upon a role of consort of Samael and mother of impure broods of dark sefirot as a dark mirror of Shekhinah.⁵

Through time additional symbolism outside main or official branch of Judaism was added to some religious rituals and feast, giving them more magical, or altogether different meaning in Jewish mysticism. Parallel to this development new forms of exegesis of the Scripture, looking for hidden mystical meanings of and within the text and of those exegeses rose what we can call 'Magic of the Names', which became dominant part of Jewish mysticism. Magic of the Names is practice of decoding parts of the text of the Hebrew Bible, looking for hidden, magically potent, names of God and their usage for various, although mainly protective, forms of magic. Fusion of these two cornerstones can be seen in Incantation bowls or written forms of amulets which started to appear in Talmudic or post-Talmudic era. Amulets and bowls were meant to protect a house or a bearer of the amulet against evil being, such as Lilith and their protective power had its source in text written on the bowls and amulets. These writing consisted of Talmudic or Biblical passages, names of angels and mystical names of God, together with incantation against the demon.

Importance of angels and demons in Jewish magic of late Antiquity depict *Sefer HaRazim*, *Sword of Moses*, and various Dead Sea Scrolls. Magic of names flourished in late post-Talmudic times and early Medieval period, since Talmud reinforced Biblical ban on magic, but added an exception concerning “magic permitted from the start” using “the Laws of Creation”, which were later interpreted as mystical names of God and angels.⁶ Many names of angelic and demonic figures used in angelology of Middle Ages are derived from mystical writings of Talmudic and Geonic period, so called Heikhalot

⁵ HESCHEL, Susannah (2nd ed.). *Lilith*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 13*. p.18-19

⁶ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition: a Study in Folk Religion*. 1st edition. New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939 p.19

(or hekhalot/heykhalot) and Merkabah literature.⁷ The concept behind this magical literature is that angels came down upon the earth to reveal heavenly mysteries to Talmudic sages, and when doing so they also revealed esoteric knowledge and told them about divine worlds. What connects Heikhalot and Merkabah literature is their focus mainly on angelology – calling upon angels and commanding them, and on visions and knowledge of divine world and its inhabitants. Calling out angelic names and Names of Gods is based on a belief that knowing a name of a person or a being gives to the magician power over them and all what is under them in their spheres. The thought of a man being able to command God by using his name was dangerously heretic so it was explained and set that the Name does not give magician power over god but the name itself will fulfil the needs of the one who uses it.⁸ It is in this Geonic period we can find the beginnings of more clearly Jewish magic and mysticism, which were highly influenced by theosophy of Gnosticism.

Middle Ages furthered what became prominent in Hellenistic period – contact of Jewish magic with other traditions, adding new formulas and terms from those traditions in different languages (plausibly pre-Islamic and Islamic Arabic, German language and folklore etc.). Ignorance or even disdain of Jewish scholars, mainly the orthodox ones, for magic and for amulets from Antiquity still permeated in this period and even further, seeing Amulets as form of *טמאה* – a sin, defilement of Jewish tradition.⁹ Moreover so with more new influences from non-Jewish sources. One of the major critiques of amulets was Maimonides.¹⁰

One of main branches of Medieval Jewish mysticism is Hasidic Ashkenazi literature of 12th and 13th century.¹¹ *Sefer Hasidim*, one of the most important texts of Hasidic branch presents teaching of the leaders of Hasidism (Samuel the Hasid, Judah the Hasid of Regensburg, and Eleazar ben Judah of Worms) and gives insight into practices of day-to-

⁷ DAN, Josephs et al. *Magic*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2nd edition. United States of America: Thomson Gale. Vol. 13, p. 342-352. ISBN 0-02-865941-4

⁸ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition: a Study in Folk Religion*. p.79-80

⁹ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation*. 1st edition. London: Routledge et Kegan Paul, 1966. p. 1

¹⁰ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.15

¹¹ DAN, Josephs et al. *Magic*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. . Vol.13 p.346

day life movement's members. Hasidism concerned itself with uttermost piety and introduced many liturgical innovations. The movement was also familiar with magic practices and Judah ben Samuel infused the prayers by mystical qualities and he brought theosophy into the Jewish circles in Germany.¹² Rabbi Eleazar of Worms wrote his *Sefer Raziel* in around year 1230 – a book meant to work as a basic handbook for amulet-making.¹³ Another important Kabbalistic book which came to surface in 13th century is *Zohar*.

In the time of Hasidic Ashkenazi in Germany, other branch of mysticism started to form in Provence – Kabbalah. Mystical teachings of Kabbalah are concerned of how all of creation is divided into several worlds and how the God himself has many aspects, or avatars. It aims through its own newly devised mystical mitzvot, called *Tikkun*, to positively influence worlds above our own - *sefirot*, material world and to repair (reconnect) broken aspects of creation or God. One of the first and most important Kabbalistic writings is *Zohar* attributed to prominent rabbi and sage of 2nd century – Simeon bar Yochai, whose teachings it self-allegedly transmits. In fact, the book was written in 13th century in Provence, probably by the collective of writers, probably by Moshe de Leon and members of prominent Abulafia family. Teachings of Kabbalah bear traces of influence of older traditions – Hellenistic mysticism, astrology, Talmud, Heikhalot literature, older midrashim (commentaries of Hebrew Bible), and presumably Gnosticism, although factual link was never clearly established.

At the beginning Kabbalah was mainly mystical theosophical theory, without aims of practicing magic in larger scale, if at all. However, still in 13th century, Abraham Abulafia introduces his own, more practical version of Kabbalah, later called ecstatic or practical, which was able to connect its user with God, thus giving the practitioner prophetic visions. This approach utilised mainly the divine names – through their understanding and right usage one becomes a prophet. Importance of divine names was also amplified in later stages of the theoretical Kabbalah, while magic-oriented practical

¹² SCHLOESSINGER, Max. Judah ben Samuel He-Hasid of Regensburg. In: SINGER, Isidore et al. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1904, 2nd edition Vol. 7, p. 356-358. ISBN 978-1-330-29075-0

¹³ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.3

Kabbalah became more and more estranged to its theoretical Jewish mystical counterpart.¹⁴

Huge impact on Jewish mysticism and amulets had a rise of Shabbethai Zebi¹⁵ and Shabbetaic movement in 17th century. Zebi and his cult heavily influenced Hasidic Jewry, bringing a lot of new ideas into the mysticism, mainly by new Messianic notions, as he thought of himself as a new Messiah. These notions also influenced amulets – new Shabbetean amulets in favour of the movement and messianic claims were made in hundreds and flooded western Jews. As cult of Shabbethai Zebi was strongly opposed and seen as blasphemous by the Jewish theological authorities, this new influence discredited usage of amulets as a whole, bringing distrust, opposition and neglect from the orthodox scholarship. Thus, the amulets and mystical usage of Angelic and divine names declined, interpretations and meaning were kept mainly in oral tradition and many faded out. Only small group of *mekubalim* tried to keep the names (*shemot*) to these days.¹⁶

1.3 Kabbalah and Abraham Abulafia

Kabbalah can be divided to two main branches – the traditional, mainstream contemplative Kabbalah (*Kabbalah lyunit*) and Practical Kabbalah (*Kabbalah Ma'asit*)- The latter risen in the Middle Ages, mainly after tenth century by the work of the first Hasidic Ashkenazi. Although their school and work has been ended abruptly by the Crusades, their work was transmitted by refuges to Spain and other countries of southern Europe. The most prominent kabbalists and rabbis dealing with Practical Kabbalah in their works during the ages are Eleazar of Worms, Abraham Abulafia, Moshe Cordevero who was a teacher of Joseph Karo – author of *Shulchan Aruch* – in his *Pardes Rimonim*,

¹⁴ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.18

¹⁵ Note this name has many spelling variations, probably the most commonly used today is *Shabbetai Zevi*. I chose the form *Shabbethai Zebi* as written in Schirer's *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation*

¹⁶ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.3

Yitzhak Luria with his own new sub-school of Lurianic Kabbalah, Moshe Zacutto, Azulai and many others.¹⁷ It was precisely the Practical Kabbalah which had to withstand common distrust, frowning upon and being seen as dangerous by many Jewish religious and theosophical authorities, whether they have been Kabbalists of contemplative branch or not Kabbalists at all. Practical Kabbalah consists of – as the name suggest – practical usage of Kabbalistic teachings by using amulets, imagination, rituals and ecstatic states to hone the characteristic and power of a person using them. This means were used in overwhelming majority to protective and healing means (white magic, if you will). Getting into the right state, summoning the correct names while preparing for writing the amulet, channelling the power of sefirot through imagination of their colour and flow to embetter positive traits or strengthen the weak skills and states of minds needed at the time, chanting the Divine Names to enter prophetic state enabling better understanding and connection to the Divine – all those are examples of common usage and goals of Practical Kabbalah.¹⁸

Abraham Abulafia, great Jewish mystic and Kabbalist known mainly due to his commentaries of Mamonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* and his book *Chaye Ha-Olam Ha-Ba*, object of many studies, including ones of Moshe Idel and Gershom Sholem, lived in the thirteenth century in Spain. Moshe Idel, who excessively studied his work, concludes that intake on Kabbalistic concerns by Abulafia is different of that of his predecessors as he focuses his experiences and techniques are based more on human being and its elevation in way of mysticism and prophecy than on uncovering and understanding the Divine and its forms. By his innovative intake on various Kabbalistic sources, maybe those of the first Hasidic Ashkenazi, resulted in so-called ecstatic Kabbalah which in alter times spread throughout southern Europe and Palestine. So big was his influence and legend in eighteenth and nineteenth century that the authorship of *Zohar* was ascribed to him by some scholars of nineteenth century.¹⁹ He put forward mystical way of Hebrew letters, combination and their acoustic resulting in kind of mystical ecstasy in opposition

¹⁷ SWART, Jacobus G. *Shadow Tree Series Volume 3: The Book of Seals and Amulets*. South Africa, Gauteng: The Sangreal Sodality Press, 2014. 1st edition. p. iv ISBN 978-0-620-59698-5

¹⁸ SWART, Jacobus G. *The Book of Seals and Amulets*. p. v-vi

¹⁹ IDEL, Moshe. *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*. United States of America: State University of New York, 1988. 2nd series. p.5-7 ISBN O-88706-552-8

to Aristotelian way of intellectual thought. Building upon Maimonides and Avicenna's thought of all prophets being philosophers and mystics, Abulafia by reversal concluded that all mystics are prophets thus he himself is also a prophet.²⁰ It should not be surprising that such proclamation gave rise to heavy criticism and discontent by many rabbinic, Kabbalistic and halakhic authorities – one of these critics was Rashba – and was put under ban and his work *Chaye Ha-Olam Ha-Ba* remained only in manuscript form, to be printed only in eighteenth century, when his name was appraised anew mainly by Azulai, one of the leading figures of Kabbala in that time.

Unlike many other Jewish mystics and Kabbalists, Abulafia left behind extensive record of his life, reaching from the year and place of his birth (1240, Saragossa), his studies and death of his father, to his unsuccessful travels to Israel and back and his life in Italy and Catalonia. Around 1270s although earlier opposing Kabbalah, he became to study *Sefer Yetzirah* – one of the earliest and most influential books concerning Kabbalah – and came to contact with Kabbalistic circles, once more resuming his travels which lead him as far as to Greece. Acting on his earlier vision commanding him to visit the Pope, he attempted to get into his acquaintance, but he was rejected. Later Abulafia tried to get to Pope again, risking burning at the stake. Soon after Abulafia arrived the Pope died and for short time he ended in chains instead on a pyre. After release he moved to Sicily and began to build up his circle of followers which made displeased local authorities turn to Rashba who by heavy polemic and ban heavily damaged Abulafia's reputation, forcing him to exile. In 1291 or soon after Abulafia died as there are no mentions or activities of Abulafia later than that.²¹

His approach to Kabbalah is different in its divide on prophetic, or ecstatic, Kabbalah and Kabbalah on Names, where former signifies the goal of divination and unity with the Divine and latter concerns itself with the path to said prophetic divination which consist of study of nature and usage of Divine Names – Names of God – in order to attain the ecstatic state. The most significant is the new goal of prophetic Kabbalah and accent on

²⁰ PINES, Shlomo. *Foreword*. in: IDEL, Moshe. *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*. United States of America: State University of New York, 1988. 2nd series. p. iii-iv. ISBN 0-88706-552-8

²¹ IDEL, Moshe. *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*. p.2-3

it. Abulafia also criticised the system of ten Sefirot, viewing it as polytheistic heresy; he also disregarded traditional Kabbalistic approach to *mitzvot* as a way of behaviour and rituals to repair damaged Divine world. Abulafia's main focus rested upon the Names of God and techniques utilising them through pronunciation, singing and even movement and correct breathing, which, needless to say, is not found within the borders of traditional Judaism and its commandments. Abulafia worked heavily with Hasidic legacy of gematria and with letter combinations and encoding. This revolutionary also called for the importance of solitude where in that time mainstream Kabbalah utilised congregations – as the more people focusing on performing *mitzva* at one place and time would impact the Divine World stronger.²²

2. Jewish Amulets

Amulet is an object which is supposed to have supernatural power, mainly in regards of protection against various forms of evil and for its powers to function it is to be carried by a person. Tradition of amulets is very ancient, and it is hard to say how far in the history it is rooted; it is not known whether amulets were widely used in Jewish tradition in biblical times since primary sources of that era are very rare.²³ Some scholars dispute that the amulets are a source of wearing jewellery. Frequent mentions of amulets are to be found in Talmudic sources which refer to them as *kame'a* (pl. *kemi'ot*), possibly coming from a root meaning “to bind” as Rashi argues, or from Arabic root meaning “to hang”.²⁴ Talmud also forbids usage of Tanakh verses for healing, but it permits them to be used as precaution against contracting sickness and amulets also using Tanakh verses are thus threatened in the same way, being permitted only as a protection and not as a cure.²⁵ Hebrew Bible never specifically mentions the amulets, only post-Babylonian canonical

²² IDEL, Moshe. *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*. p.7-10

²³ DAN, Josephs et al. Magic. In: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Vol. 13. p.343

²⁴ POSNER, Raphael. *Amulet*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Vol. 02 p.121. ISBN 978-0-02-865930-5

²⁵ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: The Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.14

writings, as Mishnah, mentions them.²⁶ In the late Middle Ages the attitude of rabbinic authorities toward amulets varied. With emergence of Kabbalah amulets became one of its main domains in practical field.

Amulets are ordinarily made of paper or parchment, plant root, or different kinds of metal – mostly silver, bronze, and gold. Sometimes other materials and specific items are used, for example presumable bones of martyrs in Christianity. Yet other types of amulets can be gems, different parts of animal bodies, whether to imbue the wearer by positive trait characteristic of given animal or for protection – fox tail was used against the Evil Eye.²⁷ Material is ornamented by protective images and inscribed by protective formulas chosen according to the specific purpose of the amulet. Specification itself can range from vague and common protection from all harm and evil, through the ones aimed against one field, namely against all illnesses and sicknesses, to ones protective against one specific threat or illness. In Jewish tradition, not only the right inscription is important, the authority of its creator is equally taken into consideration, if not even more.

The shape of metallic Jewish amulets or writings on the parchments can appear in form of geometrical shapes or forming simple pictures (*Hand of Fatima*), which are said to be imbued with additional magical power. The most common are circles, triangles, magical squares, six-pointed star known as The Star of David – *Magen David* – and five-pointed star (*Seal of Solomon*), although the latter one is much less frequent, as it is not a symbol of (solely) Hebrew culture.²⁸ Surprising fact is that although hexagram is very much connected to Jewish people – so much we find it on the Israeli national flag – it is not directly connected mainly to Judaism and only in later years of Medieval era it has been accepted and used by Jews as a major symbol of their religion.²⁹ The magical square (also known as *zahlenquadrat* or magical quadrat), using Hebrew characters and the numbers they encode are another such tool used commonly in Jewish amulets. Used frequently by Jews, some consider these squares being of Hebrew origin, however Arabic origin is more likely the case, as the Arabs occupied themselves much more by the mathematics and

²⁶ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: The Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.13

²⁷ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.133-136

²⁸ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: The Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.60-61

²⁹ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.141

numbers.³⁰ This is can be easily accepted as a lot of Jewry spent hundreds of years in the Arab countries and being influenced by their culture. The squares can span from simple 3x3 to 9x9 squares, they can be based upon name of the amulet bearer, on Divine Names, planetary system, and possibly on many other things.

Common theme in Jewish amulets are protection against sickness, Evil Eye, miscarriage and other possible dangers of pregnancy and labour, and also against nightmares and leaking a man's semen while sleeping. Amulets against Evil Eye were common in even pre-historic ages, they were found pre-historic cave dwellings. Belief in the Evil Eye was common in many Ancient nations as Egypt, Summeria, from whence it spread further on. Belief in the Evil Eye is basically that some people can curse other person and bring bad luck by mere look, whether consciously or unconsciously³¹, which is the work of evil envious demons and spirits. Other type of the Eye is the one of envy and hatred over someone else's joys or overall appraise of one's own accomplishments, setting in motion vengeful attack of evil spirits as they too are envious of happiness of men. This belief was still very prevalent in 15th and 16th century, when it played not a minor role in witch-trials.³² Jewish amulets, mainly early ones in Eastern communities, intended to ward off the Evil Eye were usually shaped into a hand, which later came to be known as *Hand of Fatima* under Arab influence. However, the main type of Jewish protection against the Eye utilise as majority of other Jewish amulets biblical quotations and sacred names of God (*shemot*), and Genesis 49:22 is also very often used, as it is considered protection against the Eye.³³

Ancient and medieval mind often saw these sicknesses and complications as a doing of witches and demons, thus the amulets with a purpose to protect against the illness are written in a form of protective wards against the demon or witch who was believed to be the sources of it. One of such antagonists is demon Lilith, who according to folklore is believed to be a reason for complications at or after childbirth, death of a child or leaking

³⁰ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: The Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.64-65

³¹ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.54

³² SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: The Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.6-7

³³ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets: The Decipherment and Interpretation*. p.8, 89

a man's semen during the night.³⁴ Lilith comes from Talmudic tradition, and even from earlier times. This demon is based on older spirits of Assyria (wind spirit *lilitu*) and Babylonia and in later traditions on a basis of her name being very close to the word *Layla* – night – she became an evil nocturnal spirit. Plural form of her name *lilin* is used as a name for demons, which by their activities resemble those of Lilith.³⁵ Babylonian Talmud warns that if a man sleeps alone in the house, Lilith will come and take hold of him (Shabbat 151a). The demoness is also associated with dangers concerning newborns and infants, together with the mother after labour. Such amulets which aim to protect the baby and its mother invoke the names of Lilith and three angels SNVY SNSVY SMNGLF, who according to legends were sent after her when she escaped the Eden. As a conclusion of the amulet *Amen* and *Selah* are repeated three times.³⁶ Well elaborated and rounded ideas about the Lilith emerge in the Geonic period in Aramaic incantations and in *Alphabet of Ben Sirach* and it is this work that introduces the aforementioned legend.³⁷ Earlier Midrashic literature states that Adam walking the Earth alone encountered Lilith Piznai and lay with her thus conceiving the whole brood of demons.³⁸

Inscriptions on the amulets consist mainly of angelic names, names of God, quotations from the Bible and other authoritative text in the field of magic or religion, and protective sacred symbols, including Magen David, menorah, Zahlenquadrat (coded magical square) and other mainly geometrical figures. Often the written text of an amulet itself is written in such a way to form such symbols. Regarding the names of God, tetragrammaton and the name Shaddai –יְהוָה meaning Almighty, are very frequent.³⁹ Due to the amulets being small, often only beginning letters of Tanakh verses were used, frequently making it hard to decipher.

Generally speaking, the study of Jewish Amulets meets with many obstacles. As an opinion on the amulets varied, from acceptance through ignorance to opposition, not many

³⁴ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.36

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.18

³⁷ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.37

³⁸ HESCHEL, Susannah (2nd ed.). *Lilith*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 13*. p.18

³⁹ POSNER, Raphael. *Amulet*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Vol.02 p.121; SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.17

scholars were encouraged to study them. On the other hand those who would study these amulets met with low material resources to study, as the owners of amulets were not exactly inclined to part with them.⁴⁰ Another problem rises up from obscurity of meaning and very nature of the amulets, especially written on parchment – amulets are mostly to be worn on the person and as such should take as little space as possible, thus the amulets were made small, written in abbreviations and those written on parchments were often folded and compressed to fit in the smaller cases which resulted in damage and parts of amulets becoming unreadable.⁴¹ Such obstacle was encountered when studying Amulets for this thesis – folding made parts of the amulets hardly readable or unreadable at all.

2.1 Hasidism

Kabbalists was main bearer and continuer of mystic Jewish traditions and most of the Kabbalists came into association with Hasidic movement. Jewish non-Hasidic majority were set mostly against the amulets, seeing them as superstitious. That however does not mean they did not use them, as in hard times every possible protection is welcomed.⁴² The Hasidic movement had its centre established in German Rhineland by Kalonymos family from Italy in 12th century. The Hasidism stood on three prominent figures of Kalonymides – Samuel ha-Hasid, his son Jehudah ha-Hasid of Worms and Jehudah's disciple Eleazar ben Jehudah of Worms, author of *Sefer Raziel*.⁴³ *Sefer Raziel* was one of the most influential writings concerning mysticism, especially regarding amulet making, as it served as a handbook for their making. Hasidism in Germany did not flourish for long, as in 13th century the Hasidic schools were dispersed in Rhines by the Crusades. Their writings and thoughts survived and were spread in Spain until the Expulsion from

⁴⁰ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.1

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.35

⁴³ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.38

Spain in 1492. The refugees then came to Safed in Palestine where the Hasidic movement was revived under the influence of Isaac Luria in 16th century.⁴⁴

Amulets are not specifically Jewish, Jewish amulets follows the same patterns of folklore as non-Jewish amulets of that time shared through civilizations. Specific Jewish are Kabbalah, Hasidic Ashkenaz, Heikhalot literature. Kabbalah is the most significant due to its elaborate ideas about angels and demons and magical properties of magical letters and writings.

3. Analysis of Amulet 501/b//1933

3.1 Description⁴⁵

The amulets in question were found in Bratislava Archives by my colleague Jana Turanská in a collection of various writings concerning now destroyed orthodox Jewish community living in Bratislava. It is not possible to say with certainty from where the amulets came from, since the material for this collection was collected in unsystematic manner over fifty-five years (1933 – 1988). The archive dated the amulets as coming from the first half of seventeenth century, which is probably not true as it will be argued for the amulets to be dated into later period.

This written amulet is made of parchment of unknown kind, plausibly deerskin. Design of the amulet is very symmetrical – on a square-shaped parchment is written Hebrew text in five homocentric circles each being smaller than other as they get to the centre. Edges of the parchments are damaged and missing, however the missing part is very small and does not impair the written part of amulet itself, damage being only outside double line functioning as borders of the actual amulet. Parchment as a whole measures 22x21.5 centimetres, vertical size being smaller due to the damaged lower edge. The amulet bares

⁴⁴ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.40-41

⁴⁵ See: Appendix: A1: Amulet 501/b/1933

traces, in form of two punctuations in the upper edge, of being hanged on the wall, although it is possible it was also folded and worn. Folding is still visible, however it was not possible to deduct which folding were results of the storing of the amulet in the archives, where it indeed was stored folded, and or if any of the folding lines is result of its usage as worn amulet.

Centre of the amulet is occupied by the name שדי (Shaddai) written in large Hebrew letters and names of three angels – סנוי וסנסנוי סמנגלף – SNVY SNSNVY SMNGLF above it. Under Shaddai inside the circles is written formula אדם וחוה חרץ לילית - *Adam ve-Chava chuts Lilit*, meaning Adam and Eve apart Lilith, from which can be understood this amulet's purpose is to protect the wearer against the demon Lilith. All writing in the centre is significantly bigger than the writing in circles, the height of the largest letters, שדי, reaching 3.7 centimetres in opposition to letters in circles measuring 0.25 centimetres. Name Shaddai itself is ornamented by a form of tagin. In each corner of the amulet, outside the circles is written text in shortcuts, also written in bigger letters.

Tagin are traditional way of writing a Sefer Torah and mezuzah and tefillin since the earlier modern period. Lurianic tradition had its own way of writing tagin and these are similar to ones used in the amulet.⁴⁶

3.2 Content of the Amulet

As mentioned, in the centre of the amulet seats the name שדי, one of the Names of God particularly often used in Jewish amulets. The angels named above the God's name are according the text of *Alphabet of Ben Sirach* three angels who are patrons of medicine and who were sent out to bring back Lilith, the first wife of Adam created of earth, after she denied to subdue herself to him, namely in sexual matters and fled from him to her own kingdom of *Zamarchad*.⁴⁷⁴⁸ The story further tells how they have found her but she

⁴⁶ Oral lecture given by Doc. Tamás Visi, Ph.D.,M.A

⁴⁷ אלפיה ביתא דבן סירא, *Alphabet of Ben Sirach* p. 12-13. Krakow: 1896

⁴⁸ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.115

denied to return and told them her purpose is to make infants sick and die, however swearing in God's name to keep away from children who are protected by the names of these three angels or when she sees written her own name.⁴⁹ These angels also appear at Babylonian incantation bowls from Late Antiquity and were traditionally carved to bedposts of new-born children. Formula under the God's name "*Adam ve-Chava chuts Lilith*", which can be translated as "Adam and Eve against Lilith" recalls the aforementioned story and embodies the idea and purpose behind the amulet – to protect a child of man against Lilith. Not only does Lilith endangers the infants, she also causes men to ejaculate while sleeping, thus creating *lilin* – spectres, new demons. It is widespread pattern that magic spells of all cultures contain lost mythological ideas of that particular culture. Lilith is also known under many different names such as the First Eve – חוה ראשונה – Amrusu, Kali, Batuh, Abiti and many others. Psalm 121 is especially used to protect the bearer of the amulet from Lilith.⁵⁰ *Shimmush Tehillim* from the geonic period suggests using Psalm 126 and later 121 with the names of three angels SNVY SNSNVY SMNGLF.⁵¹

In the corners of the amulet we find a text written in two lines using shortcuts. It is not possible to know solely from the amulet itself if the shortcuts are connected to one another and if they are, then in what order should they be read. This becomes clear only after they are deciphered. After deciphering these abbreviations with help of the register of Hebrew abbreviations *Otsar Reshi Tevot* (אוצר ראשי תבות) it becomes clear that they indeed are connected and the letters of abbreviations are the first letters of each word of Kabbalistic poem, or prayer, *Ana Be-Koach*, starting in the upper left corner with abbreviations אב"גת marking the first line of the poem.⁵² Going counter clockwise, to the first outer line of lower left corner (קר"עש"טן) and continuing to the first lines of lower right and upper right corners we get the first half of poem consisting of four lines, here written in abbreviations. Repeating the same steps with second lines of corner abbreviations, again starting with upper left and going counter clockwise, the second part, last three lines and

⁴⁹ אלפה ביתא דבן סירא, *Alphabet of Ben Sirach*, ref. 2, p. 12-13

⁵⁰ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.115-116

⁵¹ HESCHEL, Susannah (2nd ed.). *Lilith*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 13*. p.19

⁵² אוצר ראשי תבות, *Otsar Reshi Tevot*. p.8

additional blessing used after this prayer - ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד - can be deciphered. This blessing is added into *Keri'at Shema* and also after *Ana Be-Koach*. Here I provide the whole text of *Ana Be-Koach* and its translation⁵³:

אנא, בכח גדלת ימינך תתיר צרורה;
קבל רנת עמך, שגבנו, טהרנו, נורא;
נא גבור, דורשי יהודך כבבת שמרם;
ברכם, טהרם, רחמי צדקתך תמיד גמלם;
חסין קדוש, ברוב טובך נהל עדתך;
יהיד גאה, לעמך פנה, זוכרי קדשתך;
שועתנו קבל ושמע צעקתנו, יודע תעלמות

We beg thee, with the great strength of your arm untie us; accept song of your people, elevate us, purify us, oh Great one; Please heroic one, those who pursue your uniqueness guard them as the pupil of the eye; bless them, purify them, have mercy on them, may your righteousness always reward them; Powerful holy one, in your big goodness lead your community; Oh Only one, oh Proud one, face to your people, who remember your holiness; accept our prayer and hear our cries, knower of mysteries;

Ana Be-Koach has an unknown author, although some traditions ascribe its creation to the Jewish sage of first and second century Nehunya ben Ha-Kanah. Consisting of seven lines (the final blessing excluded), six words each, it makes for 42 first-letters. Initial letters in Kabbalistic tradition make up one of secret divine Names of God. Since the times of medieval commentaries of Talmud – *tosafot*, this name is mentioned by Rashi and given into the connection with the first two verses of the Torah, being encoded in them.⁵⁴ To the decoding and extraction of the name from the Torah dedicated their times

⁵³; DAVIDSON, Israel; *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry vol. I*; NY, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924. P. 285 nb 6242

⁵⁴ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.95

Rabbi Abulafia in his work *Chaye Ha-Olam Ha-Ba*⁵⁵ and later the Ramak in his *Pardes Rimonim*.

The word *Shaddai* in the middle of the parchment is encircled by five symmetrical lines of text, each one wider than the other as we go outwards. There is no clear indication as to where the text begins, however one can assume that text begins somewhere in the outermost circle. In the middle of the parchment where vertical axis would be there is a small gap in every circle in their upper halves, pointing toward plausible beginning of the text and places where, if the text is continuous it switches to the next circle. Indeed, when we start reading the text of the outermost circle right where the gap is, going traditionally from right to left, we see a text which, though partly illegible reads and translates as follows:

ויהי נועם יהוה אלוהינו עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננהו

And let the graciousness of the YHVH our God be upon us; establish Thou also upon us the work of our hands; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

This is the last line of Psalm 90, Psalm 90:17, with a small deviation from the accepted biblical text. In Hebrew Bible text we find instead of YHVH the name Adonai. This change might be caused by the earlier deviations brought to a tradition on which the amulet is based or by which it is influenced, meaning the scribe's source was not the text of the Bible itself, but some other, later text dealing with problematics of amulets or mysticism, plausibly one from Kabbalistic tradition. Other possible explanation could be a simple mistake of a scribe. Psalm 90 is attributed to the Moses and if said out loud, it is supposed to help in getting away from a lion or an evil spirit.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Internet source at http://www.hebrew.grimoar.cz/abulafia/chaje_olam_ha-ba.htm

⁵⁶ HAI ben Sherira Gaon. *שמורש תהלים*, *Shimmush Tehillim*. Budapest: 1937. p. 7

Here follows compact transcription of the text written in circles which will be described in the further detail. Semicolons were inserted here to mark the end of one circle and beginning of the next:

ויהי נועם יהוה אלוהינו עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננהו ישב בסתר עליון בצל שדי
יתלונן אמר ליהוה מחסי ימצודתי אלהי אבטחבו כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מדבר הוות באברתו יסך לך יתחת
כנפיו תחסה צנה וסחרה אמתו לא תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יומם; מדבר באפל יהלך מקטב ישוד צוהריים
ייפול מצידך אלף ורבבה מימינך אליך לא ייגש רק בעיניך תביט ושלומת רשעים תראה כי אתה יהוה מחסי
עליון שמת מעונך לא תאנה אליך רעה ונגע לא יקרב באהלך כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרך בכל דרכיך על
כפים יישאונך; פן תגוף באבן רגלך על שחל ופתן תדרך תרמס כפיר ותנין כי בי חשק ואפלטוהו אשגבהו כי
ידע שמי יקראני ואענהו עמו אנכי בצרה אחלצהו ואכבדהו ארך ימים אשביעהו ואראהו בישועתי :

After the third quarter of the third circle we find a colon. This colon marks the end of Psalm 91 and the beginning of another text – Psalm 121– followed by abbreviation and final blessing:

שיר למעלות אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא; עזרי מעם יהוה עשה שמים וארץ אל יתן למוט רגלך אל ינום
שמרף הנה לא ינום ולא יישן שמר ישראל יהוה שמרך יהוה צלך על יד ימינך יומם השמש לא יככה וירח
בלילה יהוה ישמרך מכל רע; ישמר את נפשך יהוה ישמר צאתך ובואך מעתה ועד עולם י"ן ייפ"או
ייפא"ולש ו"אש ע"בי ו"א לישועתך קויתי יהוה יהוה קויתי לישועתך לישותך יהוה קויתי לס"י יס"ל ל"ס
ש"כ"נ"ע"

Continuing reading the text after Psalm 90:17 we find out that what follows is Psalm 91 from its beginning. The first circle contains Psalm 91:1-5 and when it reaches the gap mentioned before, the text continues in the second circle. Second circle spans from 91:6 to the first part of 91:12 (על-כפיים יישאונך), three quarters of the third circle contains the rest of Psalm 91 ended by colon. This psalm is traditionally attributed to Moses, based on it being right after Psalm 90 which is explicitly, in its content, attributed to him. It is basically a prayer concerning itself with divine protection, persevering tones being aimed against the terrors and pestilences of the night - which could be interpreted as a codename for demons. *Shimmush Tehillim* in chapter on Psalm 91 says, that after saying these two psalms, presumably 90 and 91, one should say a short prayer appealing to God for removal of evil from one's presence. Then the one should write the whole Psalm and hang

it on the back doors of the house, thus departing from all evil.⁵⁷ These two Psalms are also used in exorcist rituals and they are included in the exorcist texts of the 16th and 17th century.⁵⁸

After the colon starts Psalm 121 which continues in the fourth and by a few words exceed the first quarter of the fifth circle. This Psalm is to be recited seven times as a protection if one finds himself outside alone in the night, to protect the house from thieves and is accepted as protection against Lilith.⁵⁹ The rest of the fifth innermost circle is the most complex.

After the Psalm 121 series of abbreviations follow. First abbreviation יי"ן ייפ"א ו"לש which is abbreviation using the first letter of each word in the respective verse of Priestly Blessing.⁶⁰ This blessing comes from the Torah, Numbers 6:24-27 and where, using these words, Aaron blesses Israelites. This blessing was found on silver amulets from Iron Age at Ketef Hinnom of Phoenician and Punic origin.⁶¹

Next abbreviation reads ו"אש ע"בי ו"א and stands for Numbers 6:27 reading: "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." This verse taken literally suggests that wearing the name of God on oneself protects the person and might be seen as Biblical approval, or at least suggestion for wearing amulets. The 22-letter Name of God is also traditionally associated with these verses, although it is not clear by what operation it was derived and *Sefer Raziel*, where the name occurred for the first time, does not offer any interpretation of the Name. As Eleazar of Worms, the author of *Sefer Raziel* drew heavily on Geonic sources it is plausible the Name itself is from that era or even older. Only in sixteenth century Moses Cordovero made a tables with alphabetical permutations dealing with derivation of this name.⁶²

After those abbreviations we find the following:

⁵⁷ GAON, Hai. שמש תהלים, *Shimmush Tehillim*. ref. 2. p.7

⁵⁸ ZFATMAN, Sara. *Jewish Exorcism in Early Modern Ashkenaz*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2015. p. 378.

⁵⁹ SWART, Jacobus G. *Book of Seals and Amulets*. p.43-44

⁶⁰ אוצר ראשי תבות *Otsar Reshi Tevot*. p.256

⁶¹ SMOAK, Jeremy. *The Priestly Blessing in Inscription and Scripture: The Early History of Numbers 6:24-26*. United States of America, NY: Oxford University Press 2016. ISBN 978-0-19-939997-0. p.2-5

⁶² TRACHTENBERG, Joshua: *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.92-94

לישועתך קויתי יהוה יהוה קויתי לישועתך לישועתך יהוה קויתי

This is Genesis 49:18 written three times, always with different word order. This verse is exclamation of awaiting the salvation by the hand of YHVH, spoken by Jacob on his deathbed.⁶³ The final circle ends by yet another series of abbreviations reading ל"ס"י י"ס"ל which is the same series of abbreviations as the preceding, this time it stands for Aramaic version of Genesis 49:18. The circle ends with the last abbreviation ש"כ"נ"ע" which could not be deciphered.

3.3 Analysis of the Amulet 501/b//1933

On a basis of the arguments that the amulet was hanged – as a puncture hole in the upper ridge suggests – and its content, it can be assumed it was hanged in a Jewish household to protect its inhabitants against the demon Lilith, that is either to protect child and its mother from illness or a man against the leaking of semen in the night. This can be derived from the central part of the amulet, consisting of the names of angels, which on bases on tradition recounted in *Alphabet of Ben Sirach*, have power to protect the infant living in the household against death by the hand of Lilith. The formula "*Adam ve Chava against Lilith*" further strengthen the argument, mentioning the demoness explicitly. Psalm 90, of which the last line is included at the beginning of circle writings, is, among other things, supposed to help against bad spirit. Psalm 91 strengthen these notions, mainly by the guidelines concerning its usage, by which the amulet containing this Psalm should be hanged at home. However, this can be contradicted by a presence of Psalm 121, its use being connected to travelling at night. Could have this amulet been used both as a protection of the house and protection of the bearer at his travels? If it indeed was also used for travelling, it would suggest that this amulet is made to protect a man from leaking a sperm, since if it would be for protection of an infant at its mother at night, presumably it would have not been taken from the house. Other, probably more correct explanation would be that this amulet is multifunctional as there is a no name of the owner and target

⁶³ Genesis 49

of protection of the amulet to be found as it would suggest this piece of work was made to be sold to anyone interested in protection against Lilith and being safe on his or hers travels, be it man or woman, mother or a travelling merchant.

4. Amulet 501/1//933

4.1 Description⁶⁴

The second amulet is also written on parchment of rectangular shape, measuring 42 centimetres wide and 12.5 centimetres high. As the preceding amulet, also this one bears marking of being hanged and in Bratislava Archives the notes on amulet mentions it was indeed hanged. From the hole in the left part of longer side, through which it was supposedly hanged, goes rapture to the edge of the amulet and other markings of hanging elsewhere are not visible, except small punctuation beside the magic square, which cannot be identified with certainty as a result of hanging. Amulet was kept in archives folded several times by text inside, but it bears marks of being folded in such a way to have its text on the outer side. It is also dated to the first half of seventeenth century. By the writing style it is very similar to the Amulet 501/b//1933.

Since basically nothing on amulet tells us with certainty which side of amulet should be upper, lower, left, or right, the side where the rupture as plausible result of hanging is present will be taken as the upper side. The upper, left, and lower sides of the amulet are outlined by a Hebrew text. Left and lower side consist of two lines, part of upper one of three lines. The right side does not have this textual boundary. The amulet contains various texts written in many directions and it would have to be turned around many times to read it comfortably. It also contains shot exclamations written by bigger letters seemingly everywhere where was left a piece blank. Simple magic square and Kabbalistic forms of Star of David (Magen David) are also present, accompanied by text written in a

⁶⁴ See Appendix: A2: Amulet 501/1/933

form of menorah and YHVH written by Kabbalistic letters. In the analysis, the text on the borders of the amulet will be dealt with first and the analysis of the rest of the amulet will proceed from the left to the right. Due to complexity of the amulet, parts of it will be described and analysed right away

4.2 Content and Analysis

4.2.1 Bordering Lines

Let us first see the text written around the borders of the amulet. The first, outermost, line consists exclusively of three-letter words starting from the right by והו ילי סיט עלם and so forth. These words do not seem to have any meaning, they are not words which could be found in most vocabularies. Whole line is the *72 Names of God* (sometimes called *72-letter Name of God*).⁶⁵ This name will be explored more in-depth but first let me introduce transcription of the whole text spanning around the borders of the amulet as it is needed to be presented before further description and analysis of the whole text. We will start on presumably the upper fringe of the amulet, the side which bears rapture as very plausible trace of amulet being hanged in such manner that this side is indeed the upper side. The text on this side also starts with the *72-letter Name of God* which we can assume precedes or concedes the text on the borders. Whichever the case, the text following this name is the place where we can assume the whole text starts:

והו ילי סיט עלם מהש ללה אכא כהת הזי אלד לאו ההע יזל מבה הרי הקם לאו כלי לוו פהל נלך ייי מלה חהו
נתה האא ירת שאה ריי אום לכב ושר יחו להח כוק מנד אני חעם רהע ייז ההה מיכ וול ילה סאל ערי עשל מיה
והו דני החש עמם ננא נית מבה פוי נמם ייל הרח מצר ומב יהה ענו מחי דמב מנק איע חבו ראה יבם היי מום

Here ends the *72-letter Name of God* which spans across the whole first lines of upper and left borders with the last part of the name being on the lower border of the amulet.

⁶⁵ Pardes Rimoni 21:5

Divided by a small gap more text follows, specifically Psalm 91. Underlined parts of the text are insertion into otherwise compact singular body of the Psalm:

ויהי נעם יהוה אלהינו עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננהו צמרכד

ישב בסתר עליון בצל שדי יתלונן צבאות אמר ליהוה מחסי ומצודתי מיכאל אלהי אבטחבו גבריאל כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מלטיאל מדבר הוות כאברתו אימיאל יסך לך יתחת כנפיו תחסה עמנואל צנה וסחרה אמתו אמתיאל לא תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יומם אנאל מדבר באפל יהלך מקטב ישוד צהרים סוראל יפל מצדך אלף אוריאל ירבבה מימינך ציריאל אליך נושא קמיע זו עליו לא יגש סמאל וכל סיעתו ולא לילית וכל כת דילה רק בעיניך תביט ושלמת רשעים תראה אמיאל כי אתה יהוה מחסי עליון שמת מעונך יואל לא תאוננו אליך רעה צרעיאל ונגע לא יקרב באהלך אוריאל כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרך בכל דרכיך יוהך בלך שומריאל שלהיאל על כפים ישאונך חזקיאל פן תגוף באבן רגלך סתריאל על שחל ופתן תדרוך תרמס כפיר ותנין זכוריאל כי בי חשק ואפלטוהו אשגבהו כי ידע שמי אכתריאל יה יהוה צבאות יקראני ואענהו פדיה ענאל עמו אנכי בתרה מטטרון שר הפנים אחלצהו וכבדהו רפאל ארן ימים אשביעהו חמן רוח פסקונית ואראהו בישועתי קנדי קנדיל יד קנדיל אם

The 72-letter Name of God is derived from Exodus 14: 19-21. As disclosed by Rashi, the Name is obtained by taking the first letter from verse 19, the last letter from verse 20, and the first letter from the verse 21. In this manner the first triplet והו is constructed and by following this pattern of going forward in verses 19 and 21 and backwards in 20– for every new triplet taking next and next letters in verses 19 and 21 and preceding letters in verse 20 – all following triplets are constructed, making the 72-letter Name.⁶⁶ This three verses tell about angel of God protecting the Israelites, showing them way while enshrouding them from Egyptians on their escape from Egypt to the sea and about Moses parting the sea.⁶⁷ The Name itself is considered as the most powerful version of the Name of God, maybe except Tetragrammon, and according to Rashi the tradition of the Name goes to Talmudic times, while being based on the Name originating from burning bush

⁶⁶ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.98

⁶⁷ Exodus 14:19-21

and being used to part the sea by Moses. Beside many other beneficial uses, this name is used as protection against evil spirits, serious ailments and Evil Eye.⁶⁸

After the 72-letter Name of God Psalm 90:17 follows ended by the Name Tsemerekede (Zamarchad in Schrire: *Hebrew Magic*) – צמרקד. According to Schrire this word is constructed of last letters of Genesis 1:1-5 and it very much resembles the name of kingdom of Lilith – Zamargad.⁶⁹ It is plausible that main function of the name is to protect the owner from the Lilith and the demons of her sphere. Swart does not include anything of what Schrire mentioned, instead he provides that Zamarchad is *Name of the Wing* and it hides a power of *Shekhinah*, being used as fertility booster and protection against maleficent spirits.⁷⁰ After this Name Psalm 91 in full length is written with added Name of God *Sabaoth*, meaning Lord of hosts, and Angelic Names. After the names few more additions follow, which have not been managed to be identified. Angelic Names were used plausibly as a strengthening element of the protective power of the amulet and the Psalm. As to why these exact names in this exact order are used would be a subject of further comprehensive research and study. Psalm 91 itself is a commonly found protective tool used on the basis of its content (“*The Lord is my refuge*”) and it being approved by Jewish authorities and Talmud as one of the strongest anti-demonic Psalm.⁷¹ Very similar style of writing Psalm 91 with insertion of Angelic Names can be found in the *Shorshei Ha-Shemot* by Moses ben Mordecai Zacuto and this manuscript or continuation of its tradition is very plausibly one of the major influence visible in the amulets. Also in this book, the Psalm is connected with name Zamargad.⁷²

⁶⁸ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.96-97

⁶⁹ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.120

⁷⁰ SWART, Jacobus G. *Book of Seals and Amulets*. p.48

⁷¹ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.112.113

⁷² ZACUTO, Moses ben Mordecai. *שרשי השמות*, *Shorshei ha-Shemot*. Holding in The British Library, London, England Add. 27171. Fol. 2b-3a. [online] [quoted 2019-06-18]. Accessible online at: http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?&presentorid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS000077377-1#FL34926466.

4.2.2 Menorah Writing⁷³

On the amulet I a piece of text written in the form of menorah. Such texts forming menorah, star of David, holy hand and other symbols are commonly found on Jewish amulets, be it written on parchment, bone or metal. This text should be read starting at the line enclosing the tips of the menorah, thus forming a kind of lit flames on the candlestick. The reading follows by respective arms of the menorah from left to the right. Semicolons in transcription will mark end of the line, respectively arm of the menorah:

למנצח בנגינות מזמור שיר; אלוהים יחננו ויברכנו יאר פניו אתנו סלה; לדעת בארץ דרכך בכל גוים ישועתך;
יודוך עמים אלהים יודוך עמים כלם; ישמחו וירננו לאמים כי תשפוט עמים מישור ולאמים בארץ; יודוך עמים
אלהים יודוך עמים כלם; ארץ נתנה יבולה יברכנו אלהים אלהינו; יברכנו אלהים ויראו אתו כל אפסי ארץ

It is revealed that the menorah writing consists of the Psalm 67. This Psalm in menorah writing was traditionally used in the *Shiviti Amulets* – larger, prettier, and using better-quality material – which were used in Persia. The *Shiviti* name comes from the first word of Psalm 16:8 as it was written on every one of them and became their characteristic. The first verse is written horizontally above the rest and thus forming kind of flames lit on top of the candlestick branches.⁷⁴ Menorah writing on this parchment is without any doubt inspired by these *Shiviti Amulets*.

4.2.3 Writing Encircling the Name שדי⁷⁵

In the bottom left part of the amulet we find the name of god שדי written in big letters and adorned by Kabbalistic crowns. The name is written thus as to be read when the amulet is in front of the reader in such manner that ruptured side is viewed as upper. However,

⁷³ Appendix A3: Amulet 501/1/933 Menorah Writing

⁷⁴ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.87

⁷⁵ Appendix A5 501/1/933 Writing around שדי

the text encircling the Holy Name in is written in mirrored position and should be read when the amulet is turned upside down.

אנא סוד שם המפורש הנקראת אין במאמר; דוד המלך ע"ה אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי . למענך; ולמען שמותיך הקדושים והטהורים הכתובים בקמיע זו ולמען שמך הנורא; והנכבד היוצא מן ויסע ויבוא ויט הכתוב סביב בקמיע זו שתצוה למען רחמיך למלאכיך; המבוסס על שערי שמים שישמרו לנושא קמיע זו עליו מכל מקרה רע ופגע רע ומכל מיני צרות ומאורעות; המתרגשות לבוא בעולם ומרוחות רעות ושידין ולילין ומזיקין דכרין ונוקבין ועין הרע וכישוף וקישור ובחלה ופחד; ורודה ותמהון לבב ועילוף ואסכרה ונזילה ויהיה נשמר בין ביום ובין הלילה בין בעיר ובין חוץ לעיר בין בשכבו ובין בקומו א

Oh Please secret Shem Ha-Meforash (Tetragrammaton) called ayin in the words of David the King ע"ה: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains: from whence shall my help come (Psalm 121:2)"; for your sake and sake of your holy names, and the pure writings in this amulet, and for sake of your terrible name. The venerable emanence and the moving and the coming ויט the writing around in this amulet that what was commanded, for sake of your mercy to your angels stationed at heavenly gates so they watch over the bearer of this amulet against all evil occurrences and pestilence, and from all kinds of trouble, and the exciting happenings of coming to the world, and from evil spirits, and from shidins and lilins and mazikeens – male and female – and the evil eye, and witchcraft, and bindings and from sickness and fear, and oppression and shock of heart, and fainting, and croup, and leaking; and may he be watched over during the day and during the night, within the city and in the outside of the city, while going and coming, Amen.

This translation, albeit rough, tells us that the scribe of this amulet calls out in a prayer-like manner to God and his angels for protection against all different harms that could come over the future wearer of the amulet, be it attack of demons or issues of the body and soul. The text also mentions “*exciting happenings of coming to the world*” and lilins which provides us this the maker also thought about safety of the infant and also possible male wearer and issue of leaking i.e. nocturnal emission. Shear variety of possible usages of the amulet provides argument toward the amulet being made to be sold to anyone interested, no order for making it was given by the customer.

4.2.4 Text under the Star⁷⁶

השבעתי; עליך לילית חוה ראשונה בשם; יוצרך יוצר בראשית ששלח בעבורך; שלשה מלאכים אלו סנוי סנסנוי סמנגלף; ומצאוך באיי הים והטביעוך במים; אדירים ולא הוציאוך משם עד ש[השב]עת להם כך שכל [מי]; שישא שמותם שלא תזיקי לו⁷⁷ אני משביע עליך בכח; שמותם סנוי סנסנוי סמנגלף ובתוכם קרע שטן שלא; הזיקי; ולא תפחידי לנושא קמיע זו עליו לא ביום ולא בלילה לא את; שום חד מן כת דילך. ולא את אגרת בת מחלת; ולא שום חד מן כת דילך. ולא את; זמזומית ולא שום חד מן כת דילך. ולא את; קפקונית אם השידים ולא שום חד מן כת דילך לא; בשכבו ולא בקומו לא בבית ולא בשדה לא בעיר; ולא חוץ לעיר ויהיה מעתה ועד עולם אמן

I took an oath about you Lilith, the First Eve, in the name of your creator, creator of the world, who sent in your transgression these three angels: SNVI, SNSNUI, SMNGLF, and they found you on the sea island and drown you in great waters and expelled you from there and until you swore to them as that (by) all six names you will not harm him... I swear over you by power of names SNVI, SNSNUI, SMNGLF and through them tore devil so you will not hurt and will not scare on him who wears this amulet, no in the day and not in the night, not anyone from your house/servants, and not you QFQUNIT with the demons and not anyone from your servants, not when they lay down and not hen they get up, not in the house and not in the field, not in the city and not outside of the city and so it will be from now to the end days, Amen.

The writer of the amulet provides quick reminder of the story about Lilith, her escape and chase of the angels after, as written in *Alphabet of Ben Sirach*. When they caught her, she swore to hurt or kill new-born children of men, however she also swore to not harm children protected by the names of these angels.⁷⁸ This would suggest the main focus of this amulet is protection of child and mother against demon Lilith and her kind of demons.

4.2.5 Text at the Bottom of the Amulet

כי עמך מקור חיים באורך נראה אורי יהי רצון ברחמים מלפניך; יהוה אלהי אלהי אבוחי אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק אלהי; יעקב אלהי האלהים ואדון על כל הנבראים; מושל בעליונים; ובתחתונים האל הנאמן אב הרחמן

⁷⁶ Appendix A6 501/1/933 Text, Magical Square and Hexagram

⁷⁷ The word is unreadable

⁷⁸ אַלְפֵה בֵּיתָא דְּבֶן סִירָא, *Alphabet of Ben Sirach* p. 12-13

העונה בעת צרות: העוזר דלים; הקרוב לכל אשר יקראוהו באמת ומשלם שכר טוב ליריאי; אשר לא יבושו קו...⁷⁹. עשה למען שמך הגדול והנורא המוכתר; בכתר האמונה שם אריה הכתוב בזה הקמיע שבו קרע משה את; הים לשביט עשר קרעים ועברו בני ישראל בתוכו בחרבה; ולמען; זכות ישני חברון אברהם יצחק וישראל אוהביך. ולמען זכות; יצחק שנעקד על גבי המזבח לעשות יצוגך בלבב שלם. והיה עלה; תמימה קדושה וטהורה; ולמען זכות כל הצדיקים המגינים; בכל דור ודור ובכה מלאך היום יום ה' שהוא מלאך הרניאל; שתשמור ותציל לנושא קמיע זו עליו מכל חלאים רעים; ומכל מיני צרות המתרגשות לבא בעולם. ומכל מיני פחד; ויראה ורעדה וחלחלה והרעשת איברים ואסכרה ונזילה; ועילוף וממיתה משונה ומדבר ומגפה וקטב מרירי ומכל; מיני רוחות רעות ושינוי אויר. ומלילית ובל כת דילה; וגם; מאגרת בת מחלת וכל כתדילה; ומשידין ולילין וללתין; ומזיקין דכרין ונוקבין בכל מקום; שיהלוך נושא קמיע זו; עליו לא יוזק בשום חד מרמה איבריו ולא בשכבו ולא; בקומו ויקויים בו מקרא דכתיב חנה מלאך יהוה סביב; ליריאי ויחלצם: אנסו

For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light I see my light. It shall be willed in mercy in front of you Adonai Divine God of my fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, Divine Elohim and Lord above all creation, ruler in the Highest and in the Lowest, the faithful god, the Merciful Father, the answer of time of distress, the aid of poor, the closeness/family member to all who will call him in truth and pays good tribute to his opponents, those who will not be ashamed to hope...it did so that your great and terrible coronated name by crown of faith...

The text starts with Psalm 36:10 and then it proceeds with exalting the God, reminding stories from Bible and then it pleads for elevation and mainly protection of the bearer. The dangers mentioned in this text to be warded off are plagues and diseases, death, fear and demons and spirits. Lilith is the first mentioned demon here, followed by Agrat bat-Machlat and list of kinds of demons as lilin, shidin and mazikin. In Kabbalistic tradition Agrat bat-Machlat is one of the queens of demons together with Lilith.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Part of the text is unreadable

⁸⁰ HESCHEL, Susannah (2nd ed.). *Lilith*. In: SKOLNIK, Fred, BERENBAUM, Michael et al. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 13*. p.18-19

4.2.6 Five-armed Candlestick⁸¹

Starting with a central column and then reading the arms in such manner that two upper arms make up one line and two lower ones make up another. Semicolons will point out the end of respective line:

שיר למעלות אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבא עזרי עזרי מעם יהוה עשה שמים וארץ; אל יתן למוט רגלך אל
ינזם שמרך הנה לא ינזם ולא יישן שמר ישראל יהוה שמרך יהוה צלך; על יד ימנך יומם השמש לא יככה וירח
בלילה יהוה ישמך מכל רע ישמר את נפשך יהוה ישמר צאתך ובאך מעתה ועד עולם

The candlestick writing consists of Psalm 121, a traditional Psalm for protection against Lilith.

4.2.7 Writing inside the Candlestick and under it⁸²

Written in bigger letters this is 42-letter Name of God. Hai Gaon wrote about this name in eleventh century, pointing out that the its proper vocalisation is not traditionalised, which would suggest this name comes from very antique times. It came to my attention that Trachtenberg in his *Jewish Magic and Superstition* have a different spelling or an error in transcription of the Name, precisely he writes חקד טנע instead of חקב טנע.⁸³

This name is believed to have magical properties not only in itself but also in its constituents, whether in words, or for some, even in every letter as each letter stands for other separate name. it was assumed this name was render from prayer Ana Be-Koach traditionally attributed to second century rabbi Nehunya ben Ha-Kanah, however this attribution was never proved, and it is more likely that in reversal, the prayer is based on

⁸¹ Appendix A4 501/1/933 Candlestick Writings

⁸² Appendix A4

⁸³ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.94

the name. Medieval mystical tradition stated that the Name comes from the first forty-two letters of the Torah.⁸⁴

אבג יתץ קרע שטן נגד יכש בטר צתג חקב טנע יגל פזק שקו צית

אתון מלאכייא קדישייא המשמשין קדם רבון כל

עלמא יה יהוה צבאות דהוא אלהא דעלמא יהא; שמיה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא; מיכאל; גבריאל
צדקיאל נפיאל הרניאל שמיאל; יופיאל; אשבעית עליכון בשם אלהא; דשמיא וארעא בשם שנודע למשה;
בסנה ובשם שקרעאת; הים

Last word הים stands alone in the lower right corner of the candlestick. On the right and a bit under the candlestick is another text which starts with the same word – הים, thus we can assume that this word being on its own in the last line was put there to help the reader figure out the connection between the two texts. Interesting is that the part inside the candlestick is written in Aramaic, whether the part under it is written in Hebrew:

הים ליב קרעים ובשם שנתן; תורה לישראל ובשם שנגלה; לאליהו בהר הכרמל ובשם; שרפא את המים על
ידי; אלישע שתשמרו ותצילו לכל מי שישא קמיע זו עליו; מכל צרה וצוקה וחלי ומחלה; ומרוחין בישין ושידין
ולילין; ומזיקין דכרין ונוקבין בין; ביום ובין בלילה בין בחלום; בין פחדים בין בהרהור מעתה; ועד עולם אמן

4.2.8 Magical Square⁸⁵

In the upper left corner of the amulet we find simple 3x3 magical square. These squares are often used in Hebrew amulets written on parchment. The square contains Hebrew letters which stands for their respective number in Hebrew numerals:

ד	ט	ב
ג	ה	ז
ה	א	ו

⁸⁴ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.95

⁸⁵ Appendix A6 501/1/933 Text, Magical Square and Hexagram

Converting the letters into their numeral value we get 4 9 2 in the upper line, 3 5 7 in the middle, and 8 1 6 in the lower. Adding the numbers in the rows we get the number of 15 in each of the rows. Same number we get, when we add the numbers in the columns (4 3 8, 9 5 1, 2 7 6) and also in the diagonal lines (4 5 6, 2 5 8).

The letter ה in the middle is used as a symbol of Tetragrammaton and also stand for הו, another symbol for Tetragrammaton, which also has a numerical value of 15 (this writing of 15 is never used explicitly as it is part of the Sacred Name)⁸⁶. We can assume this magical square thus symbolises the name יהוה and its magical properties. Other names used in these simple squares are Shaddai – שדי, and ehyeh - אהיה.

אהיה אשר אהיה is written in big letters to fill the blank space between two different texts. אהיה (Ehyeh) is Divine Name of God connected to Exodus 3:14 – the burning bush answering to Moses "I am that I am" – אהיה אשר אהיה.⁸⁷

4.2.9 Stars of David⁸⁸

There are two Stars of David on the Amulet – one with a text inside of it is placed at the foot of the menorah writing, and the other is framed by the text and is positioned next to the magical square at the bottom left corner of the parchment. Both stars are drawn by hand without using a ruler or any other kind of tool to make the lines straight and *nice*.

The first star, the one under menorah writing has a letter in each of the tips: ט in the top one, ה in upper-right, פ in upper-left, י and ט in lower right and left tips, and פ stand in the bottom tip. In the centre of the star is following writing:

היה שמירה והצלה לכל הנושא קמיע זו עליו מוע

It was protection and salvation to all bearing this amulet. The last word מוע is an abbreviation which might mean many things, but most likely it stands for a phrase מעתה

⁸⁶ SCHRIRE, Theodore. *Hebrew Amulets*. p.65

⁸⁷ SWART, Jacobus G. *Book of Seals and Amulets*. p.4

⁸⁸ Appendix A6

ועד עולם meaning "*from now to Eternity*".⁸⁹ Regarding the letters in the tips of the star in *The Book of Seals and Amulets* they are transliterated as *Taftafyah* and this formation is regarded as a Divine Name, one of the name of Metatron associated with sefira Chochmah. The name is derived from the first two letters of Psalm 119:69,70,76 and is often found with combination with hexagram and can be applied as a protection of a mother and her infant.⁹⁰

The second star set in the lower left corner of the amulet is set into a frame formed by this text:

יברכך יהוה וישמרך יאר יהוה פניו אליך ויתנך ישא יהוה פניו אליך יושם לך שלום

The text is transcribed here as it should be read, starting at the right side of the frame and going counterclockwise to top, left, and finally bottom side. This text is identified as Numeri 6:24-26, which is known as Priestly Blessing.

Inside the frame in respective corners and still outside of the star is yet another writing, here transcribed as red from upper right to lower left:

אמקתם פסתם פספסים דיונסים

This text is revealed to be the 22-letter version of Name of God. This named can be traced back to *Sefer Raziel* where it written down for the first time, however it is plausibly a lot older than the book, which is mostly ascribed to Eleazar of Worms (c. 1176–1236). The book does not offer any interpretation. This name was introduced to Kabbalistic prayers in 17th century by Nathan of Hanover, specifically it was put into conjunction with Priestly Blessing and popularised it further.⁹¹ Given the fact that also in this amulet the 22-letter Name following after Priestly Blessing suggest the amulet was likely written no sooner than late 17th century.

⁸⁹ Otsar Reshi Tevot. p.352

⁹⁰ SWART, Jacobus. *The Book of Seals and Amulets*. p.35-36

⁹¹ TRACHTENBERG, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. p.93-94

Finally encompassed by the Priestly Blessing and the Name we find the hexagram. Its edges are adorned by little circle, one at the edge of each tip, and in the middle of the star is written בית and its meaning and function was not uncovered.

Conclusion

Neither of the amulets contains any personal name, meaning there the author and the recipient of the amulets remain unknown. Absence of the name of the maker is not unusual, however the missing name of the recipient – the person the amulet was made for, whom it should protect – is more peculiar, as the most of amulets were made on the basis of pre-order. This would suggest that these amulets were not made on order but were produced to be sold to any interested buyer. Finding another piece of the same amulet would provide strong proof of this hypothesis, however no duplicate was found.

The earliest possible date of creation of the amulets can be set probably to the beginning of 18th century as we can see two major influences in the amulets. In 1591 *Pardes Rimonim* came out in Krakow. The influence of this book was immense in Kabbalistic circles in and it is visible in the amulets as they include *Ana Be-Koach* in same format as this book and use other protective tools given a lot of space in *Pardes Rimonim*. More importantly in Bordering Lines of second amulet we see added Angelic Names connected to the name צמרקד, which can be seen, although in slightly different additions of names, in *Shorshei Ha-Shemot* of Mordecai Zacuto. Although the time of the book being composed is unknown, given Zacuto lived from c. 1625 to 1697, we can expect it was published toward the end of 17th century. When we connect that Jews returned to Bratislava in 1692 as very small community and grew mainly in the second half of the 18th century, especially after lifting the restrictions on Jews in the last quarter of 18th century, we can say the amulets were written plausibly in second half of 18th century at earliest, and certainly not sooner than late 17th century, when *Shorshei Ha-Shemot* was published. The latest date the amulets could have been written can be set with virtually absolute certainty to 1930s as the Nazi occupation and WWII wiped out most of the Jewish community in Bratislava. The supervisor of this thesis Doc. Tamás Visi,

Ph.D.,M.A suggests that the handwriting used in amulets seems to be of later tradition than the one used in 18th century, which does fit with approximate dating on basis of Bratislava's history and sources used for creation of the amulet.

We could also speculate about more narrow dating of the amulets; however, it is really a speculation based on circumstances in Bratislava. Until the year 1840 the Jews were confined to their quarter Judengasse, which burned down in 1913 Also the amulets not having written any name on them of the person which they were supposed to protect suggest these amulets were meant to be sold to anyone interested, suggesting abundance of probable buyers, meaning big Jewish community and possible non-Jewish buyers. All these circumstantial historical and societal facts would set the date of earliest possible creation of amulets somewhere around 1840, as in that time the Jewish community became less restricted, it blossomed and grew bigger and partly moved out from Jewish quarters which burned down in 1913, thus the amulets would very likely burn down to, unless they were taken to the new house by their owner. However, it should be emphasised that this paragraph is only based on speculation!

The first amulet does not contain a name of either the scribe or the bearer. It is clearly meant to protect the user (and plausibly his closest surroundings) or a household from the attacks of demoness Lilith and health problems ascribed to her. This kind of amulet is probably the most common one throughout the history, because two major issues are connected with this demoness – one being death or serious sickness of the baby or mother after labour, while the other is a nocturnal emission of men. Nothing in the amulet itself clearly specifies to which of the two issues is the protection regarded, although it could be argued the matter of post-labour death is the focus here, as it is more important and dire issues than having wet dreams or having the ones semen stolen by Lilith or her kin. Furthermore, the hole in the upper ridge of the amulet suggests, it was hanged somewhere in the house of the user. Similar amulets as this one, containing the names and depictions of the three angels, are described as being hanged in the room, or even carved in the bedpost, where the new-born child rested with its mother. These facts give as a basis for being able to conclude with reliably strong certainty the first amulet was meant to be

bought by anyone in need of protection after giving birth to the child, whether it was to protect the child or the mother, or both.

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Amulet 501/1//933

Amulet 501/b//1933

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Annotation/Anotace

Nezval Adam

The Kurt and Ursula Schubert Center for Jewish Studies at Faculty of Arts

Centrum judaistických studií Kurta a Ursuly Schubertových; Filozofická fakulta

Jewish Protection Magic – Amulets/Židovská ochranná magie - amulety

Supervisor/Vedoucí: Doc. Tamás Visi, Ph.D.,M.A

Symbols, spaces included/Počet symbolů včetně mezer: c. 88 000

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This bachelor thesis concerns itself with short introduction to Jewish mystical tradition and its history, while main focus being put on the amulets, which are major part of the tradition. Two recently found amulets from Bratislava written on parchment are described accompanied with transcription of their text and they are analysed respectively. Aim of the thesis is to establish the approximate date of their creation, their purpose and possible influences of different Jewish mystical traditions, i.e. Kabbalah.

Bakalářská práce se zabývá krátkým úvodem do židovské tradice mysticismu a její historie, přičemž důraz je kladen na amulety, které jsou důležitou součástí této tradice. Dva nedávno nalezené amulety z Bratislavy napsané na pergamenu jsou zde popsány spolu s přepisem jejich textu a jsou každý zvlášť podroben analýze. Cílem této práce je stanovit přibližnou dobu jejich vzniku, jejich účel a možné vlivy různých židovských mystických tradic, např. Kabaly.

Appendix

A1: Amulet 501/b//1933





A3: Amulet 501/1/933 Menorah Writing





כי עמך מקור חיים באורך נראה
 יהוה אלהי שאלתי אלהי
 יעקב אלהי האלהים וארוך עול
 וכתחוננים האל הנאמן אבה החמן
 הקרוב לכל אשר יקראוהו באמת
 אשר לא יבוש קונו עשה למען
 בנתר האמונה שם אד"ה הכתוב בנז
 הים לשבע עשר קרעים ועברו בני
 זכות ישני חברון אברהם יצחק
 יעקב שבע קד על גב המזבח לעשות
 תמימה קדושה וטהורה ולמען
 בכל דור ודור ובכח מלאך היום
 שחשמור ותציל לנושא קמיע זו
 ומכל מיני צרות המתרגשות לבא
 ויראה ורעדה וחלחלה והרעשת
 ויגלוף וממיתה משונה ומדבר
 מיני רוחות רעות ושינוי אור
 מאנרת בת מחלת וכל כתדילה
 ומזיקין דברין ונוקבין בכל מקום
 עליו לא יזק בשום חד מרמור
 בקומו ויקוים בו מקדאדכתיב
 ליראיו

אור יהי רצון כרחמים מלפני
 אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי
 כל הנבראים מושל בעליונים
 העונה בעת צרות העוורדלים
 ומשלם שכר טוב ליראיו
 שמך הגדול ונראה המוכתר
 הקמיע שבו קד עמשה ארת
 ישראל בתומו בחרבה ולמען
 ישראל אוהבך ולמען זכות
 רצונך בלבב שלם והיה עליה
 זכות כל העדיקים הנמצאים
 יום ה' שהוא מלאך הרע
 עליו מכל האלים רעים
 בעולם ומכל מיני פחד
 איברים ואסכרה וגזילר
 ומגפה וקטב מדירי ומכל
 ומלילות וכל כתדילה ונס
 ומשידן ולילין וללתיץ
 שיהלך נשוא קמיע זו
 איכריו ולא בשכבו ולא
 חנה מלאך יהודה
 ויחלצם: אנסו

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נגדיכש כטרצנת
 שקוצית
 שיר למעלות
 אבנית קדעשטן
 חקבטנע ילפוק
 יתן למוט יתן
 אהנו מלאכיי
 יתן למוט יתן
 יתן למוט יתן