



Societas Magica Newsletter

Issue 32

Spring 2015

Women, Ritual Power, and Mysticism in the *Testament of Job*

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The *Testament of Job*, a fascinating Jewish literary text from first century CE Egypt, provides an example of a ritual practice that protects from Satan's attacks, heals from illness, and allows those who use it to speak in angelic tongues, demonstrating how the discourse of ritual practice does not distinguish between either modern or ancient categories of "magic" and "mysticism." In the *Testament of Job*, Job and his three daughters benefit from a "protective amulet" (φυλακτήριον) given to them by God, and are granted visions of (and perhaps even existence within) the heavenly world.¹ Like the Hekhalot literature, the *Testament of Job* weaves together descriptions of angelic encounters, the speech of angels, and the use of amulets for protection.² The text gives women a rare role as visionaries who see the angels and participate in angelic worship and raises important questions about the sharp distinctions that some scholars (ancient and modern) make between the categories of magic and mysticism. My discussion here focuses on how the women are protected from Satan and enabled to speak in angelic tongues when they bind on "multicolored" cords given to them by their father.

The *Testament of Job* is a testament attributed to a biblical character. In this genre, the children (usually only the sons) of the biblical figure gather around their father's deathbed and receive his ethical teachings. *The Testament of Job* is unusual, however, because Job's three daughters (not just his sons) receive their own spiritual

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inheritance from him. It is also not purely a testament, because it “brings together a range of stories, as well as poems, hymns, and sayings.”³ It exists in four Greek manuscripts, nine Slavonic manuscripts, and in one fragmentary Coptic manuscript.⁴ The Coptic translation is both the earliest manuscript (4th century CE) and provides access (through its translation) to the earliest known stage of the Greek text.⁵ Most scholars date the *Testament of Job* to the first century BCE or CE, and argue that it is a Jewish work originating in Egypt.⁶

In the *Testament of Job*, when Job is on his deathbed, he tells his second set of children what they will receive after his death. His sons will receive his earthly property, but his three daughters, Hemera, Kasia, and Amaltheia's Horn, will each receive one of three “multicolored” cords that God gave him to heal him of all the illnesses that Satan had inflicted upon him.⁷ The cords were “not from earth but from heaven (μη εἶναι ἐκ γῆς ἀλλὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἶσιν) shimmering with fiery sparks like the rays of the sun (ἀκτίνας τοῦ ἡλίου).”⁸ When his daughters asked him what they were good for, he told them that “these cords will lead you into the better world, to live in the heavens.”⁹ They will also be able to see “those who are coming” for his soul.¹⁰ Job identifies the function of the

cords as “a protective amulet of the Father.”¹¹ When they wear them they “will not have to face the enemy [Satan] at all,” nor will they worry about him. They will not be vulnerable to Satan, as he was, because they have protection against him. Additionally, as we will see, when they put on the cords, they will sing hymns in the languages of the angels and gain “another heart,” minded toward heavenly, not earthly, realities.

The word translated as “protective amulet” in English is the Greek φυλακτήριον. This word derives from the Greek verb φυλάσσειν, meaning to protect, guard, or defend.¹² It comes to mean “amulet,” an object that protects and heals the wearer, or gives him or her certain powers.¹³ In the Greco-Egyptian ritual papyri, the word refers to several types of objects with similar uses.¹⁴ Often, a *phylakterion* is a piece of paper or metal upon which words of power are written or inscribed, usually consisting of various Jewish, Greek, or Egyptian divine names. It can serve several uses, for example in spells to exorcise demons.¹⁵

A phylactery need not even be a material object that the practitioner wears or holds; it can also be the divine name kept in the heart. A ritual in one of the Greco-Egyptian papyri instructs the practitioner to address the highest god with these words: “Your name and your spirit rest upon the good.

Come into my mind and my understanding for all the time of my life and accomplish for me all the desires of my soul. For you are I, and I, you. I have your name for a unique phylactery in my heart, and no flesh, although moved, will overpower me.”¹⁶ Knowledge of the divine name(s) gives the possessor power.

While the forms of the amulets mentioned in the Greco-Egyptian ritual literature are different from those in the *Testament of Job*, they have similar functions – to get rid of the demons who cause disease and suffering, to protect from demons and other dangers during delicate rituals, and to assist the practitioner in gaining power over and seeing angels and gods. The idea that illnesses come from demons infesting the body of the sufferer is widespread in ancient Judaism, as attested in the Qumran literature, the New Testament, Jewish amulets from Byzantine Palestine, and the Aramaic incantation bowls.¹⁷ Amulets against demons were used across the ancient world by both women and men, so it would be entirely plausible to the ancient reader that Job's daughters could receive such objects to protect them from Satan.¹⁸

When each woman wraps on her cord, it becomes apparent what Job meant when he said that they would lead them “into the better world, to live in the heavens.” When Hemera wrapped around

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her own string (σπάρτη), she:

took on another heart – no longer minded toward earthly things (τὰ τῆς γῆς) – but she chanted in the angelic dialect (τῆ ἀγγελικῆ διαλέκτῳ), sending up a hymn to God in accord with the hymnic style of the angels (κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἀγγέλων ὕμνολογίαν). And as she chanted the hymns, she allowed “The Spirit” to be inscribed on her garment.¹⁹

After her, Kasia bound on her cord.

Then Kasia bound hers on and had her heart changed so that she no longer regarded worldly things (τὰ κοσμικά). And her mouth took on the dialect of the archons (ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῶν ἀρχῶν) and she praised God for the creation of the exalted place. Wherefore if anyone wishes to know the “creation of the heavens,” he will be able to find it in the “Hymns of Kasia.”²⁰

Finally, Amaltheia’s Horn bound on her cord.

And her mouth chanted in the dialect of those on high (ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῶν ἐν ὕψει), since

her heart also was changed, keeping aloof from worldly things. For she spoke in the dialect of the cherubim (ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῶν Χερουβίν), glorifying the Master of virtues by exhibiting their glory. And the one who further wishes to grasp the traces of the paternal glory will find it written down in the “Prayers of Amaltheia’s Horn.”²¹

Each of the women is transformed in a particular way. For each of them, either her “heart changed” and or she acquired “another heart,” meaning in this context that she did not regard or care for the things of this world, referred to either as τὰ τῆς γῆς or τὰ κοσμικά. Compare the use of the term “another heart” in reference to King Saul. When he was “among the prophets” he also gained “another heart.” According to the Old Greek translation, “And it happened, as he was turned with his shoulder to leave Samouel, God changed for him another heart (μετέστρεψεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς καρδίαν ἄλλην).” He came to a band of prophets, “and a divine spirit (πνεῦμα θεοῦ) sprang upon him, and he prophesied in the midst of them.”²² The use in the *Testament of Job* of the idea that each woman’s heart “changed” or she acquired

“another heart” suggests that their experience is thought of in some way as prophetic, just as Saul’s experience was prophetic.

The women’s experience goes beyond the prophetic, however, because each of them begins chanting in a different angelic language: the “angelic dialect,” the “dialect of the archons,” or the “dialect of the cherubim.” The text does not specify Hemera’s particular new language, but it does so for Kasia and Amaltheia’s Horn, and names two different kinds of angels – the archons (meaning “the leaders”) and the cherubim. It is particularly interesting that Amaltheia’s Horn chants in the dialect of the cherubim, because they have a long history, starting from their role as guardians of the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve

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Members of the Societas Magica are entitled to a 20% discount on all books in the Magic in History series put out by Pennsylvania State University Press. See your member home page for discount code to use when ordering books online, by phone (800-326-9180), or fax (877-778-2665).



Societas Magica Activities at the 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies – Western Michigan University, May 14-17, 2015

Friday, 9:00 PM, Bernhard Faculty Lounge

Societas Magica, the Research Group for Manuscript Evidence, and the Index of Christian Texts

Reception with open bar

Saturday, 11:45 AM, Fetzer 2030
Societas Magica Business Meeting

Session 416, Saturday, 1:30 PM, Schneider 1130

EFFICACIOUS WORDS: SPOKEN AND INSCRIBED

Sponsor: Research Group on Manuscript Evidence; Societas Magica

Organizer: Jason E. Roberts, Univ. of Texas–Austin

Presider: Marla Segol, Univ. at Buffalo
Four Approaches to the Power of Words

Lea T. Olsan, Univ. of Louisiana–Munroe
Mid uuorrdun endi mid uuercun: *The Introduction of Christian Holy Words into Germanic Folk Prayers and Charms*

Collin Brown, Univ. of Texas–Austin
The Power of God's Name and the Problem of God's Favor: A Diachronic Examination of the Tradition(s) of Solomonian Magic

Jason E. Roberts
Magic, Prayer, and the Power of Words
Alison Harthill, Cardiff Univ.

Session 475, Saturday, 3:30 PM, Schneider 1130

MAGIC SUNG, SPOKEN, INSCRIBED, AND PRINTED

Sponsor: Research Group on Manuscript

Evidence; Societas Magica

Organizer: Frank Klaassen, Univ. of Saskatchewan

Presider: Mildred Budny, Research Group on Manuscript Evidence

Voces Magicae in Greek Magical Papyri: Performance, Literacy, and Authority

Brett Lawrence Wisniewski, New York Univ.
Medieval Astrological Signs

John Haines, Univ. of Toronto

Magical Anxieties: Problems with Magic in Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29

James Weldon, Wilfrid Laurier Univ.

How Print Changed Magic: The Case of Reginald Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft

Frank Klaassen

Session 548, Sunday 10:30 AM, Fetzer 1045

MATERIALITY AND MAGIC

Sponsor: Societas Magica

Organizer: Marla Segol, Univ. at Buffalo

Presider: Frank Klaassen, Univ. of Saskatchewan

Inscribed and Spoken Magic in the Icelandic Sagas

Thomas B. de Mayo, J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College

"Let it Be Made Secretly": The Efficacy of Unread Words in Medieval England

Katherine Hindley, Yale Univ.

The Matter of Prophecy: Props, Practices, Representations

Claire Fanger, Rice Univ.

Body as Amulet in the Shiur Qomah

Marla Segol

Testament of Job cont'd have been expelled, to their participation in the heavenly praise of God in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, to their closeness to the divine throne in the Hekhalot literature.²³

When Hemera, Kasia, and Amaltheia's Horn chant in the various angelic dialects, they join together with the angels in their praise of God, adding their own original compositions to praise God. They truly do become heavenly-minded, like their father Job. We can ask whether the *Testament of Job* envisions the women in some fashion being translated to heaven to stand with the angels before the divine throne, or whether it sees them as singing together with angels here on earth. In either case, the type of mystical experience they are undergoing seems to be what Peter Schäfer calls "liturgical communion," a term which he

applies to several of the Qumran documents.²⁴

In conclusion, the *Testament of Job* is one example of an ancient text where a ritual practice – binding an amulet around oneself in the form of glimmering cords – has multiple purposes. The *phylakterion* protects Job and his daughters from Satan's attacks and heals Job's illnesses (which were the consequence of Satan's attacks). When used by the daughters, the cords make it possible to see the angels coming for Job's soul, and allow them to speak in angelic tongues, praising God together with the angels. The same ritual practice can be used at the same time for seemingly disparate ends, confounding ancient and modern attempts to draw a sharp distinction between magic and mysticism.

Endnotes

¹ All translations of *Testament of Job*

are from Philip Alexander, trans., "Testament of Job," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Doubleday: Garden City, NY, 1983-85), 1:839-868. Greek is from Sebastian P. Brock, ed., *Testamentum Iobi*, Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1967) and Robert Kraft, ed., *The Testament of Job, according to the SV text*, Greek text and English translation (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974).

² Rebecca Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Harvard Theological Studies Series 44 (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998).

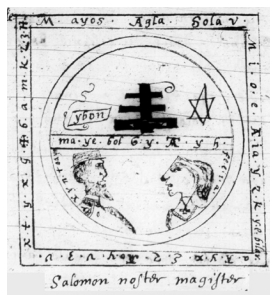
³ Maria Haralambakis, *The Testament of Job: Text, Narrative, and Reception History* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 27.

⁴ Gesa Schenke and Gesine Schenke Robinson, *Der Koptische Kölner Papyruskodex 3221. Teil 1: Das Testament des Iob* (Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), 9-11; Lorenzo DiTomasso, "Pseudepigrapha Notes IV: 5. The Testament of Job. 6. The

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The Societas Magica invites proposals for essays to run in future issues of the newsletter.

We are looking for short essays (1500-2500 words) announcing new developments deriving from research in the study and teaching of magic and its related topics. We would



be especially interested to see lead articles on modern magic, or periods other than medieval. We are also looking for smaller pieces for our notes and queries column. News about dissertations in progress or completed, manuscript discoveries, or other such items are all welcomed.



Please contact David Porreca: dporreca@uwaterloo.

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Testament of Solomon,” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 21 (2012): 313-320.

⁵ Schenke and Schenke Robinson, *Koptische Kölner Papyruskodex*, 11. They write that the Greek text lying behind the Coptic translation is the “earliest indirect text witness” (“frühtester indirekter Textzeuge”).

⁶ Dankwart Rahnenführer argued that it was of Jewish origin, and suggested that it was written before 70 CE (“Das Testament des Hiob und das Neue Testament,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 62 (1971): 68-93). Berndt Schaller, *Das Testament Hiobs*, *Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* 3; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1979, 308, 311, dates it between the beginning of the first century BCE and the middle of the second century CE. John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 241, writes, “The Egyptian provenance can scarcely be doubted, since Job is said to be king of all Egypt (28:8).”

⁷ The *Testament of Job* 47:5-9. The cords are called by several Greek words – χορδή, which means “guts” or “gut string/cord” (in the *Testament of Job* 46:7, 9; 47:1, 3, 5). A synonym, σπάοτη, appears twice (47:4; 48:1), and it means “rope, cord.” The word ζώσις is used once (52:1), and it means “belt, girdle.” For an extended discussion of the terms and their meaning in the *Testament of Job*, see Heike Omerzu, “Women, Magic, and Angels: On the Emancipation of Job’s daughters in the Apocryphal Testament of Job,” in Darlene Bird

and Yvonne Sherwood, eds., *Bodies in Question: Gender, Religion, Text* (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 85-105 [86-87].

⁸ The *Testament of Job* 46:8.

⁹ The *Testament of Job* 47:3.

¹⁰ The *Testament of Job* 47:3-11.

¹¹ The *Testament of Job* 47:11.

¹² Yehudah B. Cohn, *Tangled Up in Text: Tefillin and the Ancient World*, *Brown Judaic Studies* 351 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008), 110.

¹³ Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 1960. The term is used many times in the Greek magical papyri. For a description of the many ways in which amulets could be used, see Roy Kotansky, “Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets,” in *Magika Hiera*, eds., Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 107-137 [107-108].

¹⁴ For texts and translations of these ritual papyri, which are written in Greek, Demotic, and Coptic, see Karl Preisendanz and Albert Henrichs, eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973-74) and Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

¹⁵ One ritual is an “excellent rite for driving out demons,” which specifies that it is directed against Satan. The text is found in PGM IV 1227-64. After Satan is exorcised, an amulet (*phylakterion*) should be prepared and hung around the patient’s neck. This amulet consists of a small piece of tin on which powerful names are written.

¹⁶ PGM XIII 790-806 (Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, 190-191; Preisendanz and Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2:123). It reads in part: τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα σου ἐν φυλακτήριον ἐν καρδίᾳ τῆ ἐμῆ. Compare also PGM XXI 1-29, which has almost exactly the same wording.

¹⁷ This belief was common in the ancient world and is expressed both in the Greek magical papyri and in amulets from the Greco-Roman world. See Kotansky, “Incantations and Prayers,” 117.

¹⁸ Kotansky, “Incantations and Prayers,” 116-119.

¹⁹ The *Testament of Job* 48:1-3.

²⁰ The *Testament of Job* 49:1-3

²¹ The *Testament of Job* 50:1-3.

²² 1 Kings 10:9-10, Old Greek; translation is from Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wrights, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 255. The Greek is from Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1965), 1.519.

²³ Gen 3:24; Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 59; 3 En. 22:13 (Philip Alexander, ed., “3 Enoch,” in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:277-78 278); Peter Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), §34.

²⁴ Peter Schäfer, *Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 122, in reference to communion between the angels and the members of the Qumran community.

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