

Pazuzu

Iconography and Innovation in the Ancient Near East

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Pazuzu — King of the *lilû*-Demons

- Iconographic representations on apotropaic amulets are traceable to the end of 8th century BCE.



Figure 1–3—Pazuzu pendants, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–600 BCE)

Figure 4—Pazuzu statuette, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 911 BCE–604 BCE)



Origins of Pazuzu I — Humbaba (Sumerian: Huwawa)

- Apotropaic Humbaba severed heads attested from 1st Babylonian dynasty into the Neo-Assyrian period.



Figure 5-7—Humbaba heads, Old Babylonian Period (ca. 1800 BCE–1600 BCE)

Origins of Pazuzu II — West Wind

Imagery & Winged Hybrid Monsters

- Pazuzu iconography develops from a hybridization of earlier Humbaba heads and images of the west wind (Wiggermann 2007)

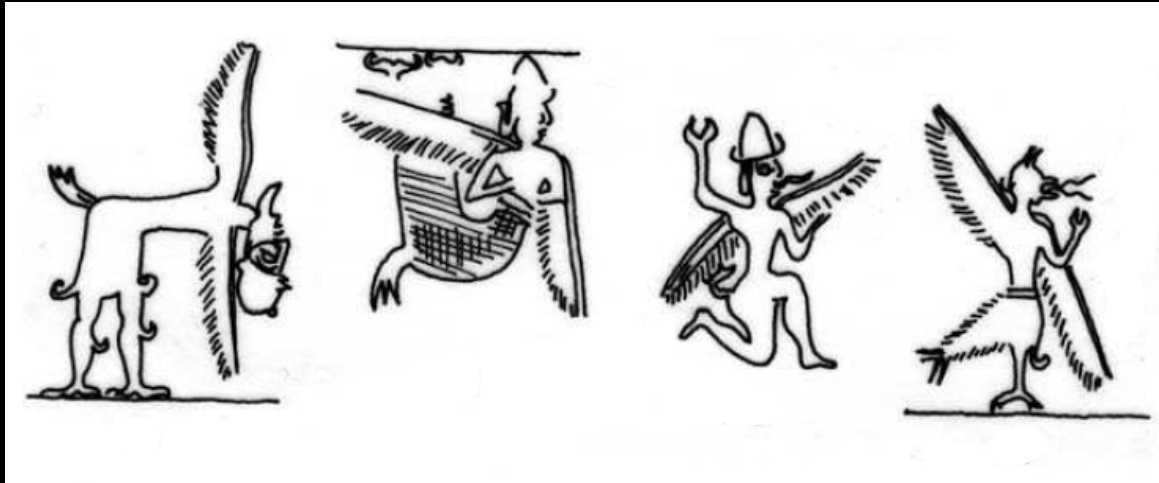


Figure 8–10—Seal impression of west wind (above) and hybrid monsters (right)

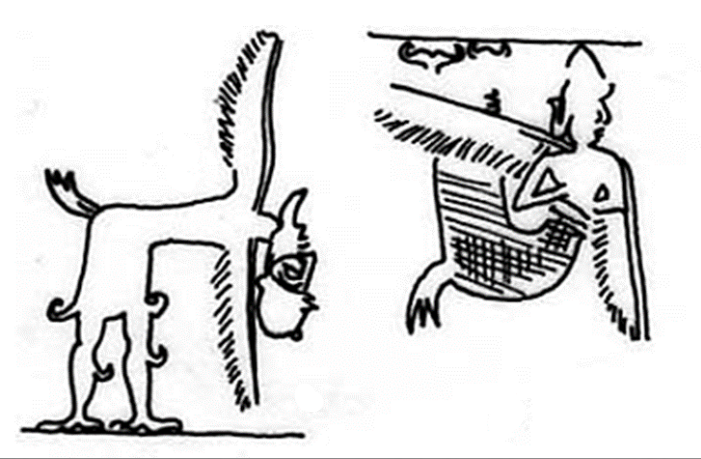


Figure 11-12—"Bent" west wind (upper) crouching Pazuzu (lower) Figure 13-14—Hybrid winged monster (left) and Pazuzu (right)

Amulets of Pazuzu — Placards I

- Pazuzu's complex full-figure iconography is “radically counterintuitive”
- He paved the way for the development of other radically counterintuitive imagery and more elaborate artistic traditions (Maiden 2018)



Figure 15–16—Pazuzu amulets of the placard type, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–500 BCE)

Amulets of Pazuzu — Placards II

- Pazuzu displays a compelling first-person *frontal gaze* (Sonik 2013)
- *Zwischenwesen*, intermediary entities are known to be masters of animals, guardians and gatekeepers

Figure 17—Lamaštu placard amulet depicting exorcism ritual in registers



Amulets of Pazuzu — Placards III

- Pazuzu was considered especially efficacious for expelling the demoness Lamaštu
- He is first seen on Lamaštu exorcistic amulets in the form of placard amulets beginning in the 7th century

Figure 18—Lamaštu placard amulet depicting exorcism ritual in registers and Pazuzu positioned behind



Amulets of Pazuzu — Heads I

- Amulets were displayed, worn as necklaces, fastened to the head, and were also intended to be handled



Figure 19—Pazuzu amulet with cuneiform incantation shown on the back, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 911 BCE–604 BCE)

Amulets of Pazuzu — Heads II

- How might Pazuzu's amulets have been exchanged and how might he have been received?
- We can consider Pazuzu as having held an unofficial, peripheral though popular niche in ancient Near Eastern magic and domestic religion during the 1st millennium BCE



Figure 20–21 — Bent west wind iconography (left) and crouching Pazuzu (right) inspired by west wind

Figures

Figure 1—Cast Pazuzu pendant, Assyria, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–700 BCE), cast bronze, $4.3 \times 2.65 \times 2.65$ cm; Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, acquired 1993; 1993.181. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 2—Cast Pazuzu head, Babylon, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–600 BCE), cast bronze alloy, 10.5 x 7.2 cm; Middle East Department, acquired 1962; 132964. Photo: The British Museum.

Figure 3—Carved Pazuzu head, Babylon, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–600 BCE), yellow limestone, 9.9 x 5.8 x 7 cm; Middle East Department, acquired 1983; 91876. Photo: The British Museum.

Figure 4—Statuette of the demon Pazuzu, Assyria, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 911 BCE–604 BCE), cast bronze, 15 x 8.6 x 5.6 cm; Department of Oriental Antiquities, acquired 1872; AO 22205. Photo: Musée du Louvre.

Figure 5—Mask of demon Humbaba, Sippar, Old Babylonian Period (ca. 1800 BCE–1600 BCE), fired clay, 8.3 x 8.1 cm; Middle East Department, acquired 1883; BM 116624. Photo: Musée du Louvre.

Figure 6—Head of demon Humbaba, Mesopotamia, Old Babylonian Period (ca. Early 2nd millennium BCE), size unknown; Photo: Iraq Museum by ArtStor Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archives/Art Resource, N.Y.

Figure 7—Plaque of Humbaba, Babylon, Old Babylonian Period (ca. 2nd millennium BCE), fired clay, 9 cm; Archaeology/Western Asiatic Antiquities, 87.160.783. Photo: The Israel Museum.

Figures (cont.)

Figure 8—Cylinder seal impressions of the West wind, Northern Mesopotamian (Mitannian) and Syrian, Late Bronze Age (ca. 14th century BCE). Source: Frans Wiggermann, 2007. “The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu.” In *Das geistige erfassen der welt im alten Orient: Sprache, religion, kultur und gesellschaft*, edited by Joost Hazenbos, Annette Zgoll and Claus Wilcke, 125–166. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Figure. 17 *a–d*.

Figure 9—Cylinder seal impression of the hybrid monster, MMA 1986.311.55, ex–Cherkasky collection; dealer): H. Pittman, *Art* (1987) no. 76; M. Stolper, in: H. Pittman, *Art* (1987) 80. Source: Frans Wiggermann, 2007. “The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu.” In *Das geistige erfassen der welt im alten Orient: Sprache, religion, kultur und gesellschaft*, edited by Joost Hazenbos, Annette Zgoll and Claus Wilcke, 125–166. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Figure. 36.

Figure 10—Cylinder seal impression winged early Iron Age girtablullû, Hasanlu IVB (ca. 9th century BCE), M. Marcus, *Lips* (1994) 11 Fig. 2. Source: Frans Wiggermann, 2007. “The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu.” In *Das geistige erfassen der welt im alten Orient: Sprache, religion, kultur und gesellschaft*, edited by Joost Hazenbos, Annette Zgoll and Claus Wilcke, 125–166. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Figure. 38 *d*.

Figure 11—Cylinder seal impressions of the West wind, Northern Mesopotamian (Mitannian) and Syrian, Late Bronze Age (ca. 14th century BCE). Source: Frans Wiggermann, 2007. “The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu.” In *Das geistige erfassen der welt im alten Orient: Sprache, religion, kultur und gesellschaft*, edited by Joost Hazenbos, Annette Zgoll and Claus Wilcke, 125–166. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Figure. 17 *a–b*.

Figures (cont.)

Figure 12—Crouching Pazuzu figurine, Assyria, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–700 BCE), red jasper, 4.3 x 6.3 cm x 2.3 cm; Department of Oriental Antiquities, mode of acquisition unknown; AO 26056. Photo: Musée du Louvre.

Figure 13—Neo-Hittite relief of Winged early Iron Age girtablullû, Karkemiš: PKg 14 Abb. 354b (ca. 950–850 BCE). Source: Frans Wiggermann, 2007. “The Four Winds and the Origins of Pazuzu.” In *Das geistige erfassen der welt im alten Orient: Sprache, religion, kultur und gesellschaft*, edited by Joost Hazenbos, Annette Zgoll and Claus Wilcke, 125–166. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Figure. 38 *e*.

Figure 14—Statuette of the demon Pazuzu (profile), Assyria, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 911 BCE–604 BCE), cast bronze, 15 x 8.6 x 5.6 cm; Department of Oriental Antiquities, acquired 1872; AO 22205. Photo: Musée du Louvre.

Figure 15—Pazuzu plaque, Mesopotamia, Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–600 BCE), stone, size unknown; Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, lent by Nanette B. Kelekian L.2004.8. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 16—Bronze Pazuzu amulet, Mesopotamia, Late Babylonian/Neo-Assyrian Period (ca. 800 BCE–500 BCE), copper alloy, 2.25 x 1.1 cm; Middle East Department, acquired 1899; 86263. Photo: The British Museum.

Figures (cont.)

Figure 17—Lamaštu placard amulet, Mesopotamia, (n.d), copper alloy, 13.7 x 8.7 x .35 cm; Middle East Department, acquired 1914; 108979. Photo: The British Museum.

Figure 18—Lamaštu conjuring plate amulet, Mesopotamia, Neo–Assyrian Period (ca. 911 BCE–604 BCE), cast bronze, 13.8 x 8.8 x 2.5 cm; Department of Oriental Antiquities, acquired 1967; MNB 467. Photo: Musée du Louvre.

Figure 19— Pazuzu head, Babylon–Mosul region, Neo–Assyrian Period (ca. 911 BCE–604 BCE), modeled terracotta, 9.1 x 7.6 x 7.4 cm; Department of Oriental Antiquities, acquired 1893; AO 2490. Photo: Musée du Louvre.

Figure 20—Stone Pazuzu head, Mesopotamia, Neo–Assyrian Period (ca. 900 BCE–612 BCE), stone, size unknown; Middle East Department. Photo: The British Museum.

Figure 21—Pazuzu head, Mesopotamia, Neo–Assyrian Period (ca. 800–700 BCE), limestone, 10.1 cm; Christie's, Antiquities Lot 89, closed June 2008. Photo: Christie's.

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