Review

Reviewed Work(s): Corpus of Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian Incantations by Elyze Zomer

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Source: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, October-December 2021, Vol. 141, No. 4 (October-December 2021), pp. 955-959

Published by: American Oriental Society

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7817/jameroriesoci.141.4.0955

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also have to do with Old Babylonian $gudu_4$ priests, some of them selling prebends. A comparison of prebend-holding from Ur III into Old Babylonian times would be a fascinating project.

The conclusion, at less than five pages, recapitulates the main conclusions of each chapter. The reviewer was hoping for comparisons more broadly across the chapters here. How did female clergy differ in provinces like Umma and Lagash? Was there a tension in royally controlled sites like Ur and Nippur between the local, traditional, and archaizing tendencies Huber Vulliet so clearly demonstrates, as over against the centralizing and perhaps reforming measures pushed by the kings? Were clergy sacred and set apart, or members of families who lived in the community and were subject to all the community's rules, customs, and taxes? And why all the snake charmers? One may also note that the bibliography used is almost entirely pre-2013, which makes sense for the 2014 completion date of the original work, but which is unfortunate in a 2019 publication.

On the whole, however, Huber Vulliet has done a great service to the field in producing this work. Her careful scholarship and attention to detail are of great benefit to us all. This reviewer is very happy to have another excellent book from the CSIC series on the shelf.

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Corpus of Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian Incantations. By Elyze Zomer. Leipziger Altorientalische Studien, vol. 9. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018. Pp. xxiv + 463, 3 pls. €84.

It is not often that published dissertations become standard reference works. The present volume qualifies as one that belongs on the shelf of anyone working on Mesopotamian incantations, although it is not likely to be displayed in the window of a local bookshop. The work contains numerous tables and catalogues of all known Middle Babylonian incantations from all over the Sumerian- and Akkadian-speaking world, as well as a useful selection of transliterated and translated texts, plus a well-executed edition and hand copy of an unpublished tablet from the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. All of this is grist for the Assyriological mill. In addition to these, the book contains six informative introductory chapters providing general background information on typologies of incantations, the materiality of the tablets, the geographical distribution of the texts, the social setting of the magic, the distribution of texts within scribal communities, and the process of standardization (or canonization) of the incantations.

There is a problem, however, with the general concept of the book, which focuses on Sumerian and Akkadian incantations from a specific time period, that the author defines with precision as the period between 1595 and 1026 BCE in Babylonia and between 1424 and 1056 in Assyria (p. 2). The geographical spread of Sumerian and Akkadian tablets during this period extends from Mesopotamia into Syria and Hittite Asia Minor, as far west as Egypt in the brief period of Amarna correspondence, and east into Susa and Iran, and all of these regions either produced or could have produced incantation tablets in their local archives or schools. Considering the vast geographical area under consideration and cultural differences (even between Babylonia and Assyria, not to mention further afield), can this chronological grouping of incantations be anything more than a modern convenience for assembling data? The author is correct to point out that a large proportion of the sources discussed were found in the periphery, outside of Mesopotamia, and this certainly attests to the spread and popularity of the art of *āšipūtu* during this period. The question is whether the incantations were subject to local influences, since the author correctly observes (p. 82) that the majority of magical texts from outside of Mesopotamia can be considered as reference works, reflecting magic as an academic discipline rather than as technical know-how.

Once this is recognized, the question is whether one can actually distinguish between Old Babylonian incantations (in Sumerian and Akkadian from Mesopotamia) and later copies of these texts from the period in question, and whether the chronological distinction is valid or even helpful, beyond being

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a curiosity. If a Middle Babylonian incantation turns out to be a later copy of an earlier Old Babylonian *Vorlage*, does this tell us anything new?

The overwhelming sense of the continuity between older incantations and those from this "middle" period is easy to detect in the author's observations in chapter 2 regarding the physical properties of the tablets. In essence, the system of noting rubrics on incantation tablets is recognizable for all periods and shows a great deal of consistency in particular with tablets from earlier Old Babylonian archives. All incantations, whether Sumerian or Akkadian, tended to use the same labels to indicate the beginnings and end of incantations, as well as ritual instructions that follow them, and all these Sumerian labels remained the same throughout the second millennium BCE with relatively minor variation: ÉN, (TU_6). ÉN.É.NU.RU, KA.INIM.MA, KÌD.KÌD.BI, DÙ.DÙ.BI (see pp. 29–35). It was not strictly necessary to translate any of these labels into Akkadian, since they were not actually part of the incantation itself, but were appended before and after the spell as markers of genre. Incantations from the latter half of the second millennium largely follow the same system dating back to the third millennium BCE, almost without variation. With this in mind, we should ask whether scribes in this period introduced any major innovations into Middle Babylonian and Assyrian incantations, or whether we can even consider the collection of incantations from this period to be a "corpus," as indicated by the book title.

In order to address such questions, it would be useful to know something about who were these scribes, scholars, or text editors who produced these incantations. While some meagre information on magical texts can be gleaned from the archaeological record (pp. 78–82), there is little evidence for contextualizing magic in this period. Zomer makes a bold attempt in chapter 4 (see pp. 66–70) at finding the social setting of these incantations in a brief survey of exorcists or magical experts known by name or title (*āšipu*) from private and official letters as well as archival sources. None of this information is conclusive, considering that we have only a handful of names of exorcists or scholars from a period covering some four centuries and from an enormous geographical region. However, in her search for "private" and "public" clients for incantations, (pp. 74–76), Zomer introduces the reader to scholars in the latter part of the second millennium who were credited in antiquity with creating editions of incantations texts.

It has long been assumed that the earliest formation of serialized incantation compositions, such as Šurpu, dates back to the Kassite period (i.e., the period in question), but almost without any supporting evidence for this view. The supposition is based upon two first-millennium colophon-like texts attributing the edition of standard texts to the famous Borsippa scholar Esagil-kīn-apli, who lived during the reign of Adad-apla-iddina (1068–1047), or to anonymous scholars from the reign of Nazi-marrutaš (1308–1242). Indirect evidence based on Kassite names of respected scholars and authors (preserved on later lists) is also used to infer that significant advances in scholarship were made by the end of the second millennium BCE. The hurdle that counters this view is simply that there is no surviving record of incantation corpora from the times when these scholars were thought to have lived that show their hand as editors or compilers of tablets. All retrospective evidence supporting such arguments is circumstantial at best, partly because ancient attributions are generally far from reliable.

Cale Johnson has reminded me of the Assur text excerpted from the first tablet of the physiognomic omen series Alamdimmû, which is claimed by the text itself to be "older" (*labīru*) and not to have been personally redacted (lit. "untied") by Esagil-kīn-apli (see N. P. Heeßel, "Neues von Esagil-kīn-apli: Die ältere Version der physiognomischen Omenserie *alamdimmû*," in *Assur-Forschungen*, ed. S. M. Maul and N. P. Heeßel [Wiesbaden, 2010]), 154. Heeßel's supposition—that the tablet reflects an earlier edition of Alamdimmû that preceded a *second* standard version created by Esagil-kīn-apli—is not provable. First, the text in question is not a simple copy of a known text but includes commentary-like comments on the text (as noted by Heeßel, ibid., 155–56), which probably betrays its purpose as an academic exercise. Second, there is no reason to assume that this Assur text (VAT 10493+) is older than the Neo-Assyrian manuscript that recorded it, or that the reference to Esagil-kīn-apli as original editor of the omen series is anything other than a traditional attribution, similar to later Greek medical treatises that kept being attributed to Hippocrates.

Nevertheless, one approach to innovation versus conservatism is to examine the question of standardization of texts from the period in question, which is the topic addressed in chapter 6. The author

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correctly challenges the idea of texts being a "forerunner" (p. 180), which is a term of convenience employed by Assyriology to indicate earlier witnesses to corpora that became standardized and serialized in first-millennium BCE archives and libraries. Although the highest levels of standardization were achieved in Assurbanipal's Royal Library, the process of dividing compositions into a sequence (*iškaru*) of "tablets" (physically and metaphorically) was universally observed in all libraries and archives. (A recent comprehensive discussion of canonicity, not available when the present volume was published, is to be found in U. Steinert, ed., *Assyrian and Babylonian Scholarly Text Catalogues: Medicine*, *Magic*, *and Divination* [Berlin, 2018]). As Zomer correctly observes, the process of labeled sequences of incantations in colophons (Tablet 1, 2, 3, etc., of a composition) was not a novel approach of first-millennium scholarship but was already known from Old Babylonian collections, from Nippur and elsewhere (see p. 176).

In order to judge whether Middle Babylonian editions of texts served as "forerunners" or precursors to later texts, one can glance at the reception history of a sample text among the selections provided in this volume. We select as a sample RS.17.155 (*Ugaritica* V, 17b, edited pp. 249–52), which has close parallels in the late series *Muššuʾu* Tablet V (Barbara Böck, *Das Handbuch Muššuʾu "Einreibung": Eine Serie sumerischer und akkadischer Beschwörungen aus dem 1. Jt. vor Chr.* [Madrid, 2007], 191–96). Two other "forerunners" to *Muššuʾu* IV are also known, see M. J. Geller and F. A. M. Wiggermann, "Duplicating Akkadian Magic," in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society: Presented to Marten Stol on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. J. Robartus Van der Spek (Bethesda, MD, 2008). The two published tablets (LB 1000 and BM 17305) are similar but not duplicates, and they also share characteristics with another late incantation compendium, SAG.GIG (Tablet VII). Neither of these two tablets has a known provenance or archaeological context and either might possibly date from a later period, i.e., Middle Babylonian rather than Old Babylonian.

Despite many similarities, the earlier and later versions of this text do not share the same incipits, counter to the usual conventions that incantations are labeled and known primarily by their incipits, which are often cited in ritual contexts to note when a particular incantation is to be recited and how often. The incipit of the late recension of the incantation incorporated within *Muššuʾu* IV reads: ÉN *ištu*(TA) *šamê*(AN-*e*) DÌM *šuruppi*(AŠ.RU) *ur-du-ni itti*(KI) *na-al-ši it-tab-ku-ni*, "*columns* (provisionally interpreting the logogram DÌM for Akk. *timmu*, "column," usually indicating a "mast," but used here metaphorically) of cold descended from heaven, they were poured out with the dew" (see Böck, *Muššuʾu*, 191 and 215 for a slightly different reading); the incipit has no known earlier attestations. The Ugaritic parallel or "forerunner," RS.17.155, on the other hand, bears a very different incipit known from Udug-hul Tablet II (ÉN *duppir lemnu*, "Let go, O evil"), showing a considerable degree of similarity with this text as well as with Muššuʾu. (Cf. M. J. Geller, *Healing Magic and Evil Demons: Canonical Udug-hul Incantations*, with L. Vacin [Berlin, 2016], 59. The Ugarit incantation is the only "forerunner" to Udug-hul II, with parallels to the first eighteen lines of the late recension.) This indicates that later first-millennium scholars inherited a rich but relatively unsystematic array of incantations from their predecessors, which they could reformulate and incorporate into different later compendia without worrying about altering the character of the original text.

We will focus on a list of diseases in *Muššuʾu* IV in later and earlier versions of the text (see Geller and Wiggermann, *Fs. Stol*, 159–60 for a convenient list of diseases listed in *Muššuʾu* IV, most of which commonly occur in medical recipes, such as fever for bites of a dog, snake, or scorpion, or terms for diseases like *miqtu*, *maškadu*, *ṣennitu*, *gergissu*, *ašû*, *sagbānu*), bearing in mind that even the later recensions of *Muššuʾu* do not present a standardized or canonized text, since they show significant variation between Late Babylonian and Late Assyrian manuscripts of the tablet. (Since early and late versions of the text are quite different, a synoptic presentation, rather than in Partitur format, might have been useful here.) Nevertheless, the late recensions have one feature in common, in that they both help to interpret the earlier Middle Babylonian "forerunner" known from Ugarit.

The list of diseases begins at l. 22 of RS.17.155 (see p. 249) with *ašû*, *samānu*, *amurriqānu*, and *ahhāzu* diseases, followed (l. 23) by an unusual combination of disease terms, both known and obscure: *ummu* "fever," *liʾbu*-infection, *almu*, *allamu*, and *diʾu*-fever (ll. 22–23 read: [*a-š*]*ú-ú sà-ma-nu a-mur-ri-qa-nu ah-ha*-[*zu*] / [*um-m*]*u li-i-bu al-mu al-la-mu di-i*-[*ú* . . .]). The diseases *almu* and *allamu* (as

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translated by Zomer) are unattested elsewhere, although *Muššuʾu* gives these both as god names with divine determinatives (^{d}*al-mu* ^{d}*al-la-mu*, *Muššuʾu* V 35; the relevant passage in *Muššuʾu* V 35 reads: *šá-da-nu ʾe-e-lu šag-ga-šú* ^{d}*al-mu* ^{d}*al-la-mu*). The names ^{d}*al-mu* ^{d}*al-la-mu* appear in the god list An-Anum VI 128–29 (R. J. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists* [Bethesda, MD, 1998], 210), in a context of "evil demons" (DINGIR *lem-nu-um*, l. 121) and followed by other classes of demons, *gallû*, *utukku*, *šēdu*, *rābiṣu* (ll. 130–33). None of these demon names specifically designate diseases, although they were certainly instrumental in causing them. However, the names Almu and Allamu occur in *Muššuʾu* V 35 in a very different context than in the "forerunner" RS.17.155, being mentioned together with vertigo (*šadânu* or *ṣīdānu*, which may have been brought on by the *ṣīdānu*-demon mentioned in the myth of Nergal and Eriškigal—see CAD Ṣ 172), the *eʾēlu* "binder"-demon, and *šaggāšu* "murderer"-demon. This may have been an attempt in later recensions to explain the obscure god or demon names ^{d}*almu* and ^{d}*allamu* as personified causes of illness, as in other examples given in the late recension.

A similar argument can be made for the rather difficult l. 25 of RS.17.155, [*né*]-*me-ed* ^{d}*a-nim a-lu-ú sa-hi-pu su-*[. . .], "the fixture of Anu, the swooping *alû* . . ." The line is not found in later *Muššuʾu* nor are these expressions known from later incantations, but nevertheless there seems to be an attempt at explanation in late versions. The corresponding line in *Mussuʾu* V 36 (with some variation between manuscripts) reads: *a-lu-ú bi-ib-bi mut-taš-rab-bi-ṭu* ^{d}*nam-tar* / DUMU.MEŠ *šá re-eš* DINGIR.MEŠ ⌈*ú-qa-a-mu*⌉, "the bull (of heaven), wandering planet, (and) fate are messengers waiting for the gods." (Böck's creative reading [p. 193] for Ms. E (K 8487) of *Muššuʾu* V 36 as *a-lu-ú a*[*l*]-⌈*lu-hap-pu*⌉, "the Alû-net" cannot be substantiated, either by her copy (pl. XXIII) or the photo (P 397651) on CDLI. The most likely restoration is *b*[*i-ib-bu*].) The intention here is to clarify *nēmed Ani*, a rare astrological term (CAD N/2 157, 165), with reference to a pun on *bibbu* as a term for both planet and "plague," as well as relying upon the pun between the celestial *alû*-bull and the *alû*-demon. The *nēmed Ani* "fixture of heaven" may have been a euphemism for epidemic, which later fell out of use.

A final example occurs in ll. 26–27 of RS.17.155, which refers to [. . . *nap*]-*la-aš-ta ú-tuk-ku*, "the Utukku [*causing*] a perforation. (Although *naplaštu* is not in the dictionaries, it has the same form as *naplastu* < *palāsu*, "blinker." This may be similar to the *palšu* disease attested only in a list of diseases [MSL 9 78:55], indicating a puncture-type wound.) It is unclear why the generic Utukku-demon should be mentioned in a list of ailments, but the Late Babylonian parallel, although damaged (*Muššuʾu* V 41), offers an elegant solution: *ú-tuk-ku* [. .]-*d*[*u*$^{?}$-. . . . .-*t*]*u*$_{4}^{?}$ ^{d}*šu-lak šá mu-sa-a-tu*$_{4}$, "the Utukku . . ., Šulak, (demon) of the lavatory." (Reading from Böck's hand copy, Pl. XXb; Böck herself (p. 193) has restored the line to read *ú-tuk-ku* [*na*]-⌈*ap*⌉-[*la-áš*]-⌈*tum*⌉ based on the Ugaritic parallel, but the restoration does not conform to the traces on her copy.) *Muššuʾu* explains the threat posed by a common demon by identifying him as the toilet-demon, feared for triggering illness.

More could be said about this one text, but the main point is that incantations from the Middle Babylonian or Middle Assyrian period were not treated as fixed or standard texts by their later redactors, nor is there any firm evidence that most Middle Babylonian or Middle Assyrian texts were part of an established canon or even a corpus of incantations. Later redactors apparently felt free to innovate, change, and explain texts that they inherited from predecessors, without regard for the integrity of the older version. Even within a major incantation compendium like *Udug-hul*, which was already serialized in the Old Babylonian period (see pp. 209ff.), many individual incantations within the Sumerian unilingual "forerunner" were not incorporated into the later bilingual compendium, even though the general tendency was toward exact replication of the Sumerian text within a later recension. First-millennium scholars did not feel themselves bound by tradition in relation to second-millennium sources to the same extent that became conventional for the standard text editions of first-millennium libraries and archives.

It appears difficult to see a "corpus" among the wealth of data presented in this dissertation, since each incantation appears to have its own story to tell within a myriad of contexts and possible reasons for being composed in the first place. It is also not easy to distinguish Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian incantations from those that preceded them, partly because our knowledge of Old Babylonian incantations is incomplete. For this reason, we cannot be certain how much represents innovative think-

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ing on the part of scribes from the latter part of the second millennium, nor can we trust later assertions that scribes from this period were the first to create highly edited recensions of incantation texts.

On the other hand, one defense of the concept of this thesis boils down to this: The importance of the chronological distribution of incantations is that it indicates the strength of the scribal curriculum, linking the classical compositions from Old Babylonian schools to their highly reworked but recognizable editions of first-millennium BCE libraries and archives, a continuity that cannot be demonstrated to the same extent in Egypt or elsewhere in the ancient world. For this rather profound insight, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the author of this volume.

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A Maritime Lexicon: Arabic Nautical Terminology in the Indian Ocean. By Abdulrahman Al Salimi and Eric Staples. Studies on Ibadism and Oman, vol. 11. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2019. Pp. 641, illus. €88.

"Lexicons are more than just inventories of lexical items," writes the Oman Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs Abdullah Bin Mohammed Al Salimi in the foreword to this comprehensive analysis of Arabic terms used in the vast Indian Ocean seafaring network. The massive volume lives up to such a goal in an impressive way. The entire text is provided in both English and Arabic, with simultaneous translation of the Arabic terms and their descriptions on the same pages. Words are listed according to their appearance in the Arabic alphabet. Without a doubt, this is now the most important study on nautical knowledge of the Gulf region and a necessary text, especially given its reasonable price, for anyone interested in the broad subject of navigation and seafaring in the Indian Ocean.

The authors have divided the contents into six parts, covering vessel types and general terms, boat building, seafaring, navigation, fishing, and pearling. There is also an appendix for the names of currencies used in the Indian Ocean (pp. 589–602). An indexed list of about 1,200 Arabic terms with their basic meaning assists the reader in finding specific terms (pp. 617–22). The volume is illustrated with high-quality photographs, mostly from Oman, and various drawings by Alessandro Ghidoni, including annotations (pp. 625–31) of the basic parts of traditional boats. The major bibliography covers Arabic- and Western-language sources consulted.

The authors' introduction notes the importance of the sea for the Arab of the Gulf, despite the stereotypical image of Bedouin raising camels in the desert. Not only did the sea provide important products, such as fish and pearls, but it opened up a maritime route east and west in the vast Indian Ocean and Red Sea trade network. As a result, Arabic nautical terms were borrowed into other languages, such as *daqal* (mast) in Persian and *merikebu* in Swahili, from the Arabic *markab* for a boat, and vice versa. The Persian terms *nākhūdhā* (ship master) and *bandar* (port) were widely used in Arabic, and the vessel called *hūrī* comes from Sanskrit. More recently, the Portuguese word *bandeira* (flag) entered Arabic, as did the English *jib* (foresail).

After discussing the major textual sources for nautical terminology, the authors lay out four objectives for their work as a complement to previous research. The first of these is presenting the material in both Arabic and English, combining Arabic lexical sources with information from Western studies; previous collections have mainly been in Arabic with the notable exception of G. R. Tibbett's translation (*Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese*, 1971) of Ibn Mājid's fifteenth-century *Fawāʾid fī uṣūl ʿilm al-baḥr wa-l-qawāʿid*. A second aim is to sample terms in the entire Arab Gulf region rather than focus on a specific country. Third, the authors look at a wide range of non-Arabic sources, such as classical Roman, Persian, Indian, Portuguese, British, and Swahili, for comparative material. Fourth is the application of an interdisciplinary approach, citing material from archaeology, historical archives, and ethnographic documentation of boat building.

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