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### Nachrufe

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an cosmogonic tradition is a classic. Here the borrowing is undeniable, but it is a borrowing of ideas rather than form. Also, it is possible to trace the route along which the transmission took place, viz. by way of Cyprus. Another counter example comes from M.'s own research. In Chapter Eight he points out the possible debt of *Iliad* 1.62-64 to the Hittite, and ultimately Sumerian, tradition (see pp. 191-220). The Greek passage mentions the diviner, priest, and dream-interpreter alongside each other in a manner otherwise unusual in Greek literature but very reminiscent of Hittite plague-prayers. The relevant lines in the latter may ultimately go back to a Sumerian model from Old-Babylonian times. The chapter that probes the parallel is a sophisticated piece of scholarship. It is a bit at odds with the rest of the book since M. argues against dependence upon the East. But, as M. notes, such parallels of ideas or very specific passages merely show that encounters did happen. In no way do they support the notion of a "pervasive influence". In the case of the *Iliad* passage, moreover, one may wonder whether it is indeed a literary dependence or the reflection of knowledge about religious practices that was obtained in Western Anatolia.

M. has produced a serious work of scholarship, arguing a thesis that merits careful attention from students both of ancient Greek literature and of the cuneiform literary traditions. It should no longer be possible to take the maximalist view on Eastern influence on Greek literature without a serious discussion of the insights reached in this book.

Amsterdam.

K. van der Toorn.

**P.-A. Beaulieu, E. Frahm, W. Horowitz and J. Steele,** *The Cuneiform Uranology Texts. Drawing the Constellations.* X + 121 pp., 17 Tfn. Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 2018 (= *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 107, Part 2). \$37.-. ISBN 978-1-60618-072-3.

This book contains editions and investigations of five Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform tablets from the first millennium BCE with descriptions of constellations, aptly designated "uranology texts" by the authors. It is the result of a collaborative effort of four specialists of Babylonian science, with John Steele taking the place of the late John Britton. Only one of the tablets was previously published by Ernst Weidner in 1923 (*Archiv für Orientforschung* 4, 73-85). The other four are published for the first time.

The book significantly increases our knowledge of a previously almost unknown group of texts. They are of great interest for historians of astral science. Compared to ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman astral science, which have left a sizeable body of imagery and artefacts in ad-

dition to texts, Mesopotamian astral science has survived primarily in the form of texts and numerical tables without images. This imbalance between text and image cannot be explained away as a general feature of Mesopotamian scribal culture because drawings are not uncommon on other cuneiform tablets such as mathematical problem texts. It is ironic that the uranology texts do not contain any drawings of the constellations which they describe, thereby confirming the impression of the primarily textual nature of cuneiform astral science. The rarity of imagery on astronomical and astrological tablets partly explains why iconographic aspects of Mesopotamian astral science have been largely ignored in modern scholarship. This even extends to Mesopotamian imagery of constellations that is readily available on published tablets, seals and other artefacts. The present book provides a much needed correction by presenting new textual evidence for the graphical conceptualization of constellations.

The book consists of five chapters and three appendices. In Chapter 1 the sources are introduced and their main features are presented. The five manuscripts, A-E, are divided into a "simple group" and a "complex group". The chapter includes a useful discussion of the relations between the uranology texts and other Mesopotamian compositions and a tentative discussion of their history. Chapter 2 contains editions of the simple group, which consists of (A) the Neo Assyrian tablet VAT 9428 from Assur published earlier by Weidner, (B) side A of the Neo- or Late Babylonian tablet BM 66958, which probably originates from Babylon, and (C) the Late Babylonian tablet NBC 7831 from Uruk. All three are duplicates of a single composition with twelve sections (I-XII), each covering one constellation. The twelve constellations form an ordered subset of those that make up the "path of Enlil" according to the composition Mul.Apin. As pointed out by the authors, this suggests the existence of two analogous uranology texts with descriptions of twelve constellations from the paths of Anu and Ea. Their existence appears all the more likely because tablets D and E deal with constellations from all three paths. Unlike the "simple group", the tablets from the "complex group" are not duplicates. Chapter 3 deals with tablet D, which originates from Seleucid Uruk. It is the largest manuscript, preserving sixteen sections (A-P) with often elaborate descriptions of constellations, a colophon and remains of several further sections. Unlike the constellations in ABC, those in D do not belong to a single celestial path but jump up and down between the three paths as they are defined in Mul.Apin. The order of the constellations in D roughly corresponds to the forward motion of the sun, the moon and the planets with respect to the stars. However, they do not trace their actual path through the zodiacal constellations because several constellations, e.g. "the Bow" (Canis Major), Ninmah (Vela), "the Wagon" (Ursa Major) and "the Demon with the Open Mouth" (Ursa Minor) are located very far from the ecliptic. The crite-

ria that underly the selection of the constellations on this tablet remains unclear. Chapter 4 deals with text E, which occupies the reverse of MLC 1884, a Late Babylonian fragment from Uruk. Chapter 5 contains an outlook on future research. Appendix A offers a guide to all the stars and constellations that are mentioned in the texts. Some tablets include other content in addition to an uranology text. BM 66958 side B is edited in Appendix B and contains what appear to be Mercury observations. The reverse of MLC 1884 is edited in Appendix C and contains a topographical text concerning watercourses and temples in Uruk.

Each description of a constellation comprises the following elements. First, the name of the constellation, sometimes also alternative names or epithets that link the constellation to deities. Secondly, a single term or short expression describing the shape of the constellation in more or less general terms. The involved terms are *šalmu*, “human figure”, animals and inanimate objects. Thirdly, a description of the constellation and its parts and its position in relation to other constellations. Chapter 1 includes an analysis of the expressions “in front of”, “behind”, “left”, and “right” that are used in these descriptions. As shown by the authors, the former two expressions make best sense if interpreted in relation to the daily rotation of the sky in agreement with other astronomical texts. By contrast, the usage of left and right reflects the perspective of the figures. Two aspects that are not fully explored by the authors may be pointed out as potential topics for further investigation. First, among the inanimate objects there are several mathematical figures. The Crab and the Wagon are described as *apsamakkus* (ABC: IV, VII), which in mathematical problem texts denotes a concave square. The Wagon of Heaven (ABC: VIII) is described as a *kalakku*, translated as “wagon box”. In mathematical texts *kalakku* usually means excavated volume, which is not appropriate here, but the term may still carry the connotation of a mathematical figure. The mathematical language does not stop there. One of the Large Twins (ABC: I; D: D) is said to carry an *uskaru*, “sickle-axe”. In mathematical texts this term denotes a crescent-shaped segment of a circle. In ABC Section IX two groups of stars are said to be drawn at the *limītu*, “circumference”, of the Dog. D Section A deals with the Field constellation, which comprises four stars that probably correspond to the Square of Pegasus ( $\alpha\beta\gamma$  Pegasi +  $\alpha$  Andromedae). Its Akkadian name *iku* also designates a unit square in the common area metrology. Furthermore, the Field is said to be the “seat of the circle (*kippatu*) of the four quarters”. Apart from containing further mathematical references this description is reminiscent of the Babylonian Map of the World, as pointed out by the authors. A more general point of agreement between the uranology texts and mathematical problem texts is that both are concerned with two-dimensional figures, their constitutive elements, properties and spatial relations. The frequent presence of

diagrams in mathematical problem texts might strengthen the case for the existence of other uranology texts with drawings of constellations.

A second aspect that merits further study concerns the peculiar usage of the verb *ešēru*, “to draw; design”. In all five texts the presence of stars in a constellation is predominantly expressed with this verb, apart from several stars that “stand”, “straddle one another”, or are “carried” by a human figure. According to the authors (p. 1) the uranology texts “provide prose descriptions of the drawing (*ešēru*) of Mesopotamian constellations.” Indeed, some of them closely match the drawings of constellations on the famous Calendar Texts from Seleucid Uruk. However, the only things that are actually said to be “drawn” in the uranology texts are stars and planets – the latter in their “secret place” (*bīt niširti*), which is a position of special astrological significance. The “drawing” occurs at specified locations in or near named constellation figures, which are not said to be drawn. It is therefore apparent that the uranology texts maintain a strict distinction between stars and constellation figures, *i.e.* between observable entities of constellations and the conceptualization of their spatial arrangement in figures. Perhaps other compositions that mention the “drawing” of stars can shed light on this peculiar distinction. As pointed out by the authors, the usage of *ešēru* is reminiscent of Enūma eliš and other Akkadian creation accounts in which *ešēru* denotes divine acts of creation, often with an implied emphasis on the visual, structural and intellectual aspects of creation. This could indicate that the uranology texts are more closely connected to creation accounts than suggested by the authors.

A few remarks about tablet D from Seleucid Uruk may be added. With regard to the unexpected equation of the weather deity Adad with the Arrow (Section G) and that of his consort Šala with the Bow (Section H), one may mention that these deities also show up unexpectedly in curses in the colophons from Seleucid Uruk. For rituals involving the Great Anu of Heaven and the Great Antu of Heaven (Sections L, O), see Julia Krul 2018, *The Revival of the Anu Cult and the Nocturnal Fire Ceremony at late Babylonian Uruk*, esp. pp. 178-181. Two attestations of the Normal Star “rear container (*quppu*) of Pabil-sag” (Section N, p. 57) are mixed up: the writing *qup-pu* is attested in the Diaries ADRT 1 -366B 6 and ADRT 3 -123 rev. 15, the writing *ku-up-pu* in the planetary text ADRT 5 No. 60 obv. I 5'.

The authors can be congratulated for their groundbreaking study, which promises to inspire future investigations into Mesopotamian astral imagery and its relation to texts in several directions. For instance, the authors have understandably refrained from identifying the stars and constellations with modern star names within the framework of this book, but the often detailed descriptions may yield refinements or new results in this area. Secondly, the uranology texts call to mind the large

corpus of Greco-Roman compositions with descriptions of constellations centered at the Phaenomena of Aratus. As mentioned in chapter 5, the uranology texts therefore offer promising new evidence for studying the cross-cultural transmission of constellations and their graphical representations between Babylonia and the Greco-Roman world.

Berlin.

M. Ossendrijver.

**A. Bácskay**, *Therapeutic Prescriptions against Fever in Ancient Mesopotamia*. XIV + 318 pp., 5 Tfn. Münster, Ugarit-Verlag, 2018 (= *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 447). € 112,-. ISBN 978-3-86835-255-9.

The turn of the second millennium marked for Assyriological scholarship an increased interest towards the study of ancient Mesopotamian medicine. Researchers engaged in the study of the medical corpus on multiple levels, aiming at disclosing previously unedited sources and understanding their significance on both the scientific and cultural levels.

The first contributions of medico-historical interest were short and mainly directed at interpreting technical names for diseases, whereas the current tendency is to address wider corpora. These either correspond to individual textual units (e.g. catalogues) or groups of thematical sources, usually selected according to modern medical specialties for practical reasons. Being dedicated to the medical care of high body temperature, the book under review is in line with the latter tendency.

The subject of fever in ancient Mesopotamia has been addressed before by previous scholarship but was lacking a comprehensive monograph.<sup>1</sup> The author built on these contributions and assessed new materials with the most recent Assyriological literature on Assyro-Babylonian medicine.

#### *Description*

The volume consists of six parts. In the *Introduction* (Chapter 1, pp. 1-13) the author states the theme of his study (“therapeutic texts related to fever”) and provides the reader with the criteria followed in the presentation of the manuscripts. Moreover, he proposes a discussion of the Akkadian terms possibly corresponding to our notion of “fever” and collateral symptoms: *ummu* and *emēmu*; *himtu*, *huntu* and *hamātu*; *širhu*, *širihtu* and *šarāhu*; *šētu* and its related terminology; *išātu*; *šuruppū* and *hurbāšu* (both meaning “shivering”). The introductory section is concluded by an analysis of both natural and supernatural aspects of “fever”.

Each of the 121 cuneiform tablets consulted by the author is presented in the *Catalogue of the tablets* (Chapter 2, pp. 15-32). These are presented according to their chronological and geographical origin, also reflected by the sigla used by the author to identify them throughout the volume. The catalogue indicates museum numbers, previous publications (where available) and a description of the testimonies: format and layout, contents, parallels (if any).

The philological core of the volume is represented by the section *The Prescriptions*, which provides “transliteration, translation and notes” of the sources under study (Chapter 3, pp. 33-236). Therapeutic recipes have been recognised as a peculiar feature within the medical corpus: they were selected and duplicated into new tablets according to the needs of their compilers.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in each text the author recognised individual prescriptions (giving the volume its title), duplicates and variants, thus reducing the 121 manuscripts described in the previous chapter to 87 entries in the textual apparatus.

Recipes are grouped according to the three main types of fever attested. Among the terms discussed in the *Introduction*, the author chose *ummu* or *išātu* (prescriptions nos. 0-49); *ummu dannu* and *lību* (nos. 50-55) and *šētu* (nos. 56-86), where it is possible to distinguish among *himit šēti* and *šēta kašid*. The prescriptions of each group are further grouped according to different criteria: if mentioned in the text, localization of fever, whether generalised to the whole body or limited to specific parts; accompanying symptoms (e.g. sweat, numbness, flatulence) or diseases (such as *aḥḥāzu*, *amurriqānu* or *šinnahtiru*); particular cases (i.e. childbirth, as no. 42). Moreover, the author included prescriptions provided for a recurring pattern of diseases (see nos. 68-74).

The *Appendix* (pp. 237-302) collects useful glossaries pertaining of medical ingredients, listed according to their specific or alleged nature (as in “Decknamen”, § 4.1.1); bulking agents (“liquids and oils”, § 4.1.2); verbs (§ 4.1.3); disease names and symptoms (§ 4.1.4); patients’ internal and external anatomy, as well as fluids and waste (§ 4.1.5); supernatural beings (gods and demons, § 4.1.7) and other terms attested in the texts analysed (§ 4.1.6). The *Appendix* comprises also a *Catalogue of medical incipits* (§ 4.2), the *Incipits of the incantations* (§ 4.3) and *Concordances* (§ 4.4).

The volume is completed by a brief but up-to-date *Bibliography* (pp. 303-310) and five *Plates* (pp. 311-315). In particular, the author provides hand-copies of a completely unpublished text (BM 41300, pl. nos. 1-2), a text edited by the author himself in another publication (BM 42272, pl. nos. 3-4)<sup>3</sup>, and a newly discovered join to an already known medical text (K 6732, pl. 5).

<sup>1</sup>) Mainly, Labat 1957-1971; Scurlock – Andersen 2005, pp. 27-35; Stol 2007; Böck 2010; Scurlock 2014, pp. 407-428.

<sup>2</sup>) See Geller 2010, pp. 97-98 and more recently Geller 2018.

<sup>3</sup>) Bácskay 2015. A further text treated by the author has been published the same year as the monograph (Bácskay 2018b).