

DANIEL SCHWEMER:

*Rituale und Beschwörungen gegen Schadenzauber.*

(Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts.) xii, 199 pp. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007. €48. ISBN 978 3 447 05592 5.

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This book results from the determination of the Deutsche Orientgesellschaft finally to complete the publication of all the finds from the excavations undertaken by Walter Andrae and Julius Jordan at the Assyrian capital city Assur between 1903 and 1914. The title of the new series, of which this is the second volume, harks back to those of the earlier volumes *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* (Erich Ebeling, 1915–1923) and *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Franz Köcher, 1953). The contents of the present volume are a miscellany of magical texts dealing with sorcery and the measures that the Babylonians deemed necessary to counter the effects of the black magic they so feared. The volume originated as part of a Habilitationsschrift of 2005 entitled *Schadenzauber in Mesopotamien. Quellen und Studien*, and the rest, which is an extensive review of the conceptual basis of magic and magical thought as it existed in Mesopotamia, has now been published as a separate monograph, *Abwehrzauber und Behexung: Studien zum Schadenzauberglauben im alten Mesopotamien*, also by Harrassowitz in the same year as the new volume of texts from Assur. Since there has been a steady stream of investigations on the topic as well as publications of new texts such a review of the field of Mesopotamian magic by a scholar of the expertise of Schwemer is most welcome. After a short introductory section the book presents a list of the sixty-six new pieces with identifications and basic descriptions, including, where possible, the *Fundort*. In some cases fragments join previously published pieces that Schwemer diligently found necessary to re-copy. The material spans the following genres of Babylonian magical and ritual texts. There are new pieces of the series known as *Maqlû*, “burning” and a new edition of this *Standartwerk* of Mesopotamian magic is a *desideratum*. There is then a miscellany of texts dealing with magical rites before the sun god Šamaš and the goddess Ištar and a variety of texts specifying ingenious measures against black magic. Each text is presented in transliteration and translation with brief philological notes; this is followed by sixty-three plates of autograph copies of the tablets and fragments and in one case an excavation photograph of a tablet that has gone astray. This is an excellent edition and a worthy successor to the volumes by Ebeling and Köcher that have gone before it.

Alasdair Livingstone

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THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

JONATHAN OWENS:

*A Linguistic History of Arabic.*

(Oxford Linguistics.) ix, 316 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. £60. ISBN 0 19 929082.

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