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Introduction

Catalogues, Corpora and Canons in Mesopotamian Scholarship

Lists of scriptures or "text catalogues" are common in different literate cultures of the ancient world. Such lists appear in various forms and types, serving different purposes and functions. Especially lists of literary works and authors from the Greco-Roman world, designated in Greek as *pinax* (plural *pinakes*; Latin *index*), display distinct characteristics and developments that can be compared with Mesopotamian text catalogues. The basic meaning of the term *pinax* is "(wooden or metal) board/tablet" used e.g. for official inscriptions, but the word also refers to lists of various kinds such as chronological lists of the winners in the great Greek games or in theatrical competitions, and lists of priests.[1] Systematic lists of literary works, most importantly the *Pinakes* by Kallimachos, a catalogue of all authors and works of Greek literature regarded as the first bibliographical catalogue in history, could only be created in the context of larger libraries as in Alexandria (Blum 1991). Kallimachos' *Pinakes* (dating to the second half of the 3rd century BCE), which were assembled presumably on the basis of existing library inventories at Alexandria, were divided into literary genres (probably reflecting the way in which groups of scrolls were stored in the library), and within each section authors were listed alphabetically (including some biographical information).[2] The works of each author were registered by name, together with the incipit (the first words of the text) and the number of constituent books or lines. Kallimachos' work served as a prime model and source of information for later catalogues of authors and texts.[3]

Ancient Mesopotamian lists of texts, which this volume sets out to investigate, were supposedly often drawn up as inventories of tablets stored in a particular archive or library, although the exact purposes of these lists are difficult to determine exactly in many cases (due to lacking colophons or explicit purpose statements).[4] None of the of tablet inventories from the late 3rd millennium to the 1st millennium BCE can definitely be identified as the complete registers of a library or archive.[5] Such documents are of varying format, scope and length; the registered texts can belong to different genres or be restricted to a specific group (e.g. to literary texts, cult songs or incantations).[6] Similar to the library catalogues and lists of literature from the Greco-Roman world, the Mesopotamian tablet inventories often display certain

1 For an overview see Regenbogen 1950; Welwei, Fakas and Scheibler 2000.

2 A detailed study of Kallimachos' *Pinakes* is found in Blum 1991; cf. Regenbogen 1950: 1418-1421. Only a few fragments of library catalogues are preserved from the Hellenistic period or later, among which is a catalogue from Rhodos (ca. 2nd century BCE) inscribed on a multi-column stone board, which was probably hung up in the library for the information of the users. It likewise listed authors and their work alphabetically and in groups of literary genres (Blum 1991: 182, 185-188; Regenbogen 1950: 1419-1420). A similar practice is attested for Ptolemaic Egypt (ca. 4th–1st century BCE), where rudimentary book catalogues were inscribed on the temple library walls at Edfu and Dendera (Webb 2013: 22).

3 See Blum 1991: 182-184, 188-227. The primary function of bibliographical catalogues such as Kallimachos' *Pinakes* was to serve as an aid for scholarly research into the branches of Greek literature. In the subsequent centuries, lists of books also appear e.g. in biographies and in compilations on the lives and opinions of famous philosophers and scholars. During the Hellenistic period and in Late Antiquity, catalogues of authors and works were created for various fields of learning and for all possible topics, while at the same time bibliographical lists of sources and indices begin to be integrated into encyclopaedic works, e.g. on history (Regenbogen 1950: 1424-1460, 1466-1482).

4 Collections of scholarly or literary cuneiform texts found in temples, palaces and private houses are conventionally designated as "libraries" in Assyriological parlance, while the term "archive" is primarily used for text assemblages of largely administrative and legal documents, although there are archaeological examples of text collections containing both text groups. In contrast to the Greco-Roman world, Mesopotamian libraries had no public function, but were only accessible to the scribes or scholars who owned them or who were employed in the institutions that housed them. The contents and functions of these "libraries" also vary from case to case, see e.g. Pedersén 1998; Robson 2013.

5 For an overview see Krecher 1980; Delnero 2010; 2015: 124-125. It may be assumed that for the management of large collections such as the library of king Ashurbanipal (669–627 BCE) at Nineveh with several thousands of tablets, a sort of registering or ordering system was necessary and in use, although there is at present no evidence for the existence of a complete library catalogue. The preserved catalogues from Nineveh are restricted to specific groups of tablets and compositions, and may reflect different scribal activities in connection with assembling, editing, registering and organising the royal tablet collection. It is possible that in larger collections such as Nineveh, tablets were stored in groups according to topic or genre. A few examples of shelf labels from Nineveh suggest that a labelling system may have been used for tablet retrieval. For discussion see Steinert's contribution in this volume.

6 Most of the Old Babylonian text catalogues (ca. 1800–1600 BCE) are "genre-specific", i.e. they list only texts of one specific type such as literary compositions, incantations, liturgical songs (Delnero 2010: 41-49; 2015: 124-125), but there are also examples of inventories registering texts of various types, see Finkel (in this volume).

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ordering principles in the arrangement of entries on the list. For instance, groups of texts with a common theme or topic may be enumerated together in ruled-off sections, which may be followed by a summary rubric or by a sub-total of the tablets listed in a section.[7] However, as a fundamental difference, Mesopotamian text catalogues and tablet inventories are usually not ordered by the names of authors, since the cuneiform writing system is not an alphabetic script and thus does not lend itself to such an ordering principle, but – equally important – because most scholarly and literary works were anonymous.[8]

At the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, new types of catalogues appear in the Mesopotamian textual record, which give a systematic outline of the contents of specific works and text corpora. These "system catalogues" (Finkel *infra*) are especially attested for technical compendia such as omen collections, medical remedies, or liturgical songs, i.e. for the text corpora associated with the disciplines of diviners, physicians, ritual specialists or lamentation priests. The present volume investigates the forms, roles and functions of text catalogues and their relations to the text corpora of different technical disciplines. These documents are also analysed as a source of information for the reconstruction of the ancient text corpora, their historical development and transmission. Moreover, Mesopotamian text catalogues not only mirror the development of specific works and compositions, but can also be used as sources for literary and scholarly canons and be brought into dialogue with discussions of canonisation processes in neighbouring cultures.[9] Notably, in studies of Greek literature, the term "canon" is used in connection with selective "priority lists" of books and authors that are preferred to others (Hägg 2010: 109). The development of lists of the "best" authors in each genre (epic, lyric poetry, prose etc.) has been connected with the teaching methods and the scholarly activities in the Alexandrian schools, and such lists can be regarded as codifications of a standard selection of authors that were already widely recognised (Hägg 2010).[10] However, the Greek "literary canon" expressed in such lists does not present a fixed or closed canon, and is not based on a clear dividing line between "inside" and "outside" books, in contrast e.g. to the biblical canon. Yet, the observation that only a smaller part of the works of Greek authors known from ancient text catalogues is preserved in complete copies, while other works are lost, has been attributed to selection and evaluation processes (on the basis of success, impact, aesthetic criteria etc.), which led to the preference of some authors and works, while others were neglected and ceased to be copied. Doubtlessly, similar processes of selective transmission could also be detected for Mesopotamia, if one compares the number of preserved copies for particular compositions and their geographical and temporal distribution.

An interesting case of "canon formation" is presented by the collection of texts designated as the Hippocratic Corpus, since it was already recognised in ancient times that not all works attributed to Hippocrates could have been written by one author alone.[11] The oldest preserved glossary on Hippocratic works by Erotian (1st century CE) contains a list of ca. 30 works which he judged to be authentic, and gives a classification of the treatises (divided into books on signs, works on aetiology/nature, therapy (surgical and dietary), works on the "art" of medicine and mixed treatises).[12]

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7 Irving Finkel (*infra*) edits two examples of inventories, in which tablets of different types were recorded at random, without apparent grouping.

8 For authorship in Mesopotamian literature, see lately van der Toorn 2007: 31-49; Lenzi 2015: 151-153; Delnero 2015: 112. One 7th century BCE catalogue of texts attributed to individual authors from Nineveh is based on an assumed "chronological" order, i.e. by the perceived antiquity of the texts and chronological sequence of their authors or editors (see below).

9 See e.g. van der Toorn 2007; Thomassen 2010; Becker and Scholz 2012; Lim 2013; Ryholt and Barjamovic 2016 for recent discussions of religious and literary canons from antiquity to the present.

10 Hägg (2010: 110) notes that the Greek word *kanôn* ("rod, bar; rule, standard, model") acquired the meaning "list of acknowledged scriptures" only in the Roman period, and that the use of the word for "scriptural canon" only appears in a Christian context, in the 4th century CE. From the Hellenistic period onward, "shortlists" with a fixed number (e.g. three, seven or ten) of "best" authors for different genres come into fashion, but the authors included can vary. Selective lists of works and authors later also appear in introductions and guides to Greek literature that give recommendations for "must-have" books, and in larger compilations that discuss the most important authors for each area of expertise and literature (Hägg 2010; Radermacher 1919).

11 Jouanna 1999: 56-65; Craik 2015: xx-xxiv; van der Eijk 2015. Galen (2nd century CE) wrote a whole book (not preserved) discussing which Hippocratic writings he regarded as authentic or spurious, and his commentaries on Hippocratic works try to establish such differentiations as well. Aristotle attributes two treatises in the Hippocratic Corpus to Hippocrates' disciples, notably to his son-in-law Polybus, and the lack of overt claims of authorship in the Hippocratic texts may indicate that some of them were not composed by an individual, but in the community setting of Hippocrates' medical school (Craik 2015: xxiii). It is also well known today that some of the Hippocratic works were not composed during Hippocrates' lifetime, but one or two generations later.

12 Jouanna 1999: 63-65; Craik 2015: xxiii-xxvi. This tradition of glossaries on Hippocratic works goes back to the Hellenistic period and the Alexandrian philologists.

Erotian's list ascribes to Hippocrates most of the major treatises known today as Hippocratic, but his list includes treatises that had previously been attributed to a different medical school (the Asclepiades of Cnidus). The medieval manuscripts that served as the basis for the Renaissance corpus of Hippocratic works (known to us through modern editions of the 19th and 20th century) have transmitted about twenty more works than Erotian under the name Hippocrates, which were presumably of unknown provenance and were added to the corpus in the course of transmission (Jouanna 1999: 64-65). After long-standing debates on the authorship of the Hippocratic treatises, modern scholarship increasingly tends to regard the Hippocratic writings as "merely the end product of a long process of canonisation" (Craik 2015: xxii) and some specialists even suggest giving up the term "Hippocratic medicine", arguing that the writings united under the name Hippocrates display such diversity that they can hardly be considered as a coherent corpus or group (Nutton 2004: 174-175; van der Eijk 2015). But it is undisputable that the long history of textual transmission of the "Hippocratic" writings involved a factor of chance as well as processes of selection, growth, modification and internal changes, and that lists of the works attributed to Hippocrates such as Erotian's contributed to the formation of a "canon".[13]

A related notion of "canon" in the sense of a limited list of books is also encountered in connection with the biblical canon of Rabbinic Judaism. As is argued by Timothy Lim (2013) in a critical reappraisal of earlier theories of Jewish canon formation, no uniform official canon existed prior to the first century CE, but a plurality of collections of scriptures that were authoritative for different communities. "Canonical" lists of the Old Testament books occur from the first century CE onward and reflect the process toward canonisation, but although these lists agree widely in content, none of them features exactly the same number and order of books (Lim 2013: 35-53; Ulrich 2015: 277, 300). The closing of the Jewish canon was a longer process: although a "majority canon" of Rabbinic Judaism was formed by the end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd century CE, many of the books included in the canon had enjoyed a status as authoritative scriptures for a longer time, i.e. they were read, studied, interpreted and used for worship and religious guidance (Lim 2013: 4-16). The emergence of the five books of the Pentateuch was itself a complex process, which involved revisions, rewriting and editing, although the existence of a discernible collection of books is already grasped earlier through the use of descriptive labels such as the "Torah" or "the books of Moses" (Lim 2013: 178-188). For Lim, the decisive factor with regard to the canonical status of the Old Testament books is not their textual standardisation, but the official judgement of a delimited set of books as holy scriptures and their acceptance by a majority of the Jewish religious communities (cf. also Ulrich 2015: 265-308). Yet, it is also apparent that selection and textual standardisation formed part of establishing the Hebrew canon.[14]

These examples of selective lists of authors and the "canonical lists" in the Jewish tradition can serve as instructive points of comparison with the processes of "canonisation" of Mesopotamian literary and scholarly texts, which is likewise reflected in the emergence of new types of text catalogues in the 1st millennium BCE, discussed in several contributions of this volume (see below).

Mesopotamian Technical Compendia and Scholarly Text Corpora: Terminology

In order to familiarise the reader with the research presented here, it is useful to clarify the terminology that is applied by the various authors in this book to describe the different levels of structural organisation, which can be encountered in Mesopotamian technical texts as well as in the catalogues that represent the structure of these texts in the form of a contents list.

13 Craik (2015: xxiv) notes that "there was no scribal consensus on the size and shape of the collection", and that the preserved manuscripts reflect different traditions of ordering and numbering the Hippocratic texts. Furthermore, some treatises mentioned by title in Erotian's and Galen's works have not survived through the ages.

14 The Qumrân texts dating between the 3rd and 1st century BCE yield archaic recensions of almost all books of the Hebrew Bible, and a proto-Masoretic recension for certain books is already attested. However, the Qumrân manuscripts document that there still existed several differing textual traditions and recensions of biblical books, some of which have links e.g. to the text underlying the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament books going back to 3rd/2nd century BCE Alexandria). The consonantal base of the Hebrew *textus receptus* was fixed around the second century CE; before that time no "standard" text existed, it was still "pluriform" (Cross 1958: 120-145; cf. Ulrich 2015: 15-28, 265-316).

I) Mesopotamian technical literature as a whole can be divided into several distinct text corpora. In a general sense, a **corpus** forms a collection of written texts (e.g. all works of an "author" or a body of texts focused on a specific subject). With regard to Mesopotamian technical literature, several text corpora can be distinguished, associated with different specialisations of practitioners (Akkadian *ummânū* "masters; scholars"), falling into the disciplines of the *bārû* "haruspex; seer", *āšipu* "conjurer; exorcist; ritual specialist", *ṭupšar Enūma Anu Enlil* "astrologer/astronomer" (lit. scribe of (the celestial omen series) *Enūma Anu Enlil*), *asû* "physician", and *kalû* "lamentation priest".[15] Each of these disciplines had its own technical "corpus", a body of texts and writings used and transmitted by the discipline. Thus, abstract terms such as *āšipūtu* "the conjurer's craft" or *kalûtu* "the lamentation priest's craft" can also refer to the text corpus of these disciplines, and catalogues such as the Exorcist's Manual listing the texts to be mastered by an adept of *āšipūtu*, are witness to the existence of distinct professional corpora.

II a) The corpora of the different disciplines consist of multiple works or compositions of varying length and complexity. Longer works from the 1st millennium BCE such as omen and incantation compendia or medical recipe collections (but also some literary texts), have the character of compilations, i.e. they are the result of compiling and editing processes, forming textual assemblages created from differing materials and multiple sources. Mesopotamian texts sometimes employ the Akkadian word *riksu* (or the Sumerian equivalent kešda) "band; package; structure; (ritual) arrangement" in the sense of "compilation" or "collection". Thus, *riksu* can refer to a "bundle" of texts perceived as an edited collection of associated material.[16] Most authors in this book use the term **compendium** for a larger collection of textual material on a particular subject, forming a delimited work with an internal structure referred to by a common title.[17] Usually, compendia are divided into a number of named textual units, which form thematic sections and are ordered in a fixed sequence.

II b) Assyriologists conventionally designate text compendia as "**series**", stemming from the use of the Akkadian word *iškāru*, lit. "work assignment", as a technical term for texts composed of several internal units. However, the meaning of the term *iškāru* in cuneiform texts is somewhat varied. It can designate a delimited work or compilation with a fixed sequence of constitutive text units ("sections" and/or "tablets"), and is applied to different text types such as literary works (e.g. the *Gilgamesh Epic*), lexical lists, but also to omen and ritual compendia.[18] For instance, the omen compendium *Sakikkû*, also referred to as the *Diagnostic Handbook* in Assyriological literature, is organised as a series of textual sub-units arranged in a sequence. On the other hand, the term *iškāru* is occasionally used in the meaning "text corpus", in phrases such as *iškār āšipūti* "corpus of the exorcist's craft" or *iškār kalûti* "corpus of the lamentation priest".[19] This terminological ambiguity seems to be reflected in the textual ensemble registered in the Assur Medical Catalogue (AMC). On the one hand, AMC consists of two parts, which could be described as two serialised compendia, each of which has its own title and consists of internal divisions designated as "sections" and "tablets".[20] On the other hand, both the contents and comprehensive character of the two compendia catalogued in AMC justify the term

15 The Akkadian designations for the respective disciplines are *bārûtu* "haruspicy; art of the seer", *āšipūtu* "exorcism; the craft of the conjurer", *asûtu* "craft of the physician", *kalûtu* "the lamentation priest's craft". The term *ṭupšarrūtu* however also designates "the craft of the scribe; scholarly learning" in general. For an overview of the disciplines see e.g. Jean 2006; Gabbay 2014: 63-79; Geller 2007; 2010: 43-88; Lenzi 2015: 146-151; Koch 2015: 15-24 and *passim*. Although Mesopotamian scholars were usually specialised in one discipline, they could be versed in multiple fields of knowledge, as letters and scholars' tablet collections inform us.

16 For instance, the diagnostic omen series *Sakikkû* (SA.GIG) and the physiognomic omen series *Alamdimmû* together form a *riksu* "compilation", as their joint catalogue tells us.

17 Cf. Johnson 2015: 4-5, who applies the term "infrastructural compendium" to Mesopotamian technical texts, which is characterised "by its use of sequences of words, phrases or brief descriptions that serve as a skeleton text or agenda for oral instruction or debate within concrete historical institutions" (Johnson 2015: 4), emphasising both the normative character of these compendia for communities of specialists and their role in facilitating scholarly activities, e.g. oral discussions, disputes, commentaries, and teaching.

18 Sometimes, *iškāru* can even designate a section of a larger text collection, see Worthington 2010 and Steinert (in this volume).

19 See Gabbay 2014: 195.

20 Panayotov (*infra*) uses the term "medical encyclopaedia" to refer to the two serialised compendia in AMC PART 1 and 2, capturing the idea that the text corpus itemised in AMC comprises a complete field of knowledge of a particular technical discipline. A general similarity that connects Mesopotamian technical compendia of the 1st millennium BCE with encyclopaedic works in the Greco-Roman world is their systematic character: textual material in the medical or omen compendia is generally grouped according to topics or organised according to a specific ordering principle, which may be explicitly stated in text catalogues.

"corpus", and some arguments speak for the view that the texts listed in AMC essentially represent the corpus of the physician (*asû*).[21]

III) Particularly long compendia can have internal divisions, which the Mesopotamian scribes designated as "sections" (*sadīrū*).[22] Assyriologists also refer to these sections as "sub-series" or "chapters".[23] The "sections" are units of varying length, but in most cases, a "section" is a text section inscribed on multiple consecutive "tablets". Examples of compendia / "series" composed of "sections" are encountered in AMC PART 1 and 2 and in the *Sakikkû* catalogue, both of which explicitly apply the term *sadīru*.

Some authors in this volume use the designation "treatise" for the "sections" (*sadīrū*) of the medical compendia listed in AMC, in order to foster comparisons with other ancient text cultures and scholarly traditions. If we apply a general definition of "treatise" as "a written work dealing formally or systematically with a subject" (OED), we may call the sections of the compendia registered in AMC "treatises", since each of them deals with a particular topic or group of illnesses. In this regard, they can be compared e.g. with the treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus.[24] The term "treatise" for the sections of Mesopotamian technical compendia is especially appropriate in cases where these units are known as quasi-independent compositions that are cited by a standard title. An example for such "treatises" are the sections of the physiognomic omen series *Alamdimmû*, which are cited as separate works in the Nineveh library records registering acquisitions to Ashurbanipal's collection (with the names *Alamdimmû*, *Kataduggû*, *Nigdimdimmû* etc.), although these sections also formed part of a compendium/series (according to the *Alamdimmû* catalogue).[25]

IV) The next smaller text unit of a compendium or serialised composition is called *ṭuppu* "tablet" by the Mesopotamian scribes, designating the content on a single physical text document (usually a clay tablet). Some contributions in this volume (Johnson, Panayotov) have adopted the term "chapter" instead of "tablet" to refer to this textual unit.[26] Some compendia/series are only divided into "tablets" numbered in a sequence (e.g. the omen series *Šumma ālu*), while others are divided both into "sections" and "tablets". In the latter case, constituent tablets are either numbered according to their position in the "section" (e.g. the AMC compendia) or according to their position in the composition as a whole (e.g. Late Babylonian manuscripts of the *Bārûtu* "series"), but occasionally a double numbering system is employed (e.g. the tablets of the *Sakikkû*).

Overview of the Volume

The contributions in the volume revolve around the analysis of Mesopotamian text catalogues and tablet inventories, focusing on 1st millennium BCE catalogues that register corpora or compendia related to exorcistic or ritual healing (*āšipūtu*), medicine (*asûtu*) and divination (astrology). The editions of the Exorcist's Manual (KAR 44 and duplicates), the catalogue of the diagnostic and physiognomic omen series (CTN 4, 71 and duplicate), the catalogues of the astrological omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil* and of the Assur Medical Catalogue (AMC) form the backbone of the book, serving as a point of departure for thematic studies.

21 Cf. below.

22 Basic meanings of *sadīru* are "row; line; sequence", but it can also stand for a ruled-off section on a tablet (see Geller and Steinert *infra* for a review of attestations).

23 See e.g. Heeßel 2000: 17-40 (concerning the six sections or "sub-series" of *Sakikkû*; Koch 2015: 32, 94-95 (with regard to the ten "chapters" of the haruspicy series *Bārûtu*).

24 Geller (*infra*) comments on the Babylonian Aramaic term *sydr'* cognate to Akkadian *sadīru*, which means "order; division" and stands for sections of the Pentateuch read aloud in sequence. On the other hand, although there are similarities between Mesopotamian and Greek medical "treatises", one also has to point out certain differences: while Mesopotamian medical "treatises" are systematic, have a clear structure and are based on ideas about illness and healing, they usually do not take the form of theoretical treatises, which present the point of view of an author on a specific topic, or set out a discussion of arguments to justify specific conclusions.

25 See Schmidtchen's discussion of the *Alamdimmû* catalogue in the present volume.

26 The "tablets" of which a longer composition consists, can be compared with the "chapters" of a book. However, the term "chapter" instead of "tablet" has not been adopted by all contributors to the volume, in order to avoid confusion with the term *sadīru* "section", which is translated as "chapter" by some Assyriologists. Note further that the Mesopotamian scribes used multiple terms to designate the units of serialised compositions contained on a single physical document. Thus, they sometimes speak of *pirsu* "division" or *nishu* "extract" instead of *ṭuppu* "tablet". Furthermore, colophons refer to other document categories such as "oblong tablet" (*imgiddû*) or "(wooden) writing board" (wax tablet, *lē'u*).

The spectrum of the Mesopotamian text catalogues is presented in Ulrike Steinert's contribution, which offers a diachronic overview of Mesopotamian tablet inventories and special catalogue types. The majority of extant catalogues attested from the late 3rd to the 1st millennium BCE are interpreted as tablet inventories with primarily practical purposes, reflecting various activities in connection with the collection, storage or movement of tablets and the maintenance of archives or libraries.[27] A challenging aspect in the analysis of inventories and catalogues is their striking diversity in terms of formats and contents, which can be gleaned from Irving Finkel's edition of three tablet inventories. Two of them – hitherto unpublished Middle Babylonian tablets – contain tablet incipits of texts belonging to various genres including omens (astrological, terrestrial, physiognomic, liver omens), medicine, lexical texts (including plant and stone lists) and Sumerian literary texts, which are itemised at random (without an apparent grouping of genres).[28] The third list of tablet incipits appears on a Seleucid tablet from Uruk (TCL 6, 12), appended as a separate section to a text with astrological-astronomical material (including illustrations of constellations). This catalogue appears to be a copy of an older list possibly transmitted over a long time, through a sequence of successive copies, since many entries are only incompletely written down and marked by glosses indicating older and more recent breakages. In TCL 6, 12 the incipits are grouped in four separated sections, which seem to reflect a grouping into "genres" (one section contains incipits of lexical works, followed by a section of largely astrological and a section with incipits of medical material, rituals and incantations). Only a minority of the listed incipits in Finkel's three inventories can be identified as entries (or tablet incipits) in 1st millennium BCE texts, which indicates that these catalogues refer to earlier compositions or alternative collections of material that were replaced by the text series and technical compendia known from the 1st millennium BCE.[29] According to Finkel, the two Middle Babylonian inventories are witness to the efforts of scholars of this period, which become manifest in the "standard" text editions of later times, namely to assemble all types of literature circulating in a rich variety of textual sources for the purpose of creating comprehensive and systematic compilations, in order to "impose system on chaos" and "to facilitate control and retrieval". Similar incipit catalogues are attested from Ashurbanipal's library, which may document preliminary stages in the creation of revised text editions, suggesting that the activities of Babylonian scholars in the Kassite and Isin-II period anticipated the efforts of Ashurbanipal's scholars in 7th century BCE Nineveh.[30]

Linked to these compilation and redaction processes leading to the formation of serialised technical compendia during the end of the 2nd and beginning of the 1st millennium BCE (a process often termed "canonisation"), new catalogue types appear in the textual record, which, as Finkel underlines, document and reinforce the authority of the newly created compendia, and which he designates as "system catalogues", but in terms of their contents, they can be divided into "series catalogues" and "corpus catalogues". The "system catalogues" treated in the present book register the textual units of a fixed technical compendium (text series) or the components of a professional text corpus. As witness to their special status, series catalogues (such as the *Sakikkû* catalogue) and corpus catalogues (such as the Exorcist's Manual) are sometimes attested in multiple copies from different places and periods (the sources date between the 9th–3rd century BCE). From the information given in the editorial notes included in these documents and from their opening lines and colophons, we can infer that "system catalogues" served as technical tools for textual scholarship

27 A few Mesopotamian tablet inventories, which explicitly refer to storage locations or to the numbers of copies present, very likely represent registers of tablets found in a library (or available at a specific location), but they are not comparable in scope with the bibliographical catalogue of Greek literature (*Pinakes*) compiled by Kallimachos on the basis of inventories of the holdings in the Alexandrian library. Kallimachos' bibliography listed not only the names of authors and the titles of their works, but included biographical information on writers, a summary of each work, and critical notes on works of doubtful authorship (Blum 1991). A fragmentary catalogue of texts listed by their authors from Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh (ca. 7th century BCE) may be regarded as an incipient Mesopotamian precursor, but this list is selective and attributes some scholarly and literary works to a divine or mythological figure, pointing to differences in the concept of authorship between Mesopotamia and the Greco-Roman world (cf. Lambert 1962; van der Toorn 2007: 207-209; Lenzi 2015: 151-153). For a contrasting perspective on the catalogue of texts and authors, see Geller *infra*, p. 44-45.

28 The two-column tablet BM 103690 (Finkel's Inventory 1) is remarkable, because its reverse was left uninscribed apart from a few partially erased lines, presenting an example of an unfinished inventory. It begins with the heading "tablet of incipits" (*ṭuppi rēšētim*), a document designation also used occasionally in 1st millennium BCE texts and catalogues.

29 It is worth noting however that a few incipits of medical texts in the two Middle Babylonian inventories match up with titles or entries in AMC and 1st millennium texts.

30 See e.g. the Nineveh catalogues of Namburbi omens discussed in Maul 1994: 191-203 *passim*. For Ashurbanipal's tablet collection, see e.g. Fincke 2003-04; Frame and George 2005; Robson 2013: 41-45.

and in specialist training. Especially the corpus catalogues could have played an educational role as outlines of study programmes ("curriculum") and formed a theoretical framework for technical disciplines and professional identities.

As elaborated by several contributors, series and corpus catalogues not only reflect the interests of Mesopotamian scholars in their own textual traditions; they are of importance for our own reconstruction of the compendia, even though the information from the catalogues is often at odds with the manuscript sources, indicating rather complex processes of textual formation and transmission. Technical compendia circulated in varying recensions or versions at different places in Babylonia and Assyria, and the discrepancies between source texts and catalogues show that some compendia went through further modifications between the Neo-Assyrian (ca. 900–600 BCE) and the Late Babylonian period (ca. 6th century BCE–1st century CE). Moreover, new compositions of magico-medical and omen material were still being compiled in the course of the 1st millennium BCE, incorporating material from existing compendia, and their appearance or omission in certain catalogues can therefore provide clues concerning the composition date of the catalogues. For instance, the Exorcist's Manual omits certain compendia connected to *āšipūtu* ("arts of the ritual specialist"), showing a few omitted texts could not be included because they were presumably composed later than the catalogue.[31] Furthermore, a close comparison of the series catalogues and extant text sources often reveals deviations between them, because the catalogues document an older stage of textual development or one particular textual redaction that was produced at a specific place and time, co-existing with or superseded by other editions (or recensions) of a serialised compendium.

In particular, the Assur Medical Catalogue (AMC) and the medical texts of the 1st millennium BCE reflect the complexities in the development and transmission of the manuscript sources, although similar patterns can be pointed out for omen compendia and other technical literature. Especially, the edition and analysis of the AMC opens up a new chapter in the study of Mesopotamian medical texts and healing professions, since it is currently the only attested catalogue that provides an outline of one particular edition project: the compilation and serialisation of the complete corpus of medical texts. Crucially, AMC corresponds in part to a medical compendium organised from head to foot assembled at Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh, which is dubbed here *The Nineveh Medical Compendium*. Thus, AMC can serve as a crucial point of comparison and cornerstone to the identification and reconstruction of therapeutic texts from Nineveh, but it also underlines the divergences between the serialised medical compendia in use in 1st millennium BCE Mesopotamia.

Equally important, AMC offers new clues to re-thinking current perspectives on the two healing disciplines, *asûtu* "medicine" and *āšipūtu* "the art of the ritual specialist", regarding the relationship, overlaps and boundaries between their text corpora and healing practices, and regarding the differences or similarities in their theoretical understandings of illnesses. Panayotov and Steinert argue that AMC and the Exorcist's Manual as well as the textual sources indicate overlaps or "incursions" between the catalogues and the text corpora of both disciplines, reflected also in the use of medical therapeutic texts (*asûtu*) by exorcists and in the inclusion of such texts in their archives/collections. Yet, in their core, the Exorcist's Manual and AMC reflect two differing and clearly delimited text corpora, professional identities and specialisations, as is emphasised in the discussions of the catalogues.

Taking a critical stance to approaches that regard the healing disciplines as complementary, Cale Johnson argues against an undifferentiated view of the two healing disciplines, because it tends to obscure the different compendial and disciplinary contexts of the medical manuscripts. In contrast, Johnson stresses that both "medicine" (*asûtu*) and "exorcistic or incantation-and-ritual driven healing" (*āšipūtu*) not only had their own disciplinary identity, textual corpora and training procedures, but that each discipline worked with differing models of aetiology and causation reflected in the compendia pertaining to each discipline. These disciplinary distinctions become apparent if one focuses on one particular area, namely gastrointestinal illnesses. While texts connected to *āšipūtu* (e.g. the *Diagnostic Handbook* and exorcistic healing incantations such as Udug-hul) regard primarily malevolent ghosts and demons as causal agents, the 1st millennium BCE therapeutic compendia connected to *asûtu* reflected in AMC suggest, in Johnson's view, that this discipline turned increasingly to "secular etiologies" based on analogies between the invisible processes in the body and visible processes in the natural and social world.

31 E.g. specialised therapeutic compendia such *Muššu'u* "Embrocation" and *Qutāru* "Fumigation", cf. Böck 2007: 27-29; Finkel 1991 and Jean 2006: 106-109 for other texts related to *āšipūtu* that are not included in the list. Apart from a few omissions, the Exorcist's Manual registers most works and compendia known as part of *āšipūtu* and was probably intended to represent the complete corpus of the discipline.

The emergence of medical compendia containing solely pharmaceutical remedies in the Old Babylonian period is often regarded as the first clear evidence for a distinct medical discipline of *asûtu*.[32] However, Johnson argues that a distinct disciplinary profile of *asûtu* is even more visible in the "medical" incantations, which are integrated as central textual blocks into the therapeutic compendia of the 1st millennium BCE and which often go back to precursor compositions from the 2nd millennium BCE.[33] Contrasting specific features of the incantations used in exorcistic healing (e.g. their prominent Sumerian or bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian format and the use of the so-called Marduk-Ea formula) with incantations in the therapeutic compendia characterised by vernacular Akkadian poetry and their unorthodox adaptations or avoidance of the Marduk-Ea formula, Johnson sees the latter incantations as "programmatic counter-texts" to *āšipūtu* texts and as "doctrinal canons" for the discipline of *asûtu*. However, while the incantations for gastrointestinal disorders in the medical treatise STOMACH analysed by Johnson focus on analogies that posit "natural causes" of illness and never attribute the complaints to malevolent ghosts, he also points out that the same incantations can appear in other incantation collections for groups of illnesses attributed to the attack of ghosts. This implies that the latter manuscripts rely on "traditional" aetiological models and reflect diverging disciplinary backgrounds of the compilers. Moreover, other treatises in the *Nineveh Medical Compendium* and AMC such as CRANIUM (focussing on ailments of the head) include numerous cases with the diagnosis "Hand of a ghost" (or similar diagnostic labels), because this section of the compendium dealt with symptoms that were traditionally attributed to the "Hand of a ghost" (e.g. headaches). Johnson surmises that diagnostic labels such as "Hand of a ghost" could have been reinterpreted in *asûtu* texts, becoming merely technical labels for specific illness symptomologies which had lost their "metaphysical significance". It may not be a coincidence that the section ABDOMEN in the AMC refers explicitly to gastrointestinal illnesses caused by ghosts or other agents (sorcery, the "curse"), since it seems to form a kind of appendix of special materials to the previous sections on gastrointestinal illnesses (STOMACH, EPIGASTRIUM) including numerous incantations. This arrangement could imply that the therapeutic compendia of *asûtu* included material that asserted the traditional aetiologies prominent in *āšipūtu*, but relegated such material to special treatises.

A slightly differing perspective concerning the textual components of the therapeutic corpus is developed in Steinert's contribution, which compares the contents listed in AMC and the Exorcist's Manual. This comparison points out that the summary rubrics in AMC register incantation genres included in several sections of the medical compendia, which also occur as genres or text groups defined as part of the *āšipūtu* corpus in the Exorcist's Manual. There remains an area of uncertainty regarding the exact meaning of these overlaps. If one regards the medical compendia outlined in AMC as the corpus of *asûtu*, it could be concluded that this serialised text corpus included incantations genres and types of therapies used in both disciplines, although the compositions involved may have been specific to each discipline. On the other hand, it is also possible that some entries in AMC that recur in the Exorcist's Manual referred to material that included therapeutic practices and texts adapted from or influenced by *āšipūtu* traditions and compositions (e.g. incantations). Vice versa, the second part of the Exorcist's Manual, which includes text types also used by other disciplines (e.g. astrological and terrestrial omens), refers to a compilation of medical remedies for various illnesses, which could be understood as a reference to the therapeutic corpus associated with the *asû* and listed in AMC. The cross-disciplinary interests of exorcists in the 1st millennium BCE are evident in their text collections, which included tablets with medical remedies.[34] At the same time, the distinctiveness of the corpora in AMC and the Exorcist's Manual suggests that each discipline maintained its own identity and text corpus, although some therapeutic components, text genres or compositions may have been used by practitioners of both disciplines.

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32 For the intimate connection of the *asû* with the genre of pharmaceutical remedies, see also the discussion of Steinert in this volume.

33 See Collins 1999 for a study of Mesopotamian "medical incantations" drawing attention to the use of illness models that are based on analogies with the natural environment. However, there is no consensus in Assyriological research regarding the status of "medical incantations" as pertaining to *asûtu* or to *āšipūtu* (cf. Collins 1999: 35-37). The appearance or invocation of the patron deities of the two healing professions (Gula/Damu vs. Marduk/Ea) in these spells may present a clue to the disciplinary links of their composers, but this criterion is not bullet-proof, since there are incantations in the *Nineveh Medical Compendium* that mention the patron deities of *asûtu* and *āšipūtu* together, see the incantations Belly 9, 14, 17, 25, 26 in Collins 1999, discussed by Johnson *infra*, see further Collins 1999: *bu'šānu* 1 (BAM 543; TEETH), Eyes 2, 5, 8 (BAM 510 //; EYES), *martu* 2 (BAM 578; STOMACH), *maškadu* 8 (AMT 42/6 // BAM 124 etc.; HAMSTRING); for an example from a collection of incantations see BM 98584+98589+K. 5416 rev. iii 4-24 (against diarrhoea), discussed by Böck 2014: 101-104; Steinert 2016: 223-225 and by Johnson *infra*; cf. Böck 2014: 79-82, 94-98, 104-114. The fact that spells for therapeutic purposes are listed both in the Exorcist's Manual and in AMC cautions us not to attribute all "medical incantations" solely to one discipline.

34 There are also hints for the opposite case, i.e. for *asû*s who owned tablets classified as *āšipūtu*.

The article of Strahil Panayotov discusses the structure of AMC and compares the incipits and tablet sequence of the treatises listed in AMC PART 1 with the Nineveh source texts corresponding to this part of the catalogue, which he terms the "Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia" (elsewhere in this volume designated as the *Nineveh Medical Compendium*). The tablets belonging to this serialised compendium form the text group with the closest correspondences to AMC, as Panayotov amply demonstrates. But there are also a few deviations between AMC and the Nineveh texts. On the other hand, the possible assumption that AMC may be a catalogue of a local version of the medical series is weakened by the fact that the preserved 1st millennium BCE medical texts from Assur show only very limited overlap with AMC and the "Nineveh Medical Enclycopedia".[35] Thus, a number of Assur medical texts belong to differing serialised compendia that contain similar, yet not identical material, including witnesses of an extract (*nishu*) series of remedies, based on originals from Babylonia. Although the Assur texts occasionally offer an incipit or section title matching AMC and Nineveh texts, in most cases the catchlines and incipits of the Assur texts diverge and their text overlaps only in part with the manuscripts of the *Nineveh Medical Compendium*.[36] Panayotov briefly reviews other recensions of serialised therapeutic compendia attested from later 1st millennium BCE Babylonia (especially from Uruk and Babylon). The interrelations and overlaps between these various compendia still remain to be investigated in detail in future research.

Several issues discussed in Panayotov's contribution are also scrutinised by Steinert with differing conclusions. Thus, both authors compare AMC, the Exorcist's Manual and the catalogue of the diagnostic and physiognomic omens in terms of their format, contents and structure. In Panayotov's view, the three catalogues stand in a direct relation, with the Exorcist's Manual representing the superordinate "master catalogue", while AMC and the catalogue of the diagnostic and physiognomic omens form "subordinate" catalogues. Steinert's article analyses the three catalogues with regard to the ideal categories of series and corpus catalogue, and concludes that the overlaps of genres between AMC and the Exorcist's Manual could reflect components of a cross-disciplinary character in the corpora of *asûtu* and *āšipūtu*, respectively. Another perspective on the disciplines is expressed in Geller's contribution "A Babylonian Hippocrates", arguing for a division of Mesopotamian "healing arts" into three distinct categories corresponding to literary genres and text corpora: "medicine" (reflected in the genre of prescriptions), "magic" (reflected in poetic incantations/rituals) and "diagnosis" (reflected in the diagnostic omen texts), all of which could potentially be studied and practiced by different healing specialists (including physicians, exorcists and even midwives). All three "genres" are represented to varying extent in the corpora of both *āšipūtu* and *asûtu*.

The joint catalogue of the diagnostic and physiognomic omen series (*Sakikkû* and *Alamdimmû*) is discussed in Eric Schmidtchen's contribution. Both catalogues are separated by a famous editorial note that attributes the edition of the series *Sakikkû* (i.e. the *Diagnostic Handbook*) to the renowned scholar Esagīl-kīn-apli who was active during the reign of the Babylonian king Adad-apla-iddina (1068–1047 BCE). Comparing the information of the catalogue with the textual witnesses from the 1st millennium BCE, Schmidtchen notes deviations suggesting that both compendia underwent further changes after the edition documented in the catalogue. This observation suggests that the *Sakikkû* and *Alamdimmû* catalogue presents an earlier stage of the series than most of the extant manuscripts. The deviations, which concern the naming of tablets (incipits), the number assigned to a particular series tablet and the number of entries on a given tablet, point to revision processes but are not always easy to explain. Deviations in the assigned tablet number in catalogue and manuscripts of *Sakikkû* sometimes result from variations in the distribution of textual units on physical tablets. Other deviations may point to alternative recensions. Thus, the text witnesses of *Sakikkû* have generally lower numbers of entries compared with the catalogue, indicating differences between an original recension preserved in the catalogue and the series witnesses attested from the Neo-Assyrian period and later. A similar situation can be demonstrated for the *Alamdimmû* catalogue, as Schmidtchen shows. Thus, the catalogue adds the editorial remark "new, not finished" to a few constituent sub-series, indicating that these sections were not yet finalised when the catalogue was drawn up. Furthermore, it seems as if not all tablets of the physiognomic omens on skin moles attested from the Neo-Assyrian period are mentioned in the catalogue, pointing to a later restructuring or reworking of the sub-series.

35 It should be added that our record of the medical archives that existed at Assur may be quite incomplete, but the differences between the preserved medical material from Nineveh and Assur may neither be completely accidental.

36 The Assur texts with parallels to the *Nineveh Medical Compendium* often contain only part of the remedies preserved in the Nineveh manuscripts, where they may occur in a diverging sequence. Sometimes, the Assur texts include material not found in the Nineveh parallels and *vice versa*. The tablets of the *Nineveh Medical Compendium* which are recognisable through their uniform layout and size, often seem to present a more extended collection of material.

There are also general differences in the way the two compendia *Sakikkû* and *Alamdimmû* are listed in the catalogue, which find parallels in other omen series (see Rochberg *infra*). Whereas the *Sakikkû* catalogue assigns a number of entries to each tablet and section of *Sakikkû*, the *Alamdimmû* catalogue only sums up the number of tablets in each sub-series or treatise of the compendium. Such differences may indicate a slightly differing degree of textual standardisation for the series *Sakikkû* und *Alamdimmû*. Doubtlessly of special importance is the extended editorial note, which is unique in its detailed information on the compiler and editor of the series Esagil-kīn-apli, his status and titles, the purpose and method of his edition. As pointed out by Schmidtchen and other contributions, the editorial achievements and principles allegedly applied by Esagil-kīn-apli, which are expressed through a specific technical vocabulary, served as a model and source for other editorial projects, since this vocabulary is also encountered in the Exorcist's Manual, AMC and in the colophon of a reworked edition of the drug compendium Uruanna created by Ashurbanipal's scholars at Nineveh (Hunger 1968: No. 321).

Geller's article "A Babylonian Hippocrates" focuses on essential questions linked to the study of the Mesopotamian "system catalogues", concerning the usefulness and implications of the term canon with regard to Mesopotamian technical or scientific texts. In Assyriological studies, the word "canonisation" is often tantamount to the standardisation of texts through editing processes, in the course of which "standard" texts were produced that are attested in different libraries and places without significant variation. However, Geller sees evidence in the three central catalogues (AMC, Exorcist's Manual and *Sakikkû/Alamdimmû* catalogue) for a "perceived 'canon' of scientific literature", in the sense of a "corpus of literature which was widely accepted and clearly defined".

Drawing on a comparison with the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, where the attribution of works to Hippocrates served as a "brand name" that helped to preserve these texts from extinction, Geller sees in Esagil-kīn-apli a Babylonian counterpart to Hippocrates, as a scholar "who was famous enough to have an entire text corpus attributed to his name". Since both the Exorcist's Manual and *Sakikkû/Alamdimmû* catalogue attribute the edition of diagnostic omens and of the corpus of exorcism to Esagil-kīn-apli, Geller questions the conspicuous attribution of works of exorcism, liturgy (*kalûtu*) and various omen series to the god Ea (stemming *ša pī Ea* "from the mouth of Ea") found in a catalogue of texts and authors from Nineveh, and instead interprets it as a cryptic reference to Esagil-kīn-apli. Geller's proposition builds on the poorly articulated differentiation between authorship and editorship in Mesopotamia, where it is not entirely unusual to find attributions of texts or technical knowledge to a divine origin.[37] For instance, a standard formula in incantations claims that these spells are not the practitioner's invention, but originate with the patron deities of the healing disciplines (e.g. Ea and Marduk), thereby invoking divine authority (see above n. 33 for examples). On the other hand, the expression *ša pī* indicating authorship or origin of specific texts is only rarely attested with divine names, but is mostly used in reference to human scholars or mythological sages (*ummânu*; *apkallu*).[38] The attribution of texts to Ea in the catalogue of texts and authors may thus be an exceptional case that should be regarded with suspicion, and Geller's reading of the passage offers a striking solution challenging current opinions on the issue.[39]

37 For a recent discussion of authorship in Mesopotamia, cf. van der Toorn 2007: 31-49 and Lenzi 2015: 151-153, arguing that it is more appropriate in most cases to speak of Mesopotamian scribes as compilers, editors and contributors to textual corpora and compositions than of authors in the modern sense. Although there are exceptional cases in which a particular person is connected with a specific work, such attributions do not necessarily reflect a concept of authorship as we understand it today (tied to ideas of authenticity and intellectual property). As Karel van der Toorn (2007: 46-48) points out, "authors" in Mesopotamia were rather seen as representatives of the scribal craft and inheritors of a scholarly tradition, who worked in the context and interest of institutions and patrons (temple and palace). The socio-economic position of Mesopotamian scribes accounts e.g. for the attribution of editorial activities and textual production in the colophons of tablets from Ashurbanipal's library directly to the king, not to the scribes who carried out these tasks. Thus, notions of authorship in Mesopotamia are closely tied to authority. For other textual examples claiming a divine origin for branches of technical knowledge, see also Lenzi 2015: 180. One text states that the practice of extispicy and lecanomancy was revealed by Šamaš and Adad to the antediluvian king Enmeduranki who taught the knowledge to men of Sippar, Nippur and Babylon (Lambert 1967 and 1998).

38 See also LKA 146, for medical remedies (leather bags) *ša pī Ea* (Lambert 1980). Although the catalogue of texts and authors seems to omit Esagil-kīn-apli, several productions of literary works as well as editorial achievements are attributed there to other named scholars associated with rulers of the Kassite or Isin II dynasties, see e.g. Lambert 1957 and 1962; Frahm 2011: 323-324.

39 Cf. Lenzi 2008: 119-120; 2015: 178-180, considering the catalogue as a reflection of the "mythology of scribal succession" (according to which the knowledge of the technical disciplines was revealed by the gods to the *apkallu* sages before the flood who transmitted it to later generations of scholars in the form of texts); similarly van der Toorn 2007: 42-45, reading the catalogue in a hierarchical and chronological manner, as a "canonical ranking" of texts in terms of their "scriptural authority". See also Glassner 2015: 5-7.

Geller's contribution further draws attention to the terms and expressions for editorial activities in text catalogues and colophons, such as *zarâ ṣabātu* "to produce an edition", lit. "weaving" (of a text), which have been equated with the process of "canonisation" (e.g. Finkel 1988). This expression includes the notion of creating a new textual ensemble by compiling and combining different textual sources, selecting material and choosing between variants, resulting in a compendium held together by a consistent arrangement of textual units. The expression *zarâ ṣabātu* is associated with Esagil-kīn-apli in the catalogue of diagnostic and physiognomic omens, and this scholar is also mentioned in the Exorcist's Manual as the person who "established" (*kunnu*) the exorcism texts. AMC as the third catalogue associated with healing uses the phrase *zarâ ṣabātu* without attributing the edition of the listed corpus to Esagil-kīn-apli. As Geller concludes, this lacking attribution suggests that the edition of the medical therapeutic texts documented in AMC took place later than Esagil-kīn-apli and the 11th century BCE. Yet, it is apparent that the use of the expression *zarâ ṣabātu* in AMC draws on the model of the *Sakikkû* catalogue and on textual editions associated with Esagil-kīn-apli. Thus, the use of a terminology associated with Esagil-kīn-apli provided the edition of therapeutic medical texts documented in AMC with authority by alluding to this scholar and his work.

In this line of thought, Geller takes up the differentiation among Mesopotamian scholars between texts that are "closely edited" ("woven"), as a synonym for texts belonging to a "standard series" (*iškāru*), and "external" texts (*ahû*). Thus, it is well known that *ahû* can refer to non-standard editions of a text series (e.g. of omen series such as *Enūma Anu Enlil* or *Šumma izbu*) or to manuscripts that contain many variants or orthographic peculiarities compared with an existing "standard series". Drawing on the observation that Mesopotamian medical texts mostly form unique manuscripts that are only rarely attested in multiple exactly duplicating witnesses, Geller interprets the reference to medical texts as *liqtī ahûti* "extraneous collections" in Ashurbanipal colophon q (Hunger 1968: No. 329) occurring on most tablets of the *Nineveh Medical Compendium* as a descriptive label for the state of the medical texts typical for *asûtu* that were in circulation at other places outside Nineveh. Geller emphasises the fact that prior to the edition carried out by Ashurbanipal's scholars in connection with assembling the royal library, most medical texts transmitted at different places were never standardised or belonged to a "fixed canon". This appealing reading of the Ashurbanipal colophon is modified further in the contributions of Panayotov and Steinert, who aim at reconciling the colophon's description of the medical corpus assembled at Nineveh as *bulṭī ištu muhhi adi ṣupri* "remedies from the top of the head and the toenail(s)" and as *liqtī ahûti* "extraneous collections" with the components of the text compendia listed in AMC. While the first expression is closely related to the serialised medical compendium in AMC PART 1, the term *liqtī ahûti* "extraneous collections" is open to differing interpretations and identifications.

The issues of textual development and standardisation in 1st millennium BCE technical compendia are also scrutinised in Francesca Rochberg's contribution focussing on the astrological omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil*. Rochberg offers an edition and discussion of two catalogues, containing fragmentary incipit lists of the astrological omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil*. The catalogues stem from two different places and periods (i.e. from 7th century BCE Assur and from 2nd century BCE Uruk), and both documents have a differing scope.[40] The multiple divergences between the catalogues lead Rochberg to reconsider the extent of textual standardisation and canonicity reflected in the catalogues and the related source texts of *Enūma Anu Enlil*. Thus, divergences in the tablet sequence between the catalogues and the Nineveh sources of the series suggest "that tablet-numbering was tied more to the local needs of the scribes than to any sense for what we would call a canonical text to be transmitted in a fixed, standardized … form".[41] Based on research by Erlend Gehlken (2005) who argues against the attribution of fixed tablet numbering systems to differing local "schools", Rochberg points out that "catalogues do not appear to be the most direct or uncomplicated evidence for canonicity in cuneiform, that is, if we want to define canonicity in terms of the existence of a fixed *textus receptus*". As Rochberg rightly emphasises, these particularities of Mesopotamian scholarly texts necessitate a definition of canonicity in cuneiform scholarship which is not based on the model of the biblical canon.[42] Thus, instead of defining canonicity on the basis of textual characteristics such as the degree of standardisation, Rochberg understands canon in the context of Mesopo-

40 The Assur catalogue presents a collective catalogue of multiple compendia including the series *Enūma Anu Enlil, Šumma ālu* and collections of extraneous or unidentified omen texts, while the Uruk catalogue focusses solely on *Enūma Anu Enlil*.

41 For the divergences in the numbering of tablets of *Enūma Anu Enlil* and the variations in the textual contents of individual tablets see also Koch-Westenholz 1995: 79. Sally Freedman (1998: 17-18) describes a similar situation with regard to the variant numberings of series tablets (as well as excerpts and commentaries) of *Šumma ālu*.

42 See also Rochberg-Halton 1984, and Rochberg 2016 for discussion.

tamian scholarly corpora as representations of "the beliefs or ideas or texts of a certain group of scribes", which had an "accepted meaning or value" as something worth collecting, copying, consulting and interpreting.

In a recent paper on canon and cuneiform scholarship, Rochberg elaborates her understanding of scholarly canons in Mesopotamia, offering a pertinent framework for studying the catalogues of series and text corpora. Emphasising power and authority as core concepts tied to a canon, she points to the role of omen texts (and other texts used by technical disciplines subsumed under the term *ṭupšarrūtu* "scribal arts") as "accepted … interpretative guidelines, or solutions" for interpreting signs in the practice of divination (Rochberg 2016: 221). As Rochberg argues, such texts became (relatively) standardised, *because* they embodied the power of an age-old tradition and a force of authority for the scribes, even though "the canonical force of the contents of these texts was not tightly bound up with textual standardization" (Rochberg 2016: 224). Thus, canonicity in cuneiform scholarship "resided in a variety of works permitting a range of internal variation" (ibid. 223). Drawing on Herman Vanstiphout (2003: 16) who connects a "first canon" of literature taught in Old Babylonian scribal school curricula with the ideological objective of presenting the "world as it should be" and reinforcing "the idea of a well-ordered state", Rochberg sees a similar instantiation of core values grounded in the idea of a well-ordered cosmos based on divine decree, in the contents of the 1st millennium BCE texts of technical disciplines, ranging from incantations to cult lamentations and omen literature (Rochberg 2016: 227). These texts formed not only "vehicles for traditional norms and values", but were also instrumental in "safeguarding what was construed as divine order" (ibid.). Thus, in their authoritative force, the texts used and studied by the Mesopotamian technical disciplines (including medicine) can be regarded as a canon or multiple canons.

In this vein, Rochberg suggests that literary or scholarly text catalogues such as AMC or the Exorcist's Manual can be read as documents for an emic perception of a canon, i.e. "as historical reflections of a text corpus considered at a given time as useful and worthy of preservation and transmission".[43] Rochberg draws on works by Jonathan Z. Smith (1982) and Aaron Hughes (2003) who regard a canon as a basic cultural process involving "a finite set of authoritative texts or objects", which occupy "the focal point in a community's self-understanding" and provide a community with an origin and a history. Especially Smith (1982: 45) connects the concept of a canon with lists (*Listenwissenschaft*) and catalogues: "When lists exhibit relatively clear principles of order, we may begin to term them catalogs, a subtype of the list whose major function is that of information retrieval". According to Smith, catalogues are in principle open. But when a catalogue is closed (or semi-closed), it can be called a canon (Hughes 2003: 152).

Mesopotamian "system catalogues" present at least semi-closed lists of delimited text compendia or professional corpora and can thus be connected with the formation and articulation of scholarly and literary canons.[44] Although the Mesopotamian scribes did not use the Akkadian word *qanû* "reed; measuring rod", which was borrowed into Greek *kanôn*, in the abstract sense of "canon", the Exorcist's Manual and the *Sakikkû* catalogue make use of the terms *iškāru* "series; compilation" and *riksu* "compilation" in the sense of a "text corpus" of authoritative texts established for scholarly study, specialist practice and teaching.[45] The corpora described in the "system catalogues" qualify as canons,

43 A similar view is developed by Niek Veldhuis (2003: 17-18) with regard to the corpus of literary texts from the Ur-III period that was used and adapted in the Old Babylonian scribal curricula. Veldhuis calls these texts canonical, not "in the sense of a closed canon that invites interpretation", but as "a literary canon, defining what literature is and how new literature is to be produced" (ibid. 18). The Sumerian texts transmitted to the Old Babylonian period also served as an "educational canon" instrumental for defining scribal identity. Veldhuis contrasts the Old Babylonian literary canon "as a living, changing corpus" with the first millennium corpus of authoritative texts, which he regards as "more or less closed and textually fixed", and emphasises that their "canonicity, their intention and ability to prescribe a direction is not in defining what newly created literature should be like. It is rather in the never-ending project of hermeneutics" (ibid. 27-28). For differences between Old Babylonian and later scholarly texts, in terms of two different models of authority cf. also Veldhuis 1999. For other views on Mesopotamian text canons, see also Hallo (1991), postulating a sequence of four differing textual canons (i.e. an Old Sumerian, Neo-Sumerian, Old Babylonian canon, and the canon of 1st millennium BCE texts which took shape towards the end of the 2nd millennium BCE).

44 For instance, Vanstiphout (2003) has argued for the existence of a textual canon already in the Old Babylonian period, reflected in the contemporary catalogues of literary texts, some of which list most of the Sumerian literary works known from that period. Tinney (1999) and Robson (2001) have interpreted them as lists of texts to be studied in the scribal curriculum, while Delnero (2010) suggests that the Old Babylonian catalogues should rather be understood as inventories of tablet collections, which were primarily drawn up for archival purposes. Nonetheless, the fact that the Old Babylonian literary catalogues register a core of identical Sumerian compositions that formed part of the scribal curriculum in different cities during this period, while differing in their listing of some works, corresponds well with the observation that the scribal curriculum was not entirely uniform, but included compositions that reflect local traditions and identities (cf. Delnero 2016).

45 Frahm 2011: 317 n. 1506; Rochberg 2016: 218. In Mesopotamian culture, the measuring rod served as a symbol of just rule based on symbols of divine authority, while Greek *kanôn* "rod; bar" acquired the secondary meanings "rule; guide; model" and also referred to selective lists of the prime representatives in different fields of learning. In a similar vein, Timothy Lim states that the ancient Jews did not use the Greek

because they form coherent groups (such as divinatory, rituals, incantations and medical texts), which are linked to different technical disciplines. These technical texts were imbued with authority and had religious, normative and prescriptive status for the specialists who used them, contributing thus to the professional identity of different groups of specialists, scholars and scribes (Koch 2015: 52-54). The authority of these texts is bolstered by their attribution to a divine origin or to a venerable and ancient tradition, although human contributions to the texts were recognised as well.

At the same time, the text catalogues and extant written sources from different periods show that Mesopotamian literary and scholarly canons were always diverse, flexible and never entirely closed – some texts were transmitted over a long time, although they went through re-workings and revisions; at the same time, other texts fall out of use and new compositions see the light of the day.[46] On the one hand, the development of serialised technical compendia can be seen as an attempt to systematise and stabilise textual traditions and as processes of canon formation or corpus building codified in catalogue documents,[47] even though these attempts did not lead to absolutely stable and uniformly standardised texts.[48]

The development of a terminology that classifies texts as *iškāru* "series" or *ahû* "extraneous" texts also indicates processes of stabilisation and differentiation. By the 7th century BCE, many technical compendia on divination and magic designated as *iškāru* "series" had become relatively fixed in content and structure, i.e. "old material was conscientiously maintained in its traditional form and new textual material was no longer integrated" (Rochberg 1984: 127). The category of *ahû* texts was often applied to thematically related textual material that was not included in the "standard" series. Both types of materials, stemming from a "series" or from an *ahû* collection, were clearly differentiated in the Neo-Assyrian letters of court scholars, but the same letters show that the scholars applied and consulted both text types to the same extent as authoritative sources for knowledge, advice and practice, i.e. they regarded them as different, but equally important textual branches of the scholarly canon.

One last aspect worth mentioning in support of canon formation in the 1st millennium BCE texts is the link between canons and commentaries. As pointed out by Jan Assmann (1995: 12), the occurrence of commentaries presupposes the existence of a canon (a body of holy or classical texts with a (relatively) fixed form), and commentaries function as dynamic links between present and past, collective identity and canon (Hughes 2003: 151, 157). This point is worth taking into account in connection with the emergence of Mesopotamian commentaries at the end of the 2nd or beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, i.e. exactly during the period in which "standard" editions of many technical and scholarly texts were created. Thus, following Eckart Frahm (Frahm 2011: 318), the emergence of commentaries can be seen as a reaction to "the creation of … Mesopotamia's first canonical texts *strictu sensu*". Through the genre of commentaries, the Mesopotamian scholarly communities could continue to extend on and creatively engage with texts that had already become relatively fixed in form, content and wording.

The present book demonstrates how the contextual study of Mesopotamian catalogues can deeply enrich and re-adjust current Assyriological perspectives on the processes of corpus building, canonisation and textual (trans)formations, especially for such critical and debated areas as the corpora of the divination and healing specialists. But most importantly, the Assur Medical Catalogue edited here will play an indispensable role for future research concerned with reconstructing the corpus of Mesopotamian medical texts, because it will help us to differentiate more clearly the varying compendial contexts and disciplinary backgrounds of medical manuscripts.

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term *kanôn* with regard to the books of the Old Testament (the term was applied in this meaning only by the Christian church). Neither did the ancient Jews have an equivalent term for "canon", although they had a concept of a canon in the sense of "authoritative scriptures" (Lim 2013: 2-4).

46 The Mesopotamian "system catalogues" such as the Exorcist's Manual can be compared to some extent with the early Jewish lists of approved biblical books, which are regarded as evidence for a "canon" (Lim 2013: 35-53). However, the selection of the Exorcist's Manual does not stipulate a closed canon of texts set apart from other texts not included in the list.

47 According to van der Toorn (2007: 206-221), these developments were connected to a rise of the written tradition to an exceedingly privileged status (vis-à-vis oral traditions).

48 Many 1st millennium BCE texts (e.g. omen series, literary texts) reflect a limited degree of standardisation, ranging from textual variants to multiple co-existing versions (Rochberg-Halton 1984: 127-128, Robson 2011: 571-572; Lenzi 2015: 163-164).

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