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A wise woman once observed: “Life is like a box of chocolates – you never know what you’re gonna get.” The same might be said of most *Festschriften*: They are collections of essays whose common denominator is solely that their authors all respect the person and the scholarly work of the honoree, but their subject matter may be of the most diverse nature. Like the recipient himself, many of the contributors to this volume in honor of Helmut Freydank have worked in Berlin, particularly on the materials from Assur in the *Pergamonmuseum*, but this is not true in every instance.

In total, there are twenty-four studies here, four in English and the majority in German. For the convenience of the reader, I will categorize them by general topic and give brief descriptions of their contents.

Text editions: Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum (“‘Wenn ein Mann ...’ Ein mittelassyrischer Text aus Tall Faḥarija”) considers a peculiar tablet whose provisions are said to be *ša pī riksi ša*^{LUGAL} ERĪN^{MES} *ša* LUGAL, “according to the text of the regulation of the royal troops.” Is this a student exercise or a royal edict? Hans Neumann (“Zu den im 2. Weltkrieg vernichteten Ur III-Texten des Leipziger Altorientalischen Instituts”) presents preliminary sketches (by K.-F. Müller) of six lost records dealing with various commodities – reed mats, livestock, grain, beer, and metal tools. Elisabeth Rieken (“Kp 14/03 – eine SMS aus der Hethiterzeit?”) publishes a small, pierced, tablet from the Hittite site of Kayalıpınar bearing the text of an oracle question, and suggests that it once formed part of a sequence of communications between oracle experts in one location and concerned parties at another. Daisuke Shibata (“Middle Assyrian Legal Documents of Adad-bēl-gabbe II, King of the Land of Mari”) edits two documents from Tell Taban in which the king of this small client state of Assur on the Middle Euphrates acts as a private individual, taking possession of persons defaulting on debts.

Lexical studies: Doris Prechel (“Anmerkungen zu § 163 der Hethitischen Gesetze”), on the basis of a newly recovered fragment of a paragraph of the Hittite collection of laws, shows that the (a²) Nesite word for ‘salt’ is *išuwant-* (see now also *HW²* IV, 280–83). Nonetheless, the interpretation of the law remains obscure: Why would someone who has just employed salt to purify his livestock dispose of this detergent material in a saltlick? Perhaps this is one of those strange provisions from the Laws which arose from a singular, idiosyncratic, event rather than reflect a common situation (cf. §§ 43, 54–55). Thomas Richter (“Ḫašip-apu und Šaḫlu-Teššup, Walker”) examines the Akkadian technical vocabulary employed by fullers. Jaime Llop (“Husking Grain or Moulding Bricks?”) reinterprets the use of the verb *šahāṭum* II in several Middle Assyrian records.

Archival studies: In by far the longest contribution (107 pages) (“Wer waren die Bewohner des mittelassyrischen *Dūr Katlimmu*?”) Saqer Salah presents a complete prosopography of the Middle Assyrian tablets from Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad, a very useful tool indeed.

Klaas Veenhof (“A Verdict of the Assembly of the Old Assyrian City-State”) gathers the legal pronouncements of the city authorities of Assur recovered at the Old Assyrian *kārum* Kaneš.

Legal study: Betina Faist (“Die Noxalhaftung im neuassyrischen Recht”) examines the legal responsibility of patrons for legal minors (slaves, children) in Assyrian records from the eighth (1 text) and seventh centuries (10 items).

Ritual studies: Barbara Böck (“‘Er hat keine Zähne, aber er beißt.’ Überlegungen zur Gedankenfigur des Adyanaton als Ausdruck des Unmöglichen”) considers the use in Akkadian incantations of the comparison of the evil to be removed from a sufferer to an impotent being, such as “a blind person who has forgotten his city neighborhood.” Birgit Christiansen (“Noch gesund oder bereits krank? Der Zustand des Patienten im hethitischen Ritualtext KBo 10.37”) reinterprets the healing ceremony in question not as intended for a new-born, but rather as a treatment for epilepsy. She also discusses the psychological aspects of Hittite rituals in general. Stefan M. Maul (“Eine altorientalische Anleitung zur Wiedererlangung von Lebensmut und Lebenskraft”) has prepared a full new edition of the ritual K 2535 + 2598 on the basis of photos posted on the CDLI website, accompanied by a consideration of differences between modern conceptions of healing and those current in the ancient Near East.

Literary study: Giovanna Matini and Claudio Saporetti (“Einige Anmerkungen zum Mythos *Enki und Ninmah*”) interpret *Ninmah*’s poorly designed creatures

in the Sumerian tale as representing harmless courtiers, utterly dependent upon the favor of their monarch.

Art historical studies: Barbara Feller (“Bābu-aḥa-id-dina. Die Siegel”) studies the uncertain cylinder seal and the five different known seal impressions of this important Middle Assyrian royal official. Aaron Schmidt (“Symbolsockel in Assyrien – eine Bilanz und Aktualisierung”) demonstrates that these constructions were not altars but rather the bases for the display of cult objects. That a good general translation for *nēmuḍu* is indeed ‘support’ (so p. 403) is buttressed by its use as an Akkadogram in Hittite, e. g.,: ^{GI}GU.ZA KÛ.GI *ni-me-ti* KÛ.GI *tamlû*, “a golden throne for lounging inlaid with gold” (KBo 10.1:41; cf. CAD N/II, 156). Lutz Martin (“Lamassu oder Götterstatue?”) interprets a small, badly broken, basalt fragment of a crowned head as evidence for the presence of now-vanished monumental sculpture in Assur in the time of Tiglath-pileser I. Joachim Marzahn (“Vasen statt Blumen”) contributes a thorough study of three Middle Assyrian vessels excavated in the court of the Assur temple that were used for storage of tablets.

Historical studies: Alfonso Archi (“Ebla and the Cities in Northern Syria”) reimagines the geography of the realm of Ebla by making use of tablets recording the disbursement of garments to leaders of subordinate communities. According to the author, the territory controlled by the city seems to have extended to the Euphrates (including Carchemish and Emar) in the east, to the Jebel al-Ansarî in the west, and to Hama and perhaps Homs in the south. Stefan Jakob (“Wann war Tukulti-Ninurta in Babylon?”) discusses the difficulties arising in coordinating the month names of the Babylonian and traditional Assyrian calendars and the resultant complications arising in the reconstruction of the order of eponyms. On a more theoretical plane, Johannes Renger (“Gedanken zur Frage von Innovation und Wachstum”) posits that the generally sluggish economic growth and relative lack of innovation observable over the centuries in ancient Mesopotamia was due to the diversion of surplus to ostentatious display by the rulers rather than to productive investment.

Miscellaneous: Ralf-B. Wartke (“Mit Julius Euting auf der Jagd nach Inschriften – Ein Blick in das Tagebuch seiner Reise in Nord-Syrien 1889/1890”) summarizes the epigraphic findings made on the journey of the Strasburg Semitist in Ottoman Syria, as well as his activity at the early German excavations at Zincirli.

In sum, this *Festschrift* is a worthy tribute to a distinguished historian and philologist who has devoted his special attention to the Middle Assyrian archives and to the history of the Late Bronze Age. (A bibliography of his numerous publications prefaces the book.) Precisely

because of its varied contents – and particularly given the inclusion of Salah’s prosopographical compilation – this book deserves a place in any reference collection dedicated to cuneiform studies.