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FU BerlinDOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22012/baf.2018.01>

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**The Babylonian Extispicy Rituals: Theory and Practice**

This presentation will focus on a series of manuals containing instructions regarding the oracle process. These sources, usually referred to as The Extispicy Rituals, also elaborate about different theoretical and practical aspects of extispicy as a scholarly discipline. But their main objective is to offer descriptions of the sequences of sacrificial offerings and the purification acts performed during the ritual. The first part of the presentation will be dedicated to the content of this group of documents and discuss their structure, based on the recent study of the relevant manuscripts. The second part of the presentation will discuss the questions raised by this collection of instructive texts. It will address the problems that concerns the roles of the seer and his client in the ritual and will clarify its setting, in time and space. The series of offerings that were given and the variety of gestures made by the participants, will also be presented.

As it happens, the ritual under discussion was performed for a defined purpose. The objective was allowing the seer to inspect the lamb he slaughter with the aim of obtaining an answer to the oracle question he pre-formulated for his client. Obtaining such an answer required prior training including the knowledge of complex theoretical literature on the subject, a matter on which the Extispicy Rituals elaborate as well. Hence, attention will also be given in this presentation to issues regarding the theoretical aspects of extispicy by contemplating the following questions: What were the relations between the seers' theoretical literature and the act of extispicy? Did astrology play a role in this practice? And, finally: to what extent was this type of knowledge considered esoteric?