

Abstract

This dissertation is a microhistorical study of a single individual named Kišir-Aššur who practiced medicine in the ancient city of Assur (modern northern Iraq) in the 7th century BCE.

The study provides the first detailed analysis of one healer's education and practice in ancient Mesopotamia based on at least 66 texts assigned to specific stages of his career. During his earliest phase, Kišir-Aššur received training in diagnostics, anatomy, and physiology. The sources indicate he also treated animals, in particular horses, and children during his training, perhaps to improve his understanding of anatomy. The evidence suggests that Kišir-Aššur began to make house calls, supervise rituals, and test the effects of certain prescriptions on patients during his later career phases. The private library of Kišir-Aššur and his family therefore illustrates practiced rather than the abstract, standardized knowledge that can be found in the text collections of the contemporary royal libraries of Nineveh.