Inhaltsverzeichnis

Erster Teil

Abhandlungen

Diplomats of Late Babylonian Archival Texts

Reinhard Pirngruber and Michael Jursa, Diplomats of Late Babylonian Archival Texts: Proceedings of a Meeting Held at Vienna University, 6-7 October 2016 .......................................................... 1

Johannes Hackl, The Artaxerxes Conundrum – Diplomats and Its Contribution to Dating Late Achaemenid Legal Documents from Babylonia ................................................................. 2-45

Michael Jursa, Diplomats, Prosopography, and Possibly Politics: the Transition from the ‘Early’ Ebabbar Archive to the Main Archive ............................................................................................ 46-52

Karlheinz Kessler, Zu den spätachämenidischen Urkunden in Uruk zwischen Xerxes und Alexander ... 53-61

Kristin Kleber, Tablet Format and Bookkeeping in Eanna: a Dossier on Long-Distance Trade from the Reign of Nabonidus ........................................................................................................... 62-71

Yuval Levavi and Martina Schmidl, Diplomats of Neo-Babylonian and Early Achaemenid Letters ..................................................................................................................................................... 72-87

Reinhard Pirngruber, A Diplomats Approach to the Eanna Archive: the Livestock Dossier ........... 88-108

Louise Quillien, Diachronic Change of the Tablet Format, Layout and Contents in the Textile Dossier of the Ebabbar Temple of Sippar (End of the 7th to Beginning of the 5th Century BC) ........................................................................ 109-118

Małgorzata Sandowicz, Transcripts of Interrogations (mas‘altus) from Sippar ................................ 119-125

Rieneke Sonneveld, Ribat’s Dossier from Nippur – a Diplomats Study of Aramaic Epigraphs on Cuneiform Tablets .......................................................................................................................... 126-138

Radosław Tarasewicz, Non-Tabulated and Tabulated Inventory Tablets from Sippar Concerning Sheep and Goats: Their Chronology, Content, and Format ................................................................. 139-153

Christopher Walker, Seals on Late Babylonian Archival Documents ................................................ 154-158

Cornelia Wunsch, Fingernail Marks on Neo-Babylonian Tablets. Their Placement, Shape, and Captions as Means to Classify and Date Tablets .............................................................................. 159-188

Abbreviations and Bibliography ........................................................................................................ 189-196

Hittite Priests between the Sacred and the Profane

Shai Gordin, Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 197-198

Michele Cammarosano, Local Priests in Hittite Anatolia ..................................................................... 199-207

Amir Gilan, “As a priest I myself offered to the goddess”: Ḫattušili’s Early Dedication to Šawoška of Šamuḫa Reconsidered ...................................................................................................................... 208-215

Stefano de Martino, The purapši-Priest and the tabri-Attendant ......................................................... 216-224

Piotr Taracha, Priestly Colleges in North-Central Anatolia: Some Remarks on the Tradition and Organization of Local Cults in the Second Millennium BCE .................................................. 225-232

Mesopotamian Belief Systems

[Jean-Jacques Glassner, Système de pensée en Mésopotamie .......................................................... AfO 53, 1-8]


Piotr Steinkeller, Early Mesopotamian Divine System: Some Fundamental Concerns .......................... 255-266
Hauptteil

Jeanette C. Fincke, The Best Day for Laying the Foundation Stone: Two Compilations Based on ippuš, on the “Lucky Days” from the Babylonian Almanac and on a Commentary as a Guideline for Selecting the Right Time .............................................................. 293-320
Markham J. Geller, Babylonian Gynaecology in Greek (or vice versa) ......................................................... 343-347
Michael Mäder, Ein baktirisches Siegel mit elamischer Strichschrift und die Suche nach dem Land Šimšakı .................................................. 416-425
Sara Milstein, Sleeping In(serted): Humor and Revision in the Adapa Tradition ........................................ 348-357
Zoltán Niederreiter, Ištar at Nippur and Her Cult Place (Ebaradurgarra, the Temple of Ungal-Nibru) in the Kassite and Later Periods .................................................................................................................. 358-371
Takayoshi Oshima and Nathan Wasserman, Forgotten Dais, Scattered Temple: Old Babylonian Akkadian Lament to Mamma and Its Historical Context ...................................................... 267-282
Yoko Watai, An Administrative Text from the Neo-Babylonian Period in the Collection of the Hirayama Ikku Silk Road Museum ........................................................................................................ 406-412
M. L. West (†), Gilgamesh ................................................................................................................................. 426-450
Abraham Winitzer, Conceptions of Mesopotamian Divination ...................................................................... 321-342
Stefan Zawadzki, The Hûndanaeans in the Neo-Babylonian Empire ......................................................... 379-405
Peter Zilberg, Lands and Estates around Al-Yaḥêdu and the Geographical Connection with the Murâšu Archive ........................................................................................................ 413-415

Kleine Mitteilungen

Stefan Bojowald, Zur Erklärung des ägyptischen Wortes ḫes in pAshmolean Museum 1984.55 rt., x + 3 ........................................................................................................................................ 451-452

Zweiter Teil

Rezensionen

Tzvi Abusch, The Witchcraft Series Maqlû (= Writings from the Ancient World 37 (JoAnn Scurlock) .... 465-477
Peter Altmann and Janling Fu (eds.), Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East (Susan Pollock) .................................................................................................. 604-606
Amar Annus, The Overturned Boat: Intertextuality of the Adapa Myth and Exorcist Literature (= State Archives of Assyria Studies XXIV) (Benjamin R. Foster) ........................................... 479-481
Noemi Borrelli, The Umma Messenger Texts from the Harvard Semitic Museum and the Yale Babylonian Collection (= Nisaba 27) (Changyu Liu) ........................................................................................................ 457-459
Manuel Ceccarelli, Enki und Ninhursâ. Eine mythische Erzählung in sumerischer Sprache (= Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 16) (Giovanna Matini) ........................................................................................................ 456-457
Eckart Frahm, Historische und historisch-literarische Texte (= Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts Bd. 3; Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft Bd. 121) (Jamie Novotny) ................................................................................................................................. 484-487
Uri Gabbay, Pacifying the Hearts of the Gods. Sumerian Emešal Prayers of the First Millennium BC (Heidelberger Emešal-Studien 1) (Jan Keetman) ........................................................................................................ 460-462
Andrew R. George, Mesopotamian Incantations and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection (= Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 32) (Nathan Wasserman) ........................................................................................................ 481-482
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manfred Hutter, Iranische Personennamen in der hebräischen Bibel (=Iranisches Personennamenbuch VII/2) (Jan Tavernier)</td>
<td>600-601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Kleber, Spätbabylonische Texte zum lokalen und regionalen Handel sowie zum Fernhandel aus dem Eanna-Archiv (= Babylonische Archive 7) (Radoslaw Tarasewicz)</td>
<td>487-495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulla Koch, Mesopotamian Divination Texts: Converging with the Gods, Sources from the First Millennium BCE (= Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 7) (Markham J. Geller)</td>
<td>482-484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul J. Kosmin, The Land of the Elephant Kings. Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire (Reinhard Pirngruber)</td>
<td>597-599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Kozuh, The Sacrificial Economy. Assessors, Contractors, and Thieves in the Management of Sacrificial Sheep at the Eanna Temple of Ur (ca. 625-520 B.C.) (= Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations 2) (Yuval Levavi)</td>
<td>495-500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, King and Court in Ancient Persia, 559 to 331 BCE (= Debates and Documents in Ancient History) (Reinhard Pirngruber)</td>
<td>599-600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John P. Nielsen, Personal Names in Early Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Tablets, 747-626 B.C.E. (= Nisaba 29) (Ran Zadok)</td>
<td>500-551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baruch Ottervanger, The Tale of the Poor Man of Nippur (= State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 12) (Scott Noegel)</td>
<td>477-479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David I. Owen, The Nesbit Tablets (= Nisaba 30) (Changyu Liu)</td>
<td>459-460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emanuel Pföh, Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age: an Anthropology of Politics and Power (Jacob Lauinger)</td>
<td>602-604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Rebitsch, Friedrich Pöhl und Sebastian Fink (Hrsg.), Die Konstruktion des Kannibalischen zwischen Fiktion und Realität (= Philippika 111) (Stefania Ermidoro)</td>
<td>606-608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Richter, Vorarbeiten zu einem hurritischen Namenbuch. Erster Teil: Personennamen altbabylonischer Überlieferung vom Mittleren Euphrat und aus dem nördlichen Mesopotamien (Ran Zadok)</td>
<td>584-586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nili Samet, The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur (= Mesopotamian Civilizations 18) (Margaret Jaques)</td>
<td>453-456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth L. Sanders, From Adapa to Enoch. Scribal Cultures and Religious Vision in Judea and Babylon (= Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 167) (Markham J. Geller)</td>
<td>559-562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malgorzata Sandowicz, Oaths and Curses. A Study in Neo- and Late Babylonian Legal Formulary (= Alter Orient und Altes Testament 398) (Johannes Hackl)</td>
<td>552-559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Schwemer, The Anti-Witchcraft Ritual Maqlû: The Cuneiform Sources of a Magic Ceremony from Ancient Mesopotamia (JoAnn Scurlock)</td>
<td>465-477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis R. Siddall, The Reign of Adad-nîrârî III: An Historical and Ideological Analysis of an Assyrian King and His Times (= Cuneiform Monographs 45) (Shana Zaia)</td>
<td>591-595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marten Stol, Women in the Ancient Near East (Josué J. Justel)</td>
<td>567-573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura (eds.), Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East (Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel)</td>
<td>573-576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole L. Tilford, Sensing World, Sensing Wisdom. The Cognitive Foundation of Biblical Metaphors (= Ancient Israel and Its Literature 31) (Marianne Grohmann)</td>
<td>601-602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilona Zsolnay (ed.), Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity (= Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East) (Gioele Zisa)</td>
<td>576-580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inhaltsanzeigen

Abd el-Masih Hanna Baghdo, Lutz Martin, Mirko Novák und Winfried Orthmann (Hrsg.), Tell Halaf. Vornehmlich über die dritte bis fünfte syrisch-deutsche Grabungskampagne (= VFMFOS 3; Ausgrabungen auf dem Tell Halaf in Nordost-Syrien Teil II) (Ellen Rehm) .......................................................... 609-610

Erlend Gehlken, Weather Omens of Enûma Anu Enlil. Thunderstorms, Wind and Rain (Tablets 44-49) (= Cuneiform Monographs 43) (Hermann Hunger) .................................................................................................................. 609

Roger Matthews and John Curtis (eds.), Proceedings of the International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (= ICAANE 7) (Ellen Rehm) ................................................................................................................................. 610-611

Daniel T. Potts (ed.), A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (= Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World), vol. I-II (Ellen Rehm) ...................................................................................................................... 611-612

Nachrufe

Dem Gedächtnis der Toten (Lamia Al-Gailani Werr, Onofrio Carruba, Muhammad Dandamayev, Horst Ehringhaus, Douglas Frayne, Volkert Haas, Rivka Harris, Karl Hecker, Hans Hirsch, Olivier Lecompte, Willem H.Ph. Römer, Geoffrey Turner, Helga Weippert) ................................................................................................................................. 613-635

Bibliographien und Register

Assyriologie, Register (M. Weszeli unter Mitarbeit von H. Hunger, M. Schmidl, M. Jursa) ............ 637-753

Mesopotamien und Nachbargebiete (M. Weszeli unter Mitarbeit von H. Hunger, M. Schmidl, M. Jursa) ................................................................................................................................................................. 754-790

whose preferred times of performance (and occasionally non-performance) are sometimes specified in the texts. I would still, however, insist that when we say in a letter that we are going to perform Maqlû, we mean a maqlû, that is, one or more of the incantations of the series and not the whole compendium from beginning to end, any more than a determination to sing hymns means singing every hymn in the hymnal. A good indication in this direction is the performance of a maqlû, so described, in the lunar eclipse ritual for the month of Ayyaru (Schwemer, Maqlû, p. 3), a month which, as we have seen, was particularly appropriate for the performance of Maqlû as detailed in its own commentaries.

To remember is that witchcraft is as much a medical as a magical problem, and Maqlû is not that dissimilar to the UGU series of medical texts which has numerous prescriptions, many of which are for exactly the same problem, organized in some logical order and with the legomena and dromena as often as not on separate tablets. I should also add that it can now be proven that a “new edition” (SUR.GIBIL) of this series was made in Assyria and in the Neo-Assyrian period.25 Even more intriguing is that the catalogue that demonstrates this also contains a catalogue of UŠ. BÜR.RU.DA, a rubric recognized, if only on texts in Babylonian script (Schwemer, Maqlû, p. 54-55, cf. 59-60), as indicating Maqlû recitations.

In conclusion, the works under review, especially Abusch’s AMD volume and its companion piece, Schwemer’s Maqlû, are long awaited and will be the goto edition of the text for many years to come. However, much more work will need to be done before we are truly in a position to understand the production and transmission of knowledge in ancient Mesopotamia.

Chicago. J. Scurlock.

Bibliography


Lutheran hymnal (1958) = Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia).


This slim, but handy volume continues the publisher’s tradition of making important Akkadian texts accessible by providing a reconstructed textual edition based on collated sources, a transliteration and translation, a brief introduction to the text, commentary, and general bibliography, as well as indices of names and logograms, a glossary, and a sign list. Textual variants found in the text’s four known recensions appear below the transliteration.

Ottervanger introduces the tale by discussing its four recensions, the provenance and date of the text (i.e. Nippur, ca. 1000 BCE), and its relationship to other Akkadian literary texts. With regard to the latter, he notes that scholars have understood portions of the tale as reflecting a Sumerian proverb and alluding to the Epic of Gilgamesh and, in a more satirical way, to the Babylonian story known as Advice to a Prince. Also discussed here is the importance of the mayor’s title “citizen of Nippur” for underscoring the reversal of the hierarchy of power between the mayor and the story’s protagonist Gimil-Ninurta. Ottervanger understands the tale’s unique lack of references to gods and their activities as the author’s way of keeping the focus on “human wit as a means to overcome grief and frustration in the face of injustice” (p. xii). He similarly perceives that magic, divination, and ritual appear to play no role in the narrative, even when animals are slaughtered (ll. 17, 46, 92), birds are released (l. 97), and Gimil-Ninurta poses as a doctor promising to heal the mayor’s wounds (ll. 121-134). He opines:

„This focus, and the humorous nature of the narrative, endows the tale with what can be seen as therapeu-
tic quality, able to aid people in overcoming the daily anguish in dealing with the powers that be. However, there may be another side to the absence of any active role for the gods in the tale: Mesopotamian religion would not easily sanction a reversal of the social order inherent in the tale’s plot (p. xii)."

The book’s introduction concludes with an examination of the tale’s meter and poetic style, including parallelism, key words, and non-normative syntax, and a survey of previous studies relating to the present edition.

While Ottervanger intends the volume to provide a detailed treatment of the text in line with current scholarship, he also integrates a number of his own philological and literary insights. With regard to philological matters, he proposes corrections for several passages, challenges several long-standing readings, and reconstructs many broken portions of the text. For example, in l. 24, instead of the previously proposed reading i-ta-giš from nagāšu “leave, go away, wander about”, he restores i-[taš-ša] from akāšu “divert, change direction”, and renders the line “turned to the gate of the chief of Nippur” (pp. 15, 26). Instead of ur-ta-ša “his commission, charge” or ur-ša-ši “his desire” (l. 41), he suggests tīš-[tī]-šu “his clamor”, a by-form of šīšitu (pp. 28-29).

A few other proposals are more conjectural. For example, Ottervanger restores the broken l. 56 in conjunction with a presumed shift in scene from the cook’s preparation of Gimil-Ninurta’s goat to the dinner: [laputti (NU.BÀN.DA) tap-pi-i nap-ta]-ni il-si-ma “[the chief] called [to the dinner]-companions” (p. 30). He restores the end of l. 82: i-[ši]-hu-šu né-ba-ḫa-an i-[na na-lap-ti]-šu “They bo[un]d him a sash on his [coat of mail]” (pp. 11, 35). For l. 114, he suggests the reading i-ta-šu-šu “he worried” instead of i-si-ih “he laughed” because the mayor had just been beaten. Thus, he translates: “the mayor heard it, and [worried] all day” (pp. 18, 39).

Given Ottervanger’s stated goal “to establish the most likely reading of each line” (p. xv), it is unfortunate that he could not consult the main recension of the text from Sultantepe housed at the Ankara Museum (p. xv).

With regard to the text’s literary features, Ottervanger is especially adept at highlighting key words, literary patterns, and cases of repetition, hendiaedys, enjambment, polysyndeton, and paronomasia. To demonstrate the latter device, he proposes that the description of the poor man as “dressed (la-biš-ma) in unchanged clothes” (l. 10) suggests the expression lābiš “like a lion”, a fitting simile for a ravenous person (p. 23). He also observes that the word ḫazānmu “mayor” usually takes the personal name determinative (M) in the text. However, when first mentioned in l. 21 it appears with LÚ. He avers that, even though it was not read aloud, the sign contributes to the repetition of the sound /lu/ in the line: lu-qi-ma ana Ė LÚ ha-za-an-ni lu-bi1 UZ “let me take the goat and bring it to the house of the mayor” (p. 25). He keenly detects the presence of bilingual paronomasia in l. 92: “The chief slaughtered a pasīl[lu] sheep to in[cre]ase his meal.” As he notes, “A scribal pun in this line consists in the fact that the infinitive šumūd ‘to increase’ ... appears beside the Sumerograms ŠUM (ṭabāhu ‘to slaughter’) and UDU (inmeru ‘sheep’)” (p. 36). Ottervanger’s literary contributions to the text are numerous and valuable, and perhaps should have warranted the inclusion of a chart to facilitate locating the various devices by name and verse.

The author’s interest in literary matters extends to parallels that he draws from the Hebrew Bible. Thus, he points out that, like many biblical (and Ugaritic) texts, one finds the number three as a thematic and structural feature. In The Poor Man of Nippur, we find references to a three-year old goat (l. 15), one-third beer (i.e. diluted with two-thirds water, ll. 59, 62), three beatings (ll. 68, 113, 139, 158), and three watches of the day (ll. 94, 96, 98) (p. 23). He also explains the Akkadian term reḫētu “market-square” (l. 13) by turning to the Hebrew cognate rēḥōb “broad place” (p. 24). In addition, Ottervanger discusses the similarities and differences between the account of the mayor’s seizure of Gimil-Ninurta’s goat and Nathan’s parable (2 Samuel 12:1-7).

As fitting as these parallels are, I suggest it is equally appropriate to consider the entire tale as employing another literary theme familiar to students of the Bible in which a person uses deception to exact vengeance upon a more powerful rival. One can point to numerous cases including Yael and Sisera, Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Laban, and Ehud and Eglon.1 Having mentioned the account of Ehud and Eglon, it is worth noting several other parallels between that narrative and The Poor Man of Nippur. In Judges 3:20, Ehud gains access to Eglon by telling him: “I have a message of God for you.” In the Akkadian poem, Gimil-Ninurta asks the gate keeper three times to convey the “blessings of the gods upon your master” before inflicting a beating on him (ll. 66, 111, 137). In both cases, the protagonist uses an expression that might usually bear a positive meaning to portend a personal message of violence. Indeed, Gimil-Ninurta followed his greeting with the mayor’s beating, while Ehud followed his missive by plunging his blade into Eglon’s stomach.

In addition, both stories place emphasis on the protagonist’s left hand during the encounter. In The Poor Man of Nippur, the narrator informs us that Gimil-Ninurta held his goat in his left hand while blessing the mayor with his right (l. 35), a gesture that the mayor perceived as denoting a bribe. In Judges, we are told that Ehud used

1) These have been studied by Ora Horn Prouser, The Pneumonomology of the Lie in Biblical Narrative (Ph.D. Dissertation; Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1991), p. i (abstract), who remarks: “deception was considered an acceptable and generally praiseworthy means for a weaker party to succeed against a stronger power. It was not deemed appropriate, however, for a more powerful person to dissemble in order to achieve his or her goals.”
his left to drive the sword through Eglon (Judges 3:21). Moreover, in both stories the revenge takes place in an isolated place. In The Poor Man of Nippur, the mayor “took him [into] a house, an inaccessible place” (p. 129). In Judges 3:23-25, the narrator repeatedly informs us that Eglon took Ehud into a private upper chamber and locked the door.

If there is any one aspect of the book that I would call into question, it is the author’s uncritical acceptance of the oft-cited view that the story of The Poor Man of Nippur is essentially humorous in nature. Ascertaining what the peoples of the ancient Near East considered humorous is extremely difficult because humor is culturally defined and we lack an ability to comprehend fully the cultural matrices that inform it. We must be especially careful not to classify a text as funny, simply because it appeals to our contemporary Western sense of humor – in this text scholars sometimes reference the beatings of the mayor at the hand of the poor man as evidence of ‘slapstick’. Even if we broaden our definition of humor to include satire and sarcasm, our task remains difficult. Indeed, one could see the same scenes simply as illustrating the potential consequences of corruption. With this in mind, I note that the name Nippur occurs no less than eighteen times in the text, far more often than required by the story. Though not discussed in this volume, one wonders whether the story repeats the name Nippur, a holy city associated with Enlil and acts of piety, to underscore by way of contrast the mayor’s misdeeds that inform the plot. The text’s numerous cases of polysemy and paronomasia too, far from encouraging a laugh, usually highlight reversal or foreboding events. Indeed, polysemy and paronomasia in ancient Near Eastern texts generally do not function to amuse. Alternatively, such devices could have provided teaching moments for masters to transmit possible polyvalent readings to pupils; note that one of the recensions (ms. D) is a Neo-Babylonian school text that contains a few lines from the beginning of the text. Additional support for this view comes from the fact that many of the text’s polysemous readings could not have been espied by hearing the text recited.

Finally a brief list of minor errata:

p. xi: “this collation is was a title ...”
p. xv: “As a part of direct approach ...”
p. 23: Paragraph starting with “The 3 m. sg.” should be indented or joined to previous paragraph.
p. 25: Number 19 is not bolded as other verses in the commentary.
p. 29, line 44: “tells to the mayor about ...”
p. 29, line 51: wages > wedges.
p. 49: First entry for abālu defines as “to be dry,” but every reference given (i.e., ll. 21, 29, 50) means “bring.” The second entry, abālu B is defined as “to bring,” and adds l. 91.

The above considerations notwithstanding, Ottervanger has written a welcome addition to the State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts series; one that will serve a future generation of scholars and make far more accessible this fascinating text.

Seattle. S. Noegel.


This wide-ranging study seeks to reinvigorate and broaden traditional comparative methods of Assyriology and biblical studies by recourse to concepts and terminology borrowed from cognitive analysis and neuroscience. Its field of inquiry is ancient Mesopotamian exorcism; its portal thereto is a group of Sumerian and Akkadian texts about or referring to the sage Adapa, who at some point was deemed the founder of exorcism as a professional vocation. Annus seeks to reconstruct key elements of the “master narrative” of the exorcist’s craft in such a way as to make “contextually independent” comparison useful and revealing. His forest is therefore more than just a plurality of trees; his texts are incidents of a larger discourse. He makes his case with admirable energy, passion, and erudition.

Annus’s exorcistic narrative has more than one beginning: a southern version, at home in Eridu and Uruk, in which the Flood is a defining chronological factor, versus a northern version, perhaps at home in Kish, in which it does not. Traces of rival claims include Aratta versus Uruk and the condemnation of Enmerkar in The Cuthaean Legend of Naram-Sin. Another north-south difference in narrative strategy is the hero’s initial fear and discomfiture (p. 79), a motif found in Babylonian epic style, as in Nebuchadnezzar I’s confession: “I became afraid of death, did not advance to battle ... [I lay on a] bed of misery and sighs” (B. Foster, Before the Muses, 2005, p. 382), but not in Assyrian epic or commemorative prose or in the heroic poetry about the Sargonic kings. For this, Annus offers an elaborate psychological explanation (p. 79: “his new Self will be instantiated”), whereas to this reader it is, rather more simply, a stock motif of combat narratives that makes the final victory the more impressive. Not many, perhaps, will share Annus’s view of the Flood as “sanitizing” an old order in preparation for a new one or even that the Flood was a kind of exorcistic ordeal, though he has interesting comments to make about fire and flood (pp. 87-88). Some readers will surely be put off by the frequent recourse to “It is reasonable to suggest”, “It seems probable”, “It is possible that” as a way of introducing ideas that have no basis whatsoever in any Mesopotamian evidence, such as a festival in honor of Adapa’s boat trip.