

[*JSOT* 44.5 (Book List 2020) 116-21]

DOI: 10.1177/0309089220910612

8. THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE SURROUNDING PEOPLES

BALOGH, AMY L., *Moses among the Idols: Mediators of the Divine in the Ancient Near East* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2018), pp. xlv + 185. \$105.00. ISBN 978-1-9787-0030-7.

In her revised Denver doctoral thesis (supervised by Mark George), B. offers and justifies an explanation of Moses' status change from 'uncircumcised lips' to 'god to Pharaoh', utilizing a comparison with the status change in the newly manufactured idol effected by the Mesopotamian *mīs pî* ritual and liturgy, a change comparable to rebirth. In the period following his call at the burning bush, Moses is ineffectual in communicating Yahweh's instructions, but at Exod. 6.28–7.1 he is transformed and thereafter effectively mediates the divine word to Pharaoh and the Hebrew people. In her Introduction (pp. xv–xlv), B. defines and provides an overview of her work and her method. Five chapters successively treat (1) the production of idols, from manufactured object until birth 'into the community of the gods'; (2) the parallel transformation of Moses 'from misfit to mediator'; (3) circumcision metaphors, the circumcision of Moses' mouth, and a new derivation of Moses' name as 'he who is washed, pure', from Akkadian *mešû* (parallel to the Hebrew root *mšh*); (4) Moses' radiant/horned visage (Exod. 34.29–35), which signifies his unique status as Israel's only mediator, embodying Yahweh; and (5) the unique 'mouth-to-mouth' character of Moses' mediation, which shows that his word is Yahweh's word. There is a brief concluding chapter, bibliography, and indexes of topics and biblical citations. Well constructed and cogently argued, the book received nominations in 2019 for both the AAR Best First Book in the History of Religions Award and the ASOR Frank Moore Cross Book Award. It is certainly a significant contribution that should not be neglected by future commentators of Exodus.

GEORGE NICOL

GLASSNER, JEAN-JACQUES, *Le Devin historien en Mésopotamie* (Ancient Magic and Divination, 16; Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. xxvi + 606. €200.00/\$245.00. ISBN 978-90-04-39005-8.

As an Assyriologist, G. has written a number of works of interest to Hebrew Bible scholars (e.g. his work on Mesopotamian chronicles: see *B.L.* 2006, p. 151). The present study is on historical divination in Mesopotamia. In some ways, ch. 11 is the heart of the

study, which collects 385 historical predictions (in transliteration and French translation, with basic bibliography) on which the discussion is based. G. attempts to work out how the diviners operated, though this has to be inferred since there are no texts or treatises that describe how to interpret the sacrifices. He notes that divination was a type of hermeneutic, not a precise science, that often involved both Sumerian and Akkadian wordplay and play on the cuneiform signs, but also on pronunciation and sounds. Divination was seen to be tied into the cosmic order and to involve past, present and future. Cosmic events were often cyclical, as were events on the human plane. Thus, past events were seen as often the key to present or future events. This will no doubt be a standard work for a long time to come.

LESTER L. GRABBE

HAUBOLD, JOHANNES, JOHN STEELE, and KATHRYN STEVENS (eds.), *Keeping Watch in Babylon: The Astronomical Diaries in Context* (CHANE, 100; Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 315. €160.00/\$192.00. ISBN 978-90-04-39775-0.

Among the myriad of new texts published within the field of Assyriology, some genres fundamentally alter our view of the antiquity, including the biblical Levant. One such is represented by Babylonian astronomical diaries, dating from the 6th to 1st centuries BCE, the importance of which is described in the editors' Introduction and by John Steele's 'The Early History of the Astronomical Diaries'. The diaries provide astronomically datable and detailed information on celestial bodies and events (eclipses) in connection with calendar, commodity prices, weather, height of the river, and current historical events; the unusual importance of this data is explained by Matheiu Ossendrijver ('Babylonian Market Predictions'). Christopher Tuplin explores the relationship between the diaries and Babylonian chronicle texts ('Logging History in Achaemenid, Hellenistic and Parthian Babylonia: Historical Entries in Dated Astronomical Diaries'), and the question of who composed the diaries is addressed by Eleanor Robson ('Who Wrote the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries?'). Further historical context is discussed by Marijn Visscher ('Royal Presence in the Astronomical Diaries'), Johannes Haubold ('History and Historiography in the Early Parthian Diaries'), and Kathryn Stevens ('From Babylon to Bahtar: The Geography of the Astronomical Diaries'). Textual studies of diaries are given by Reinhard Pirngruber ('The Museum Context of the Astronomical Diaries') and Yasuyuki Mitsuma ('The Relationship between Greco-Macedonian Citizens and the "Council of Elders" in the Arsacid Period: New Evidence from Astronomical Diary BM 35269 + 35347 + 35358'). Biblical scholars will want to look at Lucinda Dirven's contribution ('The Astronomical Diaries and Religion in Seleucid and Parthian Babylon: The Case of the Prophet of Nanāya'). Considering the wealth of astronomical data, one wonders at the complete lack of calendrical evidence for a seven-day week, apart from Genesis 1.

MARKHAM J. GELLER

LION, BRIGITTE, and CÉCILE MICHEL (eds.), *The Role of Women in Work and Society in the Ancient Near East* (Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records, 13; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. xi + 574. €149.95/£136.50/\$210.00. ISBN 978-1-61451-913-3.

The publisher has declined to make a review copy of this volume available to the *B.L.*, and so no assessment of the work can be made here, but it is understood that the

volume contains the following contributions: C. Breniquet, 'Weaving, Potting, Churning: Women at Work during the Uruk Period—Evidence from the Cylinder Seals'; C. Lecompte, 'Representation of Women in Mesopotamian Lexical Lists'; F. Karahashi, 'Women and Land in the Presargonic Lagaš Corpus'; M.G. Biga, 'The Role of Women in Work and Society in the Ebla Kingdom (Syria, 24th Century BC)'; M. Maiocchi, 'Women and Production in Sargonic Adab'; A. Otto, 'Professional Women and Women at Work in Mesopotamia and Syria (3rd and Early 2nd Millennia BC): The (Rare) Information from Visual Images'; B. Lafont, 'Women at Work and Women in Economy and Society during the Neo-Sumerian Period'; A. Garcia-Ventura, 'The Sex-Based Division of Work *versus* Intersectionality: Some Strategies for Engendering the Ur III Textile Work Force'; C. Michel, 'Women Work, Men Are Professionals in the Old Assyrian Archives'; J.S. Cooper, 'The Job of Sex: The Social and Economic Role of Prostitutes in Ancient Mesopotamia'; J. Matuszak, "'She Is Not Fit for Womanhood": The Ideal Housewife according to Sumerian Literary Texts'; I. Nakata, 'Economic Activities of *nadītum*-Women of Šamaš Reflected in the Field Sale Contracts (MHET II/1-6)'; K. De Graef, '*Cherchez la femme!* The Economic Role of Women in Old Babylonian Sippar'; N. Ziegler, 'Economic Activities of Women according to Mari Texts (18th century BC)'; S. Démare-Lafont, 'Women at Work in Mesopotamia: An Attempt at a Legal Perspective'; M. Vigo, 'Sources for the Study of the Role of Women in the Hittite Administration'; B. Lion, 'Work and Gender in Nuzi Society'; J.J. Justel, 'Women in Economic Agreements: Emarite Sale Contracts (Syria, 13th Century BC)'; M. Yamada, 'The *kubuddā*'u-Gift in the Emar Texts'; E. Matsushima, 'Women in Elamite Royal Inscriptions: Some Observations'; V. Muller, 'Women and their Activities in Divinatory Texts'; S. Svärd, 'Studying Gender: A Case Study of Female Administrators in Neo-Assyrian Palaces'; F. Joannès, 'Historiography on Studies Dedicated to Women and Economy during the Neo-Babylonian Period'; L. Quillien, 'Invisible Workers: The Role of Women in Textile Production during the 1st Millennium BC'; Y. Watai, 'Economic Activities of Women in 1st-Millennium Babylonia'; L. Cousin, 'Beauty Experts: Female Perfume-Makers in the 1st Millennium BC'; J. Monerie, 'Women and Prebends in Seleucid Uruk'; and V.S. Cuchet, 'Women and the Economic History of the Ancient Greek World: Still a Challenge for Gender Studies'.

(BOOK LIST EDITOR)

MCAFFEE, MATTHEW, *Life and Mortality in Ugaritic: A Lexical and Literary Study* (Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, 7; University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019), pp. xvii + 371. \$119.95. ISBN 978-1-57506-663-9.

This valuable study is a revised version of M.'s Chicago University dissertation, undertaken under the supervision of Dennis Pardee. The subtitle and the last two letters of the main title make clear where the emphasis lies, i.e. on the Ugaritic language rather than on the beliefs and practices of the people of Ugarit, and 'lexical' precedes 'literary'. But although it is 'primarily a lexical study' (p. 7), the very detailed lexical analysis also provides the basis for elucidating aspects of the literary material and, in the fifth chapter, what the people of Ugarit believed about living and dying. After a methodological introduction, four chapters offer a lexical survey of the main roots relating to life and death, including body parts and the inhabitants of the underworld, focusing on (1) words for 'life', (2) *npš* and other parts of the body, (3) words for 'death' (including the god

Mot), and (4) the Ugaritic Rapa'ūma. The lexical analysis is made relevant to broader issues in the interpretation of the mythological and epic texts, such as the nature of the 'life' offered by Anat to Aqhat (revivification or continuing life?); how Anat's treatment of Mot's corpse is to be understood; whether the Baal texts reflect a seasonal pattern; and whether there was a royal cult of the dead at Ugarit. An appendix notes the importance of evidence of the continuation of beliefs about life and death in Neo-Hittite states, and considers 1st-millennium BCE funerary inscriptions from Phoenicia and Sam'al (Zincirli).

ADRIAN CURTIS

STILL, BASTIAN, *The Social World of the Babylonian Priest* (CHANE, 103; Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. xvi + 311. €187.00/\$225.00. ISBN 978-90-04-399995-2.

This examination of the Borsippa priesthood originated as a doctoral thesis at the University of Leiden supervised by Caroline Waerzeggers. The research draws on the unpublished private archives of around 20 priestly families from 620 to 484 BCE. The temple had a complex hierarchy of professions from priests who undertook the most intimate service through to those who provided essential supplies such as brewers, bakers and oxherders. In the first half of the book, S. focuses on four areas of social relationship: marriage, landholding, money-lending and friendship. On marriage, he maps out how marriage networks maintained the social exclusivity of the priesthood and especially of the families enjoying the highest level prebendaries. On landholding, he examines the sale of so-called *hanšû* or fifty-land which had been distributed to families with priestly or military roles in the 8th century. On silver lending, he suggests various personal factors determined from whom loans were sought, and there was a slight correlation to temple rank. On friendship, S. examines further aspects of social relationship between the families such as acting as a witness. The second half of the book seeks to treat the social world of the Babylonian priesthood as a whole. The notion of homophily—the preference for relationships with those similar to oneself—can explain why most interactions occurred within the social in-group of the priesthood. The final chapter examines the various factors that led to the construction of a collective social identity. S.'s book is a valuable contribution to our growing knowledge of the Mesopotamian priesthoods in the first millennium.

NATHAN MACDONALD

THAVAPALAN, SHIYANTHI, *The Meaning of Color in Ancient Mesopotamia* (CHANE, 104; Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. xiii + 509. €163.00/ \$196.00. ISBN 978-90-04-41537-9.

This thorough and enlightening study on the meaning of colour in ancient Mesopotamia is a revision of T.'s Yale PhD thesis (supervised by Benjamin Foster). Her aim is to 'understand how people used and talked about color in ancient times' by 'providing the first systematic and comprehensive investigation of the words and expressions for colors in the Akkadian language' (p. 18). While she acknowledges that the list is not exhaustive and that Sumerian and other cuneiform languages deserve separate studies, she provides a foundation for them by making a large dent into the Akkadian corpus, linguistically analysing colour terms using a methodology that takes into account cognitive linguistics, archaeology, anthropology and various types of genre.

After outlining this in ch. 1, ch. 2 addresses the ‘Abstract Colors’, the verbal, adjectival and broader perception of how the culture understood colour. Chapter 3 makes a point of differentiating the abstract from the ‘Material Colors’ (such as precious stones and metals, organic dyes and mineral pigments); they are discussed in relation to their grammatical forms and etymologies, and the semantic ranges of individual terms. Chapter 4 sees a shift to an in-depth discussion of those coloured materials that represented the physical world including ANE artwork and figurines. An epilogue concludes the book, followed by a lengthy bibliography, two appendixes and a series of plates. The study particularly nuances the way biblical scholars and students should begin to interpret ancient colour categories which ultimately enriches our understanding of different ancient cultures; this, in turn, deserves wide readership.

ELLENA LYELL

WYATT, NICK, *‘There’s such Divinity doth Hedge a King’: Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (Society for Old Testament Study Monographs; London and New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. xiii + 298. £40.00. ISBN 978-1-138-38376-0.

This is the paperback edition of a work published in hardback in 2005, and reviewed in *B.L.* 2006, p. 156.

(BOOK LIST EDITOR)

ZOMER, ELYZE, *Corpus of Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian Incantations* (Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien, 9; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), pp. xxiv + 463. With 3 plates. €84.00. ISBN 978-3-447-11041-9.

While this excellent work is of limited utility to biblical scholarship *per se*, it offers a detailed survey of Mesopotamian magic in the 2nd millennium BCE. The volume includes extensive tables of all known incantations from exorcistic, witchcraft, and therapeutic (medical) contexts, including unilingual Sumerian and Akkadian as well as bilingual incantations, with all known source provenances. Of more general interest to biblical studies, however, is the overview of the social setting of these texts (ch. 4), providing discussion of magic vs. medicine as complimentary healing strategies, and the role of the *āšipu*-exorcist (or ‘magical expert’) as priest, healer and scholar, which resonates with the diagnostic role of the Israelite priesthood (Lev. 13–14). Mesopotamian incantation literature claimed a dominant role within the curriculum, as both reference and school texts, reflected in the discussion (ch. 6) of the beginnings of standardization and serialization of magical texts, developing into major canonical works in 1st-millennium archives. Chapter 7 includes editions and translations of incantation-prayers, a genre which is difficult to distinguish formally from prayer in general. This work draws attention to crucial text genres missing from extant documentation of ancient Israel, but nevertheless offers useful reflections on magical healing in the Bible.

MARKHAM J. GELLER

Note also the following books reviewed in other sections of this *Book List*:

BOSWORTH, DAVID A., *House of Weeping: The Motif of Tears in Akkadian and Hebrew Prayers* — see p. 75

DALY, ROBERT J., *Sacrifice in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* — see p. 123

DAVIS, ANDREW R., *Reconstructing the Temple: The Royal Rhetoric of Temple Renovation in the Ancient Near East and Israel* — see p. 21

FELIU, LLUÍS, FUMI KARAHASHI, and GONZALO RUBIO (eds.), *The First Ninety Years: A Sumerian Celebration in Honor of Miguel Civil* — see p. 11

PITKÄNEN, PEKKA, *Migration and Colonialism in Late Second Millennium BCE Levant and Its Environs: The Making of a New World* — see p. 25

SCHELLENBERG, ANNETTE, and THOMAS KRÜGER (eds.), *Sounding Sensory Profiles in the Ancient Near East* — see p. 26

SILVERMAN, JASON M., *Persian Royal-Judaeen Elite Engagements in the Early Teispid and Achaemenid Empire: The King's Acolytes* — see p. 27

WICKS, YASMINA, *Profiling Death: Neo-Elamite Mortuary Practices, Afterlife Beliefs, and Entanglements with Ancestors* — see p. 15

YOUNGER, K. LAWSON, JR., *A Political History of the Arameans: From their Origins to the End of their Politics* — see p. 28