

In the preface, the author justifies his decision not to include scale drawings of the manuscripts with reference to new digital techniques available for reading and copying cuneiform tablets. Unfortunately, the photographs' quality varies considerably in print and most do not allow the reader to verify the transliteration easily, the most notable examples being YBC 9869 and YBC 4650. Considering the high philological interest in these compositions and the omnipresent interpretational difficulties when reading Sumerian texts, well-lit, high resolution photographs would have been desirable. Perhaps this could be ameliorated by providing online access to the digital photographs, e.g. on CDLI, which would enable digital techniques to be applied to them.

Still, the preface and the commentaries are filled with interesting ideas, e.g. that syllabic texts were perhaps written predominantly by "novice scribes from dictation" (p. ix) and new ideas about compositional practices and textual criticism (see some examples above). The texts published in this volume and the author's ideas provide students of Sumerian with plenty of new, fascinating material to process in the future, for which the field can be very grateful.

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MAURIZIO VIANO:

The Reception of Sumerian Literature in the Western Periphery.

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This revised and expanded PhD dissertation, submitted to the University of Trieste in 2010, is the first comprehensive work to tackle the difficult problem of the transmission of Sumerian texts in Late Bronze Age Syria and Anatolia. The book is centred around successive, catalogic presentations of the texts attested in individual areas during the period. Each section includes a summary of individual tablets; a discussion of its position in the receptional history of the work; remarks on orthographic and grammatical peculiarities; and occasional transcriptions of select lines. The presentation focuses on literary texts, including narratives, hymns, liturgies, wisdom texts, and incantations, but excluding lexical texts and monumental inscriptions.

Despite the limits set by the title, the first two chapters provide a comprehensive overview of the Sumerian tradition in Babylonia (pp. 33–86) and Assyria (pp. 87–129). Differences between the two are interpreted as evidence for "different stages in the transmission process of Sumerian literature" (p. 125). Together, these chapters provide the background to the discussion of Sumerian literary and magical texts in Ḫattusa (pp. 229–83), Emar (pp. 285–323), and Ugarit (pp. 325–36), preceded by a lengthy chapter on orthography (pp. 141–228). While the first two chapters are structured by genre, the following also divide the texts paleographically: Babylonian, Assyro-Mittanian, and Hittite ductus at Ḫattusa; Syrian and Syro-Hittite at Emar; Babylonian, Hittite, and Ugaritic at Ugarit. Since duplicates are attested at several sites, the purely geographic division quickly breaks down: the discussions of *The Message of Lu-diġira to His Mother* (CTH 315; pp. 256–65) in Ḫattusa and of the *Ballad of Early Rulers* (pp. 298–310) in Emar anticipate the relevant tablets from Ugarit.

The summaries on Ḫattusa (pp. 337–59) and Emar and Ugarit (pp. 361–79) highlight the break at Ḫattusa with the curricular tradition at Nippur, the absence of epics such as *Lugal-e* and *Angim*, and the heavy focus on “practical” texts such as incantations, “likely related to the presence of foreign experts” at the Hittite court (p. 339). The Akkadian–Hurrian bilingual recension of the *Instructions of Suruppak* and the “vanity theme” of numerous compositions suggest that “most of the Sumerian literary texts from Emar and Ugarit were connected with the education of scribes in the Old Babylonian period”, though bilingual transmission points to the “post-Old Babylonian stage of Sumerian literature” (p. 364) and the link to Nippur is often indirect. A final chapter (“Towards a history of Sumerian literature in the late bronze age”, pp. 381–386) establishes the following chronology: phonetically written incantations (CTH 800) at Ḫattusa (16th–15th centuries); Sumerian forerunners to the Hittite prayers to the Sun-God (KBo 19, 98) (15th–14th centuries); Assyro-Mittanian incantations, the hymn to Iškur/Adad, and Saġ-geg VI to Ḫattusa as well as the incantations and prayers in Emar and Ugarit (14th–13th centuries); the *Message of Lu-diġira to his Mother* to Ḫattusa and Ugarit as well as select incantations to all three cities (13th century); and, finally, Enlil and Namzitarra, the *Ballad of Early Rulers*, the hymn to Enki, and again incantations (late 13th–12th centuries).

While many details are open to debate, one major criticism can be raised: the scope of the subject often precludes detailed discussion of individual problems. Viano’s identification of particular lines of transmission depends on the distinction of the Nippur corpus, the “Northern Babylonian tradition” (p. 30), and the “common Mesopotamian body of knowledge” (p. 346). The latter two remain poorly defined throughout. Northern tradition is essentially tied to “... phonetic orthography” as “a convention particularly adopted in Northern Babylonia” (p. 345). There are, however, numerous difficulties inherent in the opposition between Early Old Babylonian Nippur and Late Old Babylonian Sippar, including both the span of time separating the two and the nature of the tablet collections (mostly curricular and liturgical, respectively). There is no need, for example, to define the liturgical tradition as particularly “northern” even though many of the relevant tablets derive from Sippar and Kiš (see Delnero in *Texts and Contexts*, ed. P. Delnero and J. Lauinger (SANER 9; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 96). Conversely, the syllabic writings in liturgical texts from Sippar can plausibly be interpreted as performative, and not exclusively regional. As Viano himself notes (pp. 30, 141), unorthographic writings are a recurrent feature of the Sumerian tradition: they certainly do not suggest an exclusively syllabic transmission as a separate, regional and recensional branch. However, the unorthographic writings provide the repeated basis for defining the monolingual incantations CTH 800 as “the earliest wave and the oldest tradition” of Sumerian at Ḫattusa, thus overturning the association with the Hittite imperial period offered by Klinger in Prechel (ed.), *Motivationen und Mechanismen des Kulturkontakts* (Eothen 13; Florence: LoGisma editore, 2005), 107 and Schwemer in Cancik-Kirschbaum et al. (eds), *Diversity and Standardization* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 153. The further suggestion that they “would have been brought to Ḫattuša as booty, probably together with *āšipū* priests” (p. 235) during the raids of Mušili I in Babylonia, is wholly specious. Additional attempts to support the northern tradition, including the association of ki-^dUtu-texts and “compositions on Utu” with Sippar “because the Ebabbar at Sippar was the main temple of the Sun-god” (p. 82), are similarly unfounded – see in particular Sallaberger, *Der kultische Kalender der Ur III-Zeit* (UAVA 7/1; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 215 f. on ki-^dUtu-rites attested in the Ur III-period at Puzriš-Daġan, Umma, and Nippur. The identification of the “earliest wave” in CTH 800 thus remains highly problematic.

Despite these reservations, the catalogue of available material stands as a welcome invitation to follow many of the threads opened in individual chapters. The resulting picture is one of remarkable heterogeneity and complexity and serves to reinforce cautious admonitions on the traditions of the Late Bronze Age: the mechanics and mechanisms of transfer established for a particular text are not necessarily valid for others, even of the same genre, and certainly not for other text types, languages, and forms (paraphrasing Klinger, p. 105). Viano's work thus provides a valuable contribution to a complex and much-neglected topic.

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ENRIQUE JIMÉNEZ:

The Babylonian Disputation Poems. With Editions of the Series of the Poplar, Palm and Vine, the Series of the Spider, and the Story of the Poor, Forlorn Wren.

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Six Sumerian and eight Akkadian disputations are known to date. These texts, from the Old Babylonian period (18th century BCE) to the end of the cuneiform-writing era (2nd–1st centuries BCE), some known from many dozens of manuscripts, are said by the author to display all, or almost all, of the following features: poetic compositions, often written in verse, with tripartite structure: occasional mythical introduction, the disputation between the two contenders, and the resolution, often declared by a god or a king. The disputation section contains only dialogue, with no narrative (the main distinction between the disputation and fable genres). The protagonists are non-human: animals, utensils, trees, metals and abstract concepts such as seasons. The purpose of a text in the disputation genre is to establish a winner; the verbal wrangling is not heuristic, is not intended to solve a specific problem, nor to offer an etiological explanation to some natural phenomenon (pp. 11–12).

The back-and-forth litigation is referred to by the Sumerian term *ada-min* and *du₁₄* and *šāltu/tāhāzu* in Akkadian. It is unclear whether these terms are the emic designations used by ancient Mesopotamian scribes to refer to this genre as a whole, or simply to the disputation section only (pp. 10–11).

The book has six parts. Part I (pp. 69–153) offers an extensive introductory discussion of Mesopotamian (i.e. Sumerian and Akkadian) disputations, with a concise survey of all known compositions belonging to this genre, and a detailed analysis of its literary features (verse and style, language register, allusions and quotations in other texts, typical rebuttal formulae, speech introducing formulae and grievance formulae). The relation between disputations and parodies in Mesopotamian, Graeco-Roman and other literatures, as well as the perpetuation of Mesopotamian disputations in later, mainly Syriac and Arabic traditions, is also discussed. Especially important is the author's comprehensive investigation of the *Sitz im Leben* of Mesopotamian disputations. The fact that Babylonian disputations parody Babylonian epics and mimic in metrical style patterns found in "serious" wisdom dialogue, leads the author to conclude that "disputation poems appear as a