moved the language closer to Russian. Bilaniuk's primary focus is on the post-Soviet period, during which the restoration of Ukrainian as the state language has led to renewed debates over the correctness of regional varieties and the status of Ukrainian and Russian in the ethnically and linguistically mixed state. Throughout the book Bilaniuk explores how the act of speaking Ukrainian, or of identifying one's or another's speech as Ukrainian, have remained intensely socially symbolic acts, acts defined against a complex range of ideological judgments of language use. In particular, Bilaniuk pays overdue scholarly attention to s*urzhyk*, a generally maligned form speech that is considered an inferior hybrid of Ukrainian and Russian, yet is at the same time a rich linguistic resource for millions of Ukrainians.

In *Contested Tongues*, Bilaniuk's study strikes a delicate balance between theoretical analysis of the semiotics of language choices and ethnographic exploration of the lived reality of language use. One of key points at which these two approaches converge is in her examination of "correctness." Bilaniuk theorizes correctness as a rich intersection of competing ideologies of language, and incorporates a clear discussion of contemporary linguistic anthropological approaches to ideological and symbolic elements of language in social context. However, rather than focusing solely on how local or authoritative judgments of linguistic correctness are applied, Bilaniuk also considers social dimensions of linguistic performance and the narrowing or expanding of perceived linguistic choices for speakers in given contexts. Her close analysis of the politics of linguistic correctness in Ukraine highlights the ways in which social factors that contribute to evaluations of linguistic correctness as well as the range of linguistic choices have changed in the fifteen years since Ukraine became an independent country.

While *Contested Tongues* is particularly valuable for scholars focused on language and identity, or those seeking to better understand identity formation in post-Soviet contexts, it has a broader value to scholars working in other fields. Bilaniuk delivers a concise and well-argued case for investigating patterns of language use and language attitudes as part of contemporary (or historical) studies of ethnically and linguistically diverse social and political systems, with the goal of creating a more nuanced portrait of dynamic social interactions.

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Marian H. Feldman. *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an 'International Style' in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200 BCE*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 278 pp.

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Marian Feldman's title is an apt play on the strategy of "design-by-diplomacy" adopted by the committee in charge of selecting the emblems that would mark

the European Union's new currency. These images would have to speak to Europeans as a whole, while maintaining a careful and calculated neutrality so as to avoid referencing any people, places, animals, or objects that could be situated in or identified with one country in particular. The stylized architectural elements eventually chosen to ornament the coins are bland enough to avoid offending any of the very different peoples who exchange them, though whether the designs serve their purpose in fostering a new cultural unity is less clear.

Feldman argues that the small-scale prestige goods she identifies as belonging to a Late Bronze Age "international artistic koiné" similarly served as mediums of exchange between actors from extremely different cultures—in this case a self-defined group of "Great Kings"—who wished to create and preserve amity among themselves. The corpus of daggers, jugs, chariot equipment, furniture fittings, and the like that Feldman discusses are unified mainly by their decoration, which featured real or imaginary animals attacking prey, on the one hand, or peacefully grazing on fantastic foliage, on the other. What is notable, however, is that the style and iconography of the motifs renders it impossible to pin down a culture of origin for them—to state that they look distinctively Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Aegean, Levantine, or Anatolian. Like the abstracted architecture depicted on the Euro, the designs belong to all cultures but fit seamlessly in none.

The intentional "visual hybridity" of the designs' styles and content, according to Feldman, enabled the force and fecundity associated with kingship to be invoked in a universal manner that would be impossible to achieve if an actual king—in all of his culturally specific regalia—were to be depicted. The koiné appealed to the commonalities of the monarchs who likely exchanged them among themselves. All of these kings, however diverse, appreciated the same types of precious materials, and all came from regions that had a tradition of utilizing animals to express themes of violence and fertility.

Feldman draws from material culture studies, anthropological theories of gifting, and her own extensive knowledge of Late Bronze Age international relations to mount a fascinating and convincing (though by her own admission unprovable) case that the "international artistic koiné" served as a lingua franca for these kings in much the same way as did the cuneiform script and highly stylized discourse they adopted for their letters. Further, the melding of their individual artistic traditions into a hybrid style paralleled their attempts to co-mingle their bloodlines through a regular exchange of women. Ornate, splendid, yet culturally vague and inoffensive, the designs on these probable royal greeting gifts would have been the perfect complement to the flowery, yet largely phatic rhetoric expressed in the letters that the gifts likely accompanied. As the materialization of the "invented tradition" that these rulers strove to create, Feldman argues that such

šulmānu-gifts (a term derived from the same tri-literal root as the Hebrew and Arabic words for "peace") acted to foster goodwill among the brotherhood of Great Kings in the Late Bronze Age.

———Ellen Morris, Columbia University

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