

MANUEL CECCARELLI:

Enki und Ninmah: eine mythische Erzählung in sumerischer Sprache.

(Orientalische Religionen in der Antike.) xviii, 251 pp., 16 plates.

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016. ISBN 978 3 16 154278 7.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000885

Enki and Ninmah is a mythological account of the creation of mankind divided into two distinct parts. The first presents Enki and Namma's creation of man as substitutes of gods in daily work. The second tells of the contest between Enki and Ninmah: the goddess creates seven abnormal humans, for each of whom Enki assigns an employment despite their disabilities; when it is Ninmah's turn, the goddess cannot establish a useful employment for Enki's creation (uĝu'ul) because of its terrible defects. The composition ends with praise of Enki's superiority.

This new edition of *Enki and Ninmah* is the revised version of the author's PhD dissertation submitted at Tübingen University. The book is structured in two chapters. Chapter 1 is divided into four sections. Section A contains a short discussion on the definition of myth (pp. 1–2), a brief summary of the plot (pp. 2–3), a description of the main characters (pp. 3–6), a brief outline of Mesopotamian creation myths (pp. 6–8), and an up-to-date list of references (pp. 8–16). Section B provides a detailed analysis of the main themes of the composition. This section is divided in six parts respectively dedicated to the cosmogonic setting of the composition (pp. 16–9), the creation of mankind (pp. 19–40), the abnormal and defective creations of Ninmah (pp. 40–61), the creation of uĝu'ul (pp. 61–6), the conclusion of the text (pp. 66–9) and finally an interpretation of the contest between the two deities (pp. 70–8). Section C (pp. 78–85) includes a list of lexical, graphic and grammatical anomalies. Section D (pp. 85–8) discusses the composition and date of *Enki and Ninmah*. Chapter 2 presents the edition of the text (pp. 95–139) with the commentary (pp. 140–98). The volume ends with 16 tables reproducing photos and copies of the manuscripts.

This edition brings new insight in the comprehension of the text. Unlike other commentators who maintained that Namma generated a foetus, the author convincingly asserts that the man was created already formed with clay and blood (pp. 30–35). On the basis of the comparison with other literary sources, the author shows that the composition could be also read as an “Ätiologie für die Abgrenzung der Rolle der Muttergöttin” (p. 77): Ninmah traditionally lacks the ability to determine autonomously the destiny of men and therefore to create mankind. Although the creation of mankind necessarily results from the co-operation of Enki and Ninmah, the limited role of the goddess is explained by the author as a reflection of the pre-eminent role of the father to determine the future of children in Mesopotamian society (p. 78). Ceccarelli suggests a contemporary date of composition with *Atra-ḫasis* based on the similarities between the two texts (p. 86).

One criticism that can be moved to this work is the author's little interest for the reception of the composition (“Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte lässt sich nicht viel sagen”, p. 87), which at times limits the comprehension of the text. Due to the paucity of sources, Ceccarelli regards *Enki and Ninmah* to have had “eine untergeordnete Rolle innerhalb des Schulcurriculums” (p. 87). This would pair with the most likely absence of *Enki and Ninmah* from the literary catalogues (p. 140). However, the use of this text in schools is questionable as compositions preserved in few manuscripts were non-curricular texts (for curricular and non-curricular texts see S. Tinney, “Tablets of schools and scholars: a portrait of the Old Babylonian

corpus”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, Oxford, 2011, 577–96). Ceccarelli interestingly suggests that the theomorphic creation of man in Genesis was influenced by Mesopotamian models much more than is usually acknowledged (pp. 24–5). However, this assumption does not rest on an adequate discussion of the circulation and reception of this mythological narrative in the Mesopotamian cultural setting, given that, as the author notes, *Enki and Ninmah* is the only account of the creation of man as the image of god. How such motifs, attested in a composition preserved in only five or six manuscripts, could have reached a vast audience and influenced other literatures, is overlooked. Indeed, *Enki and Ninmah* presents several peculiarities such as the role of Namma as creator or her epithets (pp. 35–6) as well as lexical singularities and rare words. The same criticism applies to Ceccarelli’s comment on the ironic and sarcastic tone of *Enki and Ninmah*, when he assumes that “Der Leser kann nämlich die Logik der Entscheidungen Enkis nachvollziehen und somit befindet er sich in einer privilegierten Stellung gegenüber der Muttergöttin” (p. 59). But, who is the reader? Due to its scarce popularity, it is likely that *Enki and Ninmah* never passed beyond the boundaries of scribal circles and its audience was limited to the scribes themselves. One may see the abnormal humans as a scribal and elitist mockery of the other professions. Not by chance is this mockery featured by Enki the god of wisdom which, as is well known, included the scribal art.

Among the Mesopotamian creation myths, the author quotes *KAR 4-Erzählung* (aka *The Creation of Mankind*, listed in ETCSL full catalogue as No. 1.7.5, see Lambert *Babylonian Creation Myths*, MC 16, Winona Lake, 2013, 350–60) affirming that the composition “ist zuerst aus der mittelassyrischen Zeit überliefert” (p. 7). However, the text is preserved in an Old Babylonian manuscript from Isin published by Lambert (2013), the latter mentioned among the studies on creation myths (p. 15). As with *Enki and Ninmah*, *The Creation of Mankind* is also known from the library of Assurbanipal. The omission of the OB source of *The Creation of Mankind* prevented the author from offering a parallel to *Enki and Ninmah* of a creation myth in Sumerian language transmitted from the Old Babylonian period up to the first millennium. This would have perhaps strengthened the author’s suggestion (p. 87) that the interest aroused by narratives on the creation of mankind was behind the preservation of such compositions.

Overall Ceccarelli’s work is a valuable edition offering the scholarly community a rich commentary that will be useful for future research in the field of Sumerology.

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CHARLES W. STEITLER:

The Solar Deities of Bronze Age Anatolia. Studies in Texts of the Early Hittite Kingdom.

(Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten, 62.) xx, 605 pp. Wiesbaden:

Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. €98. ISBN 978 3 447 10798 3.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000666

Among the approximately 3,000 references to Solar deities in Hittite texts, 100 belong to Old Hittite (= OH) and 400 to Middle Hittite (= MH) sources (p. 8). Steitler arranges his study using a strictly chronological approach: OH (chs 4–6)