

more” (i.e. several kings of one land set opposite several kings of another) in a single unit. Subsequently, he deduced three “standards” by which the scribes drew the lines: (i) to list the pairs of kings from the distant past whose synchronizations cannot be confirmed by available sources into separate units in the style of “one to one” and pack all the subsequent kings from the two lands together into one unit (in the category of “one to more” or “more to one”) that ends, immediately preceding the confirmed pair of contemporary kings which follows; (ii) to draw a dividing line under the name of an *ummānu* “scholar” so that no king would be listed directly under an *ummānu* in the same unit; and (iii) to draw lines under the pairs of kings who were contemporaries during the greater part of their reigns.

Chapter 4 considers the date of composition, the number of kings, the period originally covered by the text, and other issues. Chen suggests that A.117 and A.118 date to the reigns of Assurbanipal and Aššur-etil-ilani, respectively, with whom the texts end. The colophon of A.118 reveals that the text originally started with Erišum of Assur and Sumu-la-El of Babylon. In this connection, he proposes that “the synchronization between Hammurabi and Šamši-Adad I, as well as Išme-Dagan I, would have made it possible for the scribe to regard Sumu-la-El to have been the contemporary of Erišum I”, as the number of generations that elapsed between these rulers in Assyria and Babylonia was five/six and four, respectively. This implies that the Assyrian scribes did not attempt to calculate the precise timespans to prove their non-contemporaneity (r. 1894–1881 vs r. 1974–1935) upon the supposedly available sources of the eponym lists, the Assyrian King List, and the Babylonian King List A, although Chen does not state this explicitly.

In chapter 5, regarding the purpose of the composition, the author suggests that the ScKL was composed as propaganda to support Assurbanipal’s Babylonian policy by declaring that the “separation” policy concerning the thrones of Assyria and Babylonia, as planned by Esarhaddon, was still being maintained by Assurbanipal.

The book culminates with a conclusion, appendices, bibliography, plates, and index. It represents the first systematic study of the ScKL, a welcome addition to the study of Mesopotamian chronographic sources.

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JOHANNES BACH:

*Untersuchungen zur transtextuellen Poetik assyrischer herrschaftlich-narrativen Texte.*

(State Archives of Assyria Studies XXX.) xii, 481 pp. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2020. \$75. ISBN 978 952 10 9503 0. doi:10.1017/S0041977X22000040

This book is an outstanding contribution to Neo-Assyrian studies. Since the last quarter of the twentieth century there has been a renewed interest in the Assyrian empire and a great deal of attention has been given to understanding the compositional nature of Assyrian royal inscriptions. Initially, scholars aimed to understand the political history of the era, and in more recent decades the interest has shifted towards examining Assyrian royal texts and art as sources for the royal ideologies

and structures of power, rather than straightforward history. Bach's study follows this trajectory and takes it in a new direction: an examination of the nature and development of the systems of transtextuality in Assyrian "royal narrative texts" in the second and first millennia BCE, which includes both annalistic styled "royal inscriptions" and Assyrian royal epics. The result is an engaging methodology that recognizes how the ancient scribes employed in the service of the Assyrian rulers alluded to or cited imagery, motifs, and phrases of well-known literary texts when composing narratives in celebration of the kings. While there have been some notable studies of intertextual scribal practice in Assyrian royal inscriptions over the last twenty years, what is striking about this study is Bach's ability to balance the ideas of modern literary theorists with the ancient historical contexts beyond the realm of basic genre theory, semiotics, and structuralism that has been a feature of studies over recent decades. Further, this book was researched and written at the same time as another significant study along similar lines, of intertextuality in Babylonian myths and epics (S. Wisnom, *Weapons of Words: Intertextual Competition in Babylonian Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), reviewed by A.-C. Rendu Loisel in *BSOAS* 83/3, 2020, 512–5). Such timing indicates that the field of Assyriology is moving towards a new phase of hermeneutics.

"Transtextuality" is an analytical model Bach adopted primarily from the literary theorist Gérard Genette and adapted to suit his assessment of literary texts and motifs in Assyrian royal narratives. In the first part of the book, Bach defends his use of transtextual theory and over the course of four chapters outlines the five-step process of his analysis, which distinguishes extraordinary quotations of literary texts (intertextuality) and transformative allusions (hypertextuality) from regular generic features of a given text (architextuality), and thereby enables the scholar to build a network of transtextuality and identify the cultural poetic milieu. The success of this model is its method of distinguishing generic commonness between texts from genuine intertextual endeavours, which can be employed further with compositions and corpora beyond those examined in this study.

In the fifth chapter, Bach turns from theory to application by using transtextuality to examine the development of the Assyrian royal narrative during the second millennium from basic royal labels and building texts into recognizable architextuality of forms and modes, which are summarized and presented in a 51-page appendix. The initial period of inter- and hypertextuality occurred during the reigns of Adad-nīrārī I and Tukulti-Ninurta I, which saw the advent of royal epics in the corpus of royal expression. From this point on the royal inscriptions elevated the royal figure by directly drawing on the mytho-poetic tradition of the war god, Ninurta and the literary text *Lugal-e*, in particular. A further theme incorporated in the royal narrative during the Middle Assyrian period (from Adad-nīrārī I to Tiglath-pileser I) is the king being associated with motifs of agriculture and livestock. This theme had previously been present in the royal expression of southern Mesopotamia, but it is, of course, also a connection with Ninurta's other key aspect of a god of earth. Bach's research shows that, except for a short-lived flourishing in the ninth century in the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, there was little further intertextual development until the time of the Sargonid dynasty in the sixth century.

The second part of the book shifts to the Sargonid era, and Bach applies his methodology to two major case studies: Sargon's Eighth Campaign and Esarhaddon's succession narrative. The former is a stand-alone text preserved on a single, large clay tablet, while the latter is a narrative unit excerpted from a longer text inscribed on hexagonal clay prisms that records the annals of Esarhaddon's reign. Both texts are examined, not only for the predominant hypertextualities, but also for their transtextual networks. Striking is the level of hypertextuality with

the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, so often presenting the Assyrian rulers in the image of the mythical king of Uruk. Both texts also make direct allusions to a range of well-known mytho-epic texts, and Bach shows that Esarhaddon's succession narrative is a part of a wider field of texts including proverbs, the ritual text *Maqlû*, and the *Series of the Fox*. In this way, Bach establishes not only the high literary nature of these texts, but the exact methods the Assyrian scribes employed. One is left with a picture of a highly sophisticated scribal culture at the Assyrian courts.

Bach concludes his book with the words "Es bleibt noch viel zu tun. Hier fängt die Geschichte an". One hopes that this is just the beginning of a new era of a literary-critical understanding of the nature of the Assyrian royal narratives. Further studies of this nature will continue to reap handsome rewards.

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GIUSEPPE LABISI:

*Dwelling Models of Umayyad Madā'in and Quṣūr in Greater Syria.*

(BAR International Series 3004.) xviii, 337 pp. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2020. £65. ISBN 978 1 4073 5722 5 paperback, 978 1 4073 5723 5 e-format.

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Where and how people tailored their lives in a rapidly changing seventh- to eighth-century Bilād al-Shām is a huge, yet barely considered, question. In his book, a reworked and translated version of his doctoral thesis, Giuseppe Labisi sets out to address that very question. Setting the clear goal of identifying architectural and cultural patterns as represented in the living quarters found in Umayyad architecture, an objective largely achieved, Labisi systematically brings together a wide, if uneven, range of published material acquired over the last century, and uses it to analyse and categorize different dwelling types while detailing the living spaces within them.

An introductory account of settlement models and dwelling types in their historical context forms Part 1 of the book (pp. 5–16). The possible pre-Islamic origins in late antiquity are considered for *madā'in* (town/city) and *quṣūr* (castle/palace), the focus of this study, before progressing to components within these, specifically "living units" (pp. 9–16). Two primary types are diagnosed: the "five room unit" (a large central room lined on either side by a pair of rooms) and *banā' al-Ḥūrī* (a central *iwān* with an adjoining room either side, all prefaced with a courtyard portico). These two distinctive components, with their subsidiaries, form a common theme that underlies the whole study.

In Part 2 (pp. 19–59), the descriptive core of the book, Labisi divides the architectural sources into two categories based on the dwelling types of *madā'in* and *quṣūr*. The different purpose and function of each type is a key factor in separating the overall layout of these new foundations, even when associated with an existing urban centre such as 'Ammān, which brings greater clarity to comprehending the positioning of living units within the larger plan and, in some cases, the intended purpose of individual rooms. In dealing with *madā'in* (chapter 2), Labisi considers the three primary sites of 'Anjar, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, and 'Ammān. The focus in