

REVIEWS

THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

W.G. LAMBERT:

Babylonian Creation Myths.

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In the early 1990s the reviewer had the privilege of breakfasting with W.G. Lambert during a Rencontre Assyriologique. Looking for a suitable subject for a German *Habilitation*, the young scholar dared to ask the great professor whether his edition of *Enūma Eliš*, which even then had been announced decades previously, would ever appear. Lambert answered: “The edition is almost finished and will be published next year”. Probably none of us could imagine that another twenty years would pass by before the magnificent book under review would sit on the shelves of Assyriologists – two years after the death of its author.

The first chapter (pp. 3–144) contains the transliterated and translated text of the Babylonian epic of creation (*Enūma Eliš*). Unlike many other Mesopotamian literary compositions in cuneiform, the text of the epic of creation is surprisingly well preserved: 1016 of the total of 1096 text lines, i.e. c. 93 per cent, are completely preserved, 57 lines are partially destroyed, and only 23 are totally or almost totally missing, with a clear concentration of the partly destroyed or missing lines on tablet V of the epic (48 + 21 of 158 lines). Lambert presents a transliterated composite text with an apparatus criticus. This procedure saves space but does not allow easy recognition of the text of the individual manuscripts. Short notes on the edition are found on pp. 469–91 and hand copies on pp. 535–72 (= plates 1–38).

Part II, “*Enūma Eliš* and Marduk”, consists of an in-depth study of different aspects of the epic in the framework of Mesopotamian religious history: Marduk’s names (tablet VII; pp. 147–68), the organization of the universe (tablets IV and V; pp. 169–201) and the conflicts between Ea and Apsū (tablet I) as well as between Marduk and Tiamat (tablet IV; pp. 202–47). Since the “purpose of the Epic was to show that Marduk had replaced Enlil as head of the pantheon” (p. 268), part II concludes with a long essay on the rise of Marduk in the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon (pp. 248–77).

Although *Enūma Eliš* is the most prominent composition in cuneiform dealing with the creation, it is by no means the only text touching this subject (a good survey on Mesopotamian creation texts can be found in the article “*Mythologie*” by W. Heimpel, RIA vol. 8 (Berlin and New York, 1993–97) on pp. 546–7 and 558–60). Part III, “Further Babylonian creation tales” (pp. 281–401) gives an edition of no fewer than 16 Sumerian and Akkadian literary texts: *Enmešarra’s Defeat* (PSBA 30, 53 ff. etc.), *The Town of Zarpānītum* (a fragmentary text not published before), *The Toil of Babylon* (TSBA 5, 303 ff. and STC 1, 219–20), *Uraš and Marduk* (JET 6, 398), *The Murder of Anšar* (previously unpublished), *Damkina’s Bond* (previously unpublished), *The Defeat of Enutila, Enmešarra, and Qingu* (fragmentary, previously unpublished), *Enki and Ninmah*, *The Exaltation of Nabū* (KAR 360, etc.), *A Unilingual/Bilingual Account of Creation* (KAR 4, etc.), *The Slaying of Labbu* (CT 13, 34–5), *The Founding of Eridu* (BM 93014; Last edition by C. Ambos, *Mesopotamische Baurituale* (Dresden, 2004)

200–07), *The First Brick* (WVDOG 4, pl. 12, etc.), *Another Dragon-Slaying Episode* (KAR 6), *The Theogony of Dunnu* (CT 46, 43), *The River Incantation* (numerous manuscripts). Notes on the editions of all these texts are found on pp. 493–526 and hand copies or photos on pp. 573–605 (= plates 39–71).

Part IV, “Other material related to Enūma Eliš”, deals with the theogonies of Enlil and Anu (pp. 405–26) and with the goddesses Namma, Ningirimma and Ninimma. In his summary (pp. 439–65), Lambert attempts to answer different questions about the composition of the epic, among them the question of its date. Lambert concludes that the epic was composed between Nebuchadnezzar I (c. 1125–1104 BC) and c. 900 BC.

The extraordinarily long time-span during which this book was in the making seems to be the reason for the secondary literature used and quoted not being up-to-date. Thus, e.g., the edition of the KAR 4-myth (*A Unilingual/Bilingual Account of Creation*, pp. 350 ff.) does not mention any edition or translation of the text after 1965, although the text was edited by G. Pettinato on pp. 74–81 of “Das altorientalische Menschenbild und die sumerischen und akkadischen Schöpfungsmythen” and translated by K. Hecker, TUAT III/4, 1994, 606–08 and B. Foster, *Before the Muses* (Bethesda, 2005) 491–3 (for further studies see now www.seal.uni-leipzig.de no. 1.3.16.8). The edition of *Enūma Eliš* does not always refer to the editions of manuscripts from school texts by P. Gesche, “Schulunterricht in Babylonien im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr.” (AOAT 275, Münster, 2000). For the iconography of monsters (cf. p. 229 n. 11) see F.A.M. Wiggerman and A. Green, “Mischwesen”, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* vol. 8 (Berlin and New York, 1993–97), 222–64.

The edition of *Enūma eliš* by T.R. Kämmerer and K.A. Metzler, *Das babylonische Weltschöpfungsepos Enūma eliš* (AOAT 375, Münster, 2012) appeared almost simultaneously with *Babylonian Creation Myths*. The two books should be used side-by-side: some new manuscripts are in both volumes in hand copy or photo, and Kämmerer and Metzler present the text far more conveniently as a score. However, Lambert’s edition is more complete since it offers 30 manuscripts more than Kämmerer and Metzler, and Lambert’s thorough study of the epic in the context of the religious history of Mesopotamia is unmatched in Kämmerer/Metzler.

Babylonian Creation Myths is an excellent book and a worthy memorial of a great Assyriologist.

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THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

GEORGE ANTON KIRAZ:

A Grammar of the Syriac Language. Volume 1. Orthography.

lix, 482 pp. Piscataway, NY: Gorgias Press, 2012. ISBN 978 1 4632 0183 8.

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While a postdoctoral researcher the present reviewer well remembers struggling to decipher the system of dots in an early-eighth-century Syriac manuscript, with the limited aid provided by J.B. Segal’s 1953 study *The Diacritical Point and the*