

The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology. BY PEETER ESPAK. Philippika, vol. 87. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2015. Pp. xviii + 235. €52 (paper).

The volume under review is the updated version of the dissertation Peeter Espak defended in 2010 at the Faculty of Theology, University of Tartu. Its purpose, in the author's words, is "to understand how the god Enki was described by ancient priests and scribes, and how that description and methodology evolved during the different periods of Sumero-Akkadian history" (p. 3). In order to achieve this goal, Espak begins his examination with a short introduction about the history of the topic (pp. 1–6), followed by an analysis of the attestations of the god Enki in documents from the Early Dynastic to the Old Babylonian Period (chapters 1–7). He then provides an overview of the role Enki played as a creator in Sumerian mythology (chapter 8) and reviews the literature pertaining to the alleged conflict between the Nippur and Eridu theologies (chapter 9). Some general conclusions end the book, which is also provided with ample bibliography as well as indexes.

The book has an ambitious scope, since it aims at exploring two interconnected albeit different topics: the position Enki held in Sumerian royal ideology *and* Enki's role in Sumerian mythology. In addition, Espak wishes to explore some questions which pertain specifically to the nature of the god Enki. In order to do so, Espak focuses on royal inscriptions and mythological, or literary, texts.

Rather than examining each chapter in detail, the present review offers some remarks about alternative avenues of research the author may wish to consider, as well as some corrections and suggestions. These remarks should by no means detract from the importance this study has in furthering our understanding of the position Enki had in the Mesopotamian pantheon.

First, a note on terminology: I found the lack of any discussion as to what exactly Espak means by "*Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*" problematic, especially in light of the material used in the analysis. Are we talking about the royal ideology and the mythological texts composed by the "Sumerians," whoever they might have been? Are we alluding to a "Sumerian" consciousness, which transcended chronological, geographical, and ethnical borders (a Sumerian invented tradition, to borrow from N. Veldhuis 2004)? Or are we referring to documents written in Sumerian? The latter does not seem to be the case, since Espak diligently translates the Akkadian documents of the Sargonic dynasty as well as the Akkadian texts from the dynasty of Isin onwards. Discussing Sumerian royal ideology in royal inscriptions from Old Babylonian rulers is reductive, considering that these documents express an Amorite royal ideology as well as, perhaps, incorporating a more traditional Sumerian one.

Second is the issue of textual genre. As already stated, Espak tracks down and discusses all attestations of the god Enki in Sumerian and Akkadian royal inscriptions from the Early Dynastic to the Old Babylonian Period. This is quite an accomplishment, and the author must be commended for his painstaking work in providing us with the definitive catalogue on the topic. He does the same for literary documents. Here too, his breadth of knowledge and research abilities are quite remarkable. What is missing from Espak's investigations is a methodological section, explaining the different genre nature of royal inscriptions and literature, as well as an explanation as to why administrative texts have been excluded from the analysis.

It is important to recognize that royal inscriptions and literary documents served two different, albeit complementary, purposes. Royal inscriptions tend to describe the military and architectural achievements of the kings in order to validate their ideology of kingship. Literature was also a tool for royal ideology, and it provides us with insight as to the mythology of the ancient Mesopotamians. However, the best known Sumerian literature we have, produced during the Old Babylonian period, is firmly rooted in the scribal curriculum (e.g., Veldhuis 2004), at a time when Sumerian had died out as a spoken language, but was still taught in schools.

With regards to the absence of a discussion of administrative texts, one has to acknowledge that the addition of this corpus would have most likely made the project unmanageable. After all, a simple search of Enki in the Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts (<http://bdts.filol.csic.es>) produces more than three thousand attestations limited to the Third Dynasty of Ur. Even excluding year names, this is quite a large number. Nevertheless, an explanation as to why these documents have been omitted would have

been welcome. This is especially true of year names, which are, after all, programmatic names for the king's rule and therefore pertinent to royal ideology.

Third is the issue of translation. One cannot help but wonder why the author opted for literal translations of the sources. Examples of this practice abound: "Nudimmud, / the god who created you, / from Abzu / abundance has increased for you" (p. 95); "[Enki] / [his canal]/ with (only) silt / may measure out (= may block)" (p. 47); "broad knowledge / for creating eternal works / Enki was given" (p. 109). Although one may appreciate Espak's wish to provide a translation as close to the Sumerian or Akkadian text as possible, one gets, quite literally, lost in translation. I would recommend that the author consider avoiding such a practice as a matter of course. The initiated reader can follow along the Sumerian and Akkadian texts. The general audience, however, may find the stilted translations more than a little off-putting.

As for some particulars, I found Espak's discussion of the so-called "Song of Šulgi" and the conclusions derived from this document extremely problematic. According to Espak, "[t]he growth of Enki's position in royal ideology is explicitly demonstrated by a royal hymn titled the Song of Šulgi and by the fragmentary Šulgi hymn H" (p. 56). The fact that Šulgi opts in this song to visit Enki's sanctuary in Eridu first, before Enlil's in Nippur, is read as evidence "that a certain new religious program [was] introduced by Šulgi influencing the theology and ideology of his reign" (p. 57). Although such a statement does not rest solely on the evidence of the "Song of Šulgi," the latter plays a major role in the argument, and this is problematic.

The "Song of Šulgi" is currently preserved in one manuscript, housed in the Ontario Museum (Frayne 1983). According to Frayne, the document, of unknown provenance, dates to the Old Babylonian period, and not to the Third Dynasty of Ur. As such it is currently impossible to establish whether the text goes back to an Ur III original or if it is a literary invention of the Old Babylonian scribes. The fact that it is preserved only in a single manuscript indicates its low popularity, something which, to my mind, is hard to accept for a text supposedly marking an important religious reform.

Equally problematic is Espak's discussion of Amar-Su'en's royal hymns. These form an extremely challenging corpus not only because they are poorly preserved, but also because they notoriously portray the king in unflattering terms. On the one hand, Espak suggests that "[a]ll the preserved major texts of Amar-Su'en were dedicated to the building of the temple of Enki and the 'literary tradition points to a special devotion of Amar-Suena for the cult of the god Enki at Eridu'" (p. 63). On the other hand, Espak states, I believe correctly, that Amar-Su'en A was most likely "written after the death of Amar-Su'en by the scribes of the succeeding rulers of Ur or even later" (p. 60). If this is the case, then this hymn has no probative value as to the ideology of kingship, the mythology, or the reforms enacted by Amar-Su'en during his reign. Indeed, one has to wonder what had occurred during Amar-Su'en's nine years in power that made him so unpopular that he was consistently depicted as an incompetent ruler in his royal hymnology (for problems during his reign as reflected in the administrative texts see Allred 2013).

These observations do not detract from Peeter Espak's analysis. His overview of Enki's role in Sumerian mythology and his discussion and dismissal of the conflict between the Nippur and Eridu theologies are a very welcome addition to the study of the history of Mesopotamian religion.

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Children in the Ancient Near Eastern Household. By KRISTINE GARROWAY. Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, vol. 3. Winona Lake, Ind.: EISENBRAUNS, 2014. Pp. xvii + 374. \$57.50.

Kristine Garroway's useful book joins the growing number of works devoted to children and families in the ancient Near East or the Hebrew Bible. In this volume—based largely on material from her 2009 dissertation—Garroway explores children's social status in the household, through the analysis of Mesopotamian laws and contracts, biblical texts, and burial data from Canaan and surrounding areas. Garroway's subject matter and methodology are intentionally eclectic. Her plan is not to present a narrowly focused study, but to build a composite picture of children's social status through an array of sources and methods.

Garroway devotes her introduction and initial chapter to theory, including definitions of the age categories she uses and discussion of the methodologies she employs: processual-plus archaeology, anthropology, and gender theory. She spends the next seven chapters analyzing selected textual evidence pertaining to particular categories of children. Chapter 2 looks at adopted children, chapter 3 studies those lacking one or both parents, chapter 4 looks at child debt-slaves, and chapter 5 examines children who are chattel slaves or hired out. In these chapters, Garroway's sources are cuneiform texts, principally the Code of Hammurapi, Old Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian contracts, and Nuzi contracts and seals, with some references to Middle Assyrian laws.

In chapter 6, "Children in Biblical Israel," Garroway's attention shifts to inheritance among half-siblings as evidenced in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis. Chapter 7, entitled "Child Sacrifice," also focuses on biblical texts after a survey of the state of scholarship on child sacrifice in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. The next two chapters shift focus again as Garroway moves from analyzing texts to studying burials in selected sites dating from the Early Bronze Age through Iron II, first in regions surrounding Canaan/ancient Israel, and then in Canaan/Israel proper. Garroway synthesizes her conclusions at the end of each chapter, then draws them together in chapter 10. The book ends with three appendices (cuneiform texts and translations, burial data, and a catalog of burial sites), a brief glossary, a bibliography, and separate indexes for authors, Scripture, and ancient sources.

In her introduction, Garroway sets out several goals, including building a database of relevant texts and mortuary data for future studies of ancient Near Eastern children and analyzing the relationship between children's social status and household membership (p. 2). In particular, she aims to study how children entered households, how they were treated while there, and how they left (e.g., through adoption, sale, or death), with attention to social status and gender. She achieves these goals through her detailed study of specific laws and contracts and in her final chapter, in which she depicts the various ways children entered and exited households in a series of figures.

For example, in chapter 5 Garroway describes a six-year-old slave girl sold to new owners, as detailed in Neo-Babylonian contract Nbn. 693. Garroway notes that the brand on the girl's wrist, mentioned in the sale contract, meant that the girl would always carry with her "a set of expectations and limitations for social interactions" (p. 145). Such a comment illustrates Garroway's efforts to treat the material from the children's perspective to the extent possible, in contrast to most previous studies which—she notes—tend to focus more on adults (e.g., the buyers and sellers of child slaves). The household status of the children is depicted, in Garroway's final chapter, in the tables portraying household membership. Figure 10 (p. 252) shows that, for child slaves, the natal family household was part of a master's household, and the children would leave that household either for another master's household or through emancipation (or, presumably, through death).

Garroway's study is particularly enlightening regarding the intersection of gender with other aspects of status. To give one example: for girls, marriage was a consideration in adoption contracts, whereas for boys the main issue was inheritance. JEN 432 from Nuzi records a "daughter and daughter-in-lawship adoption" in which the adoptive father reserved the right to wed the girl—apparently a free