

IRAQ

VOLUME LXXV • 2013

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

KAREL NOVÁČEK, NARMIN ALI MUHAMMAD AMIN AND MIROSLAV MELČÁK: A Medieval City Within Assyrian Walls: The Continuity of the Town of Arbīl in Northern Mesopotamia

This study presents a first attempt at an archaeological topography of the city of Arbīl (Arbela, Urbilum, Arbail). Arbīl's large tell and citadel are among the most famous sites in northern Iraq, although research on the site has begun only recently. The study of the immediate hinterlands of the tell, complementary use of written sources, remote sensing and surveys offer a perspective on the extremely long-term evolution of the lower town, whose architectural remains have entirely disappeared under modern building development. Despite many lacunae in the data and a predominance of indirect hypotheses, the urban structure of Assyrian Arbail becomes comprehensible in the context of other Assyrian royal capitals. During the Islamic period the city underwent a transformation, which merged the once prosperous Sasanian provincial capital with the expanding Muslim community.

PETER A. MIGLUS, ULRIKE BÜRGER, RAFAŁ A. FETNER, SIMONE MÜHL AND ALEXANDER SOLLEE: Excavation at Bakr Awa 2010 and 2011

The site of Bakr Awa is situated in north-eastern Iraq, in the Plain of Shahrizor. Excavations were undertaken in 1960–61 by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities and 2010–11 by the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Occupation layers from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age to the Ottoman period were uncovered in the lower city and on the citadel. Archaeological evidence from the second millennium B.C. shows the most intensive settlement activities and apparent prosperity at Bakr Awa. Several forms of pottery, small finds and architecture reflect dynamic processes of cultural and political transformation at the site, which was located in an area of transition between northern and southern Mesopotamia and western Iran.

JASON UR, LIDEWIJDE DE JONG, JESSICA GIRAUD, JAMES F. OSBORNE AND JOHN MACGINNIS: Ancient Cities and Landscapes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: The Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey 2012 Season

In 2012, the Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey (EPAS) conducted its first season of fieldwork. The project's goal is the complete mapping of the archaeological landscape of Erbil, with an emphasis on the Neo-Assyrian and Hellenistic periods. It will test the hypothesis that the Neo-Assyrian landscape was closely planned. This first report emphasizes the project's field methodology, especially the use of a variety of satellite remote sensing

imagery. Our preliminary results suggest that the plain was part of the urbanized world of Mesopotamia, with new cities of the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Sasanian era identified.

BRETT THORN AND DOMINIQUE COLLON: Dr Lee's Collection of Cylinder Seals

Dr Lee was known as a collector of cylinder seals only because six of them were published by Cullimore in 1843. Now twenty seals have been rediscovered in the Buckinghamshire County Museum in Aylesbury, and have been registered and recorded. Some of the preliminary drawings made for Cullimore's publication have also survived and have thrown light on the way the seals were recorded for publication in the early 1840s. Here a full catalogue and assessment of Lee's collection is presented, together with evidence for the way seals were recorded for Cullimore's catalogue.

LISA COOPER: Archaeology and Acrimony: Gertrude Bell, Ernst Herzfeld and the Study of Pre-Modern Mesopotamia

Letters sent from the German scholar Ernst Herzfeld to Gertrude Bell between 1909 and 1912 provide valuable information about the scholarship of these remarkable characters as they explored issues pertaining to the development of early Islamic art and architecture in Mesopotamia. Through a spirited and often fractious exchange of ideas about a range of artistic and architectural topics that included vaulting techniques, the design of early mosques and palace forms, one can track the impact each had upon the other's scholarship, and the degree to which their respective views shaped one another's conclusions about important Islamic period sites such as Samarra and Ukhaidir.

J. C. FINCKE: "If a Star Changes into Ashes. . ." A Sequence of Unusual Celestial Omens

A sequence of omens has puzzled Assyriologists since 1866, when Henry C. Rawlinson published the first copy of these peculiar divinatory texts. The omens have the structure DIŠ MUL *ana* . . . GUR, "If a star turns into . . .", where the object into which the star changes can be an animal, metal, stone or some other item. Such a change has been held to belong to the field of dreams or, more generally, to terrestrial events rather than to astronomy. In fact, however, these omens refer to a specific celestial phenomenon, the transformation of a "star" into a meteorite that can be picked up from the ground, as can also be seen in the phrasing of the corresponding *namburbi*-ritual, which some scribes appended to their recension of this omen sequence.

R. PIRNGRUBER: The Historical Sections of the Astronomical Diaries in Context: Developments in a Late Babylonian Scientific Text Corpus

The article addresses developments within the Astronomical Diaries, as regards their formal structure and the content of their historical sections, with a particular emphasis on ominous references. Although both the total number and length of historical sections increased significantly over time, the number of ominous references declined. A relationship can be posited between this development and on-going changes in the prevailing scientific worldview in first millennium B.C. Babylonia. The Diaries were deeply embedded in Babylonian traditions of knowledge production, rendering untenable assessments that deny any impact of Babylonian science of divination on them; at the same time, a characterization of the Diaries as a kind of database for diviners falls equally short.

KATHRYN STEVENS: Secrets in the Library: Protected Knowledge and Professional Identity in Late Babylonian Uruk

Injunctions to secrecy in the colophons of scholarly cuneiform tablets offer potential insights into the classification and protection of knowledge in Mesopotamia. However, most models of a body of “secret knowledge” defined by the so-called “*Geheimwissen* colophons” have found it difficult to account for a seemingly disparate corpus of protected texts. This study argues first for an expanded definition of intellectual protection, which leads to a larger corpus of protected texts. Through a case study of Late Babylonian colophons from Uruk, it is suggested that there is a strong correlation between texts related to the professional specialism of the tablet owner, and the occurrence of protective formulae in the colophon. This implies that it is fruitful to consider “secret knowledge” less as an abstracted corpus of esoteric texts and more as a mutable categorization strongly linked to professional and individual intellectual identity.

NATHAN WASSERMAN: Treating Garments in the Old Babylonian Period: “At the Cleaners” in a Comparative View

This article examines UET 6/2, 414, the Old Babylonian dialogue between a fuller and a client, commonly referred to as “At the Cleaners”, from the point of view of ancient technology. Drawing upon a wide range of Talmudic and Classical sources mentioning laundry, and based on a careful philological reading of the Akkadian text, this study offers a new understanding of the different stages of washing and treatment of luxury garments in the Old Babylonian period. It is argued that the possible humorous aspect of the text is irrelevant to the fact that UET 6/2, 414 is a unique composition in antiquity, offering a long and accurate sequence of laundry instructions. Washing procedures and ways of treating luxury garments in Mesopotamia are outlined step by step; new Akkadian terms pertaining to garments and clothing are presented; wages of laundry workers in ancient Mesopotamia are briefly discussed. The study concludes with a new edition and translation of UET 6/2, 414.