

Buried History

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2020 Volume 56

Buried History

Buried History is the annual journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology. It publishes papers and reviews based on the results of research relating to Eastern Mediterranean, Near Eastern and Classical Archaeology, Epigraphy and the Biblical text, and the history of such research and archaeology generally for an informed readership. Papers are refereed in accordance with Australian HERDC specifications.

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Address:

**Australian Institute of Archaeology
La Trobe University
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Cover: The 'Ark' tablet: Image courtesy of Dr Irving Finkel

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Christopher J. Davey

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Editorial

Buried History is not normally thematic but this edition has turned out to be almost exclusively about Ancient Near Eastern language and history, particularly as it was recorded in cuneiform script. Sadly, this year has seen the passing of Australia's two leading cuneiform scholars, Francis Andersen and Noel Weeks. We begin with papers remembering them.

Emeritus Professor Edwin Judge pens a biographical memoir about Francis Andersen. While adopting British Academy convention, Edwin also aims to create a lived scenario that encompasses every single one of the 250 items as formulated by Frank in his *curriculum vitae*. Edwin believes that Frank's punctilio in this may itself be a sign of the unique understanding of linguistic meaning with which he was endowed.

The biographical memoir is bound by the content of Frank's c.v., which does not include the *The Hebrew Bible: Andersen-Forbes Analyzed Text* (2012: Faithlife), a software biblical text linked to the databases behind research he carried out with Dean Forbes. It is the culmination of their life-time of research and was licensed to Faithlife (previously Logos). It has also been licensed to Accordance, the other main provider of electronic biblical literature and was released in their system recently.

Readers will note that Frank had a long association with the Australian Institute of Archaeology, joining the Council in 1950, being a Fellow from 2002 and having many important points of contact in the interim, including being editor of this journal. Arguably, Frank's relationship with the Institute and its people led him to the study of languages and the Ancient Near East after his research in science became problematic. Later, when he was at the lowest ebb in his career, it was the Institute that threw him a lifeline. Professor Judge's memoir acknowledges this relationship, something overlooked by nearly every other obituary/tribute.

Frank was intellectually gifted and his journey into ancient languages produced an extraordinary volume of scholarship with many creative ideas that will have significant and lasting influence on the understanding of the Hebrew Bible. His interest was the 'archaeology' of the Hebrew language and the meaning of the literature written in that language. The uncertainty that this research may create is not embraced by all, but is at the core of the Institute's mission to understand the past rather than the more common process of using ancient documents, such as the Old Testament, to bolster more recent theories and theologies. Frank was abreast of research into the ancient world till the end of his life and an afternoon in his presence was always mentally exhausting.

Frank had the potential to be Albright's intellectual successor but, as Professor Judge's memoir describes, that

did not happen for reasons he cannot explain. Professor Cyrus Gordon was one of Albright's most distinguished linguistic successors and it is one of his students, Dr Noel Weeks, who is the subject of a tribute written by Drs Luis Siddall and Samuel Jackson. The tribute had the benefit of a draft of Noel's intellectual autobiography. It is worthy of comment that both Andersen and Weeks began their careers in the sciences before studying with leading American scholars and spending a lifetime in Ancient Near Eastern languages and history. Dr Weeks is remembered fondly by the many students he taught during his long tenure at the University of Sydney.

The last paper in this edition was written by Dr Weeks and like his contribution to the last issue, it has been edited by Dr Luis Siddall. The paper discusses the nature of the transmission of ancient culture and traditions. The precise parallels between the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern literature such as the 'Ark Tablet', which Dr Irving Finkel of the British Museum spoke about at the Institute in 2019, give the topic new impetus.

The first paper was written by members of the CANZ (Cuneiform in Australia and New Zealand) team. It translates an astronomical diary from Babylon that they discovered in the Abbey Museum, Caboolture, Queensland. The text appears to be a mundane record of astronomical observations, weather reports and events. The transliteration and translation of the tablet is certainly not mundane and embodies the best scholarly collaborative traditions. The tablet is the work of ancient observers and scribes, who were highly educated in the sciences and humanities. Although the authors of the paper do not explore issues relating to the identity of the astronomers or the nature of their observations, it is probable that the activities illustrated by this tablet were those practised by the people called Magi, *magoi*, who were reported in the Gospel of Matthew to have visited the infant Jesus because they had 'seen his star in the East' (Matt 2: 1).

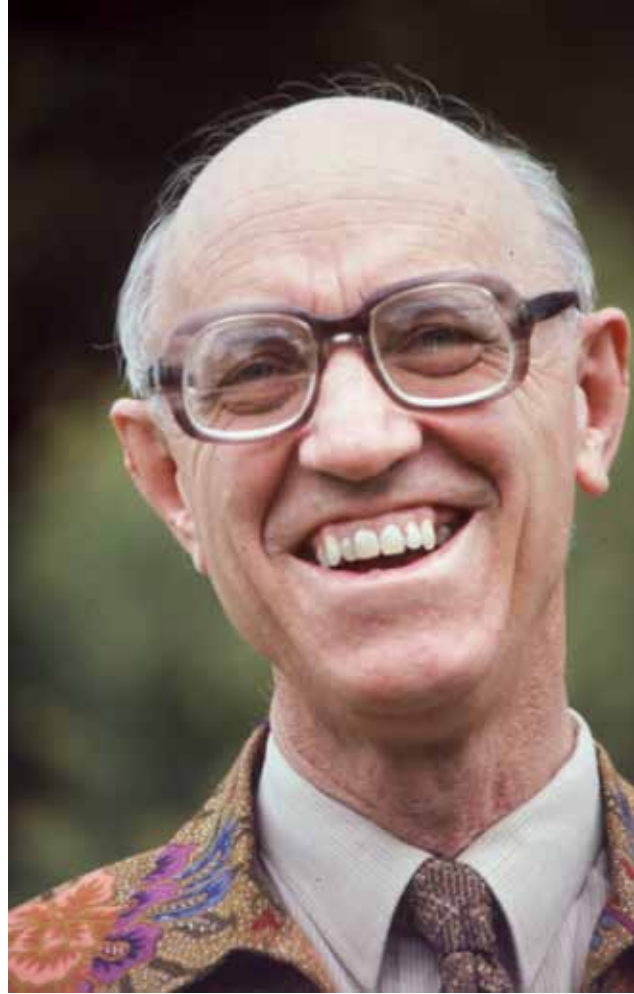
The following paper by Professor Horowitz discusses the Juniper Garden in Babylon and the funeral of Alexander the Great. He explains how the research of the CANZ team in Australia and New Zealand led to his interest in this topic.

In keeping with the cuneiform theme, Dr Siddall reviews Josette Elayi's history of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. While the two books on Biblical Archaeology that I review are focussed on ancient Israel, they do recognise the connections with Mesopotamian texts.

As always, we gratefully acknowledge the contributions of our reviewers and production staff.

Christopher J Davey
December 2020

A Biographical Memoir:



Francis Ian Andersen 1925 – 2020

Frank Andersen must be considered the pioneer excavator, as it were, of the linguistic authenticity of biblical Hebrew. This was uncovered across the full scriptural text for the first time through electronic analysis. It exposed the inherent Semitic syntax which had become masked by the alien straitjacket of Classical Greek grammar as that was defined in Ptolemaic Alexandria and still constrains ‘the poverty of English’ (Andersen 2001: 3 footnote).

It also undermined the set definition of each word as that was entrenched through being copied from one dictionary to another across two millennia. Instead the new principles Andersen saw being tested (e.g. in New Guinea) through the Summer Institute of Linguistics opened the way for a word’s meaning to be discerned through its expression in each particular context. We hear God’s Word through the ‘instrument at hand’, as he put it in the opening number of our local journal *Interchange: Papers on Biblical and Current Questions* (1967).

Far from his being the solo genius as his Antipodean friends assumed, however, FIA’s career was by then already engrossed with the two lifelong intellectual and

personal bonds he had developed, one on either side of San Francisco Bay. At the Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley, to the NE) there was David Noel Freedman (1922–2008), FIA’s senior partner for nearly forty years in the Anchor Bible Commentary project on the *Book of the Twelve Prophets*. In Palo Alto (‘Silicon Valley’, near Stanford University, to the SW) lived Alfred Dean Forbes (1941–), along with those magnates who owned Google and Facebook. Dean Forbes belonged to the medical research department of Hewlett-Packard Laboratories. He became FIA’s co-author in data analysis, with whom there was an even longer connection than with Freedman, routine weekly telephone calls not ceasing until Frank’s death. During the late sixties, all three were linked (but need not have met) through the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), which affiliated (e.g. for library purposes) eight different denominational seminaries of the Bay Area. Freedman and FIA were teaching in different schools, Forbes being at that stage an M.Div. candidate at a third and consultant at HP Labs and Stanford School of Medicine.



*Frank with his life-long collaborator Dean Forbes and Ellen Forbes in Melbourne 2017.
Photo: courtesy of Dean Forbes*

In a very precise eight-page curriculum vitae Andersen lists two hundred and fifty items capable of formal definition, ninety-nine covering his various ecclesiastical or academic appointments, while one hundred and fifty-one cover several types of academic publication (fifty books, one hundred and one articles). A different c.v. groups sixty-nine of the publications across the following eleven disciplines: Archaeology, Biblical Studies, Chemistry, Computational Linguistics, Hebrew Morphology, Hebrew Orthography, Hebrew Syntax, Pseudepigrapha, Semitic Languages, Sociology and Theology. If this quick-fire bombardment suggests a pious polymath you would be utterly wrong. Frank recoiled from both such supposed compliments. More importantly they fail to give the slightest hint of the emotionally responsive down-to-earth but captivating teacher who let students know how they could do it. Note also the absence of those overwhelming categories to which he did not assign his publications: History, and its meretricious usurper, Religion.

The catalogue, however, also constituted a puzzle, and on its own terms. FIA was never appointed by a public university to an established chair in any of the disciplines he professed. At Berkeley people were still saying ‘Out here in California ...’ even though the (State) University of California at Berkeley boasted more Nobel Prizes than any other in the land. The GTU of course and some of its affiliated seminaries were located in the same city of Berkeley as the famous University, but in no formal way part of it. Yet one might aspire to use a GTU affiliate as a springboard. At the Church Divinity School of the Pacific FIA was to replace James B. Pritchard, editor of the standard *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the*

Old Testament (Princeton 1950). Pritchard had now been recruited back to the East, to the University of Pennsylvania. Freedman had also been recruited back to the East, from the San Francisco Theological Seminary, to the University of Michigan. But FIA was abruptly transferred from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (within GTU) in the wrong direction for the real world, and still within his existing professional commitment, to become the Warden of St John’s Theological College in Auckland, N.Z. ‘It seemed as though he had gone to the outermost limits, not only of our field, but of the world’, Freedman, in Conrad and Newing (1987: xxi).

Frank Andersen was born into a family of seven siblings at Warwick in the State of Queensland. The Danish grandparents had expected them to sing the Christmas carols in that language, which they could still do in old age. Under the lee of the Great Dividing Range near Warwick rises the Condamine River. It flows slowly NW across the rich Darling Downs before gradually draining SW into the Darling River and down through outback NSW before what remains can empty into the Great Southern Ocean 3,750 km away. As a schoolboy Frank was ranked first in the vast State for tertiary entrance. At the University of Queensland in Brisbane (1943–1946) he won four scholarships, with prizes in Mathematics and Chemistry, graduating BSc with Honours. He was elected President of the Evangelical Union. Though once a ‘wobbly Methodist’ he had passed the Pauline test of Romans 10:13 (Anon. 2019: 4). He may already have come to know John Arthur Thompson (1913–2002), then teaching school science at ‘Churchie’ in Brisbane. In 1947 they both moved to their new lives in Melbourne.



Frank with wife Lois, at home in Donvale, about 2005. Photo: courtesy of the Andersen family.

From 1 March 1947 Thompson had been appointed Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology (AIA), resigning on 2 Sept 1956, before moving to Sydney to teach at Morling College. At the University of Melbourne Thompson enrolled in Hebrew with Professor Maurice David Goldman (1898–1957) and also in Geology. By 1949 he was himself tutoring in Hebrew, and a sessional lecturer for Biblical Archaeology. In 1950–51 Thompson was travelling in the Middle East and Cyprus, excavating with J.B. Pritchard and journeying on to Europe.

Andersen was Demonstrator in Chemistry at Melbourne 1947–53, completing an MSc thesis in 1951 (unpublished). From 1950 he was on the Council of the AIA, representing the Inter-Varsity Fellowship Australia whose General Secretary, Dr Paul White, had been joint founder of AIA in 1946 (along with its benefactor). FIA was concurrently enrolled for the BA, concentrating on Russian, though taking Hebrew as well with Thompson and Goldman. In 1970 he was to dedicate his first book, *The Verbless Clause in the Hebrew Pentateuch*, to John A. Thompson as ‘my first Hebrew Teacher’. In 1952 Frank married Lois Garrett, a licensed medical graduate of the University of Melbourne. She was of Brethren background. The Archbishop of Melbourne privately confirmed them both within the Church of England as it was still officially called in Australia. Frank was appointed a lay reader licensed to read the services throughout the Diocese of Melbourne where they were to make their ultimate home base.

Across the years 1953–57 Andersen was holding the post of ‘Lecturer in Biblical Languages and Theology’ at Ridley College, Melbourne. Its Principal, Stuart Barton Babbage (1916–2012), himself newly installed there in 1953, had created a new position for FIA, observing that he was losing interest in a Chemistry doctorate. By 1955 FIA had not only completed the BA, but also the national

Licentiate in Theology with First-Class Honours, as well as winning its prizes in Hebrew and Greek. For 1956 the London BD added yet more distinction. From his first decade in Melbourne FIA was to publish three papers on nuclear Chemistry (one in *Nature*) and six on Science and Theology or Biblical Studies.

A Fulbright scholarship of 1957 took the Andersen family (now with two small sons and a third pending) to Baltimore where Frank was to enrol in the school of the veteran William Foxwell Albright (1891–1971) at the Johns Hopkins University. Two unpublished theses were written there by FIA: *Poetic Substratum in the Hebrew Patriarchal Traditions* (for the MA 1958) and *Studies in Hebrew Syntax* (for the PhD 1960). Five much more diverse yet substantial articles by him appeared in 1959–60 reflecting no doubt the stimulus of the Baltimore scene. Albright’s standing had been inherited by Freedman, who likened FIA to the master. The name Albright remains on the American Institute for Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, but his paradigm term ‘Biblical Archaeology’ was later to be academically contested. It is not used by FIA. At Baltimore in 1958 the Bishop of Maryland, acting for the Archbishop of Melbourne, had ordained Frank to be a deacon in the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church, a commitment regularly confirmed (or extended) wherever he was later to live.

The family returned from Baltimore in 1960 to Melbourne back to Ridley College. FIA was now to be Vice-Principal, Leon Morris having become Librarian of Tyndale House in Cambridge. An Andersen daughter, Nedra, was born in 1961 while FIA was Acting Principal, but only three articles by him were to be published from Ridley, each unrelated to the Baltimore thesis on Hebrew syntax. One’s impression is that both Babbage and FIA now found his return frustrating (Babbage 2004: 101–4). His escape in 1963 to the Church Divinity School of the Pacific



At the American Schools of Oriental Research, Jerusalem (now the Albright Institute), 2 April 1967. Frank was about to set off on a field trip. Photo: courtesy of the Andersen family

(CDSP) no doubt implied he should not wait to become Principal at Ridley himself. Babbage in the event also left for the US in 1963. As a seminary for Episcopalian ministers CDSP was, however, a lesser enterprise than Ridley. The whole State of California was at first only a single Episcopalian diocese, while Australia with a much smaller population needed twenty-four diocesan bishops within its well-established Anglican denomination. FIA's success at Johns Hopkins ensured that he was given access to the CDSP position when the incumbent Pritchard was taken back over to be at the centre of Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. But for FIA his formal title was now the conventional 'Professor of Old Testament'. By contrast he habitually identified his discipline as 'the Hebrew Bible'.

The decade with CDSP (1963–72) nevertheless brought Andersen to the height of his powers. Aged now from thirty-eight to forty-seven he was reaching what in ancient Rome was rightly seen as the age of consular command. In the long declining years after that one would rule indirectly on the strength of senatorial dignity. For FIA disconcertingly that proved not to be. But it began well. The family relocated for the second time to the United States. A second daughter, Kathryn, was born at Berkeley. To the seventeen articles hitherto published the CDSP years brought eighteen more, including the massive 'Moabite Syntax' (*Orientalia* 35, 1966, 81–120). Major international journals were taking his new philological discoveries, as were the work papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. There were expeditions abroad, with archaeological field work at Pella in Jordan, and lectures in Jerusalem and at Oxford. Over four years he was each time even brought across the fence next door to the University of California itself as visiting professor of Hebrew, so that he could supply Ugaritic in their program

also. Across the US several projects invited him to visit. His first two books appeared: *The Verbless Clause in the Hebrew Pentateuch* (1970), and (with A. Dean Forbes) *The Computer Bible 6* (1972), while the commentary on Job was ready for final revision in 1973. The CDSP celebrated his now unique standing with the honorary Doctorate of Divinity. FIA characteristically responded by offering them another of his unpublished theses, *Hierarchical Structure in Hebrew Discourse* (1972).

Had no one planned to extend Andersen's prospects at Berkeley? Why had the far-sighted Freedman not prompted an invitation to another centre of Ancient Near Eastern Studies in an older university back East? The call to Auckland for 1973, however, opened a very different vista which Frank clearly found compelling. It may have related to the strategic place of St John's College in training ordinands for Anglican ministry throughout those various islands of the remote South Seas that had long before been opened up by missions. But for him the outcome was to prove personally catastrophic. He arrived at the historic and richly endowed buildings of the pioneer Bishop Selwyn's foundation to find them no longer ready as he must have believed to a great new impulse. I recall myself the expectations I had in 1973 at the news of his appointment. But the revered St John's College was now to be shared with the Methodists (Babbage in Conrad & Newing 1987: xv-xvi), which seems to have been psychologically traumatic for Frank. The merger was carried out after he had accepted the appointment but before he arrived and without any consultation with him. It involved a significant restructure of the position of principal, which proved to be unworkable in practice. As a result FIA left the position after reaching a legal settlement with the Anglican church. Later on the merger was dissolved anyway. In footnote 2 to the 'Tributes'

page attached to his c.v. Frank says: ‘... the negative reception that befell us in Australasia almost meant the end of my career, at least a drastic change of direction in which I had to cope with a devastating PTSD and to forfeit both the higher levels of my scholarly work and also my active ministry in the church, with bitter-sweet memories of those wonderful early days.’ Revealed at age ninety (the latest date in the c.v. being 2016) ‘those wonderful early days’ were no doubt the three years in Baltimore and ten in Berkeley.

At Auckland in 1973 FIA was nevertheless made an honorary canon of the cathedral (his highest ecclesiastical dignity), along with becoming Lecturer in Biblical History and Literature (part-time) at the University. Then for 1974 he was made a Research Fellow of the AIA, which enabled him to retreat with the family back to their home base in Melbourne. In the Preface to his commentary on Job he says, ‘A generous research grant of the Australian Institute of Archaeology made it possible to complete the final revision ... The completion of this book is also a tribute to the Dean of Auckland ... and his wife ... who brought the love of God to us in a dark hour.’ (Andersen 1976: 9) A brief full-time professorship in Freedman’s Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan (1974–75) also no doubt helped hold the fort. But what of the new positions he now actively sought for himself in major public universities: the five years in History at Macquarie and the eight in Studies of Religion at Queensland? Were they part of the Australasian ‘drastic change of direction’ or of a possible recovery from it?

At Macquarie University *Israel in the Ancient World* was one of the three basic units of Ancient History (with Greece and Rome). It was already covered by Dr G.J. Cowling, as was its sequel *The New Testament in its Times*, taught by Dr R.J. Banks. We now wanted to go far back in time (I was Head of School) for a lecturer to teach *The Early Civilisations* (such as those of Egypt, the Aegean and Mesopotamia). FIA was chosen out of a very highly qualified field, his breadth being the attraction. He was later promoted to Associate Professor of History. After he left the position it was won by an Egyptologist. Our striking benefits from Frank’s time at Macquarie are set out in Anon (2019: 28–9). In particular he raised the alarming idea (then entirely new in Australia, but now normal) that a foreign qualification (field-work at Tel Aviv) be incorporated into the Macquarie degree structure. He was himself free to take visiting appointments abroad, at Berkeley (First Presbyterian Church, 1976), at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem and the international New Testament Congress at Tübingen (1977), in Leningrad (nullified by the Australian government for political reasons, 1978), at Fuller Seminary (Pasadena) and New College, Berkeley, concurrently with the University there itself (1980), while in that same year which was to prove his last with us Macquarie provided a brief visiting fellowship for Freedman to renew his working connection with Andersen here.



The Japanese translation of Francis I Andersen, The Book of Job, published by Inochi No Kotoba Sha on 22 January 2014. The translator was Shimizu Takeo. Image: courtesy of the Andersen family

The quinquennium in Sydney probably offered the family no attraction domestically and was visibly overshadowed by grief at the death of their young teenager, Martin, carried off in his sleep by an already recognised epilepsy. Academic productivity at this stage was however marked by the appearance of another Andersen flagship, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, in 1974, the year funded by AIA, and a string of eleven articles mainly in its journal, *Buried History*, or other Melbourne and Sydney outlets. A truly unique event was however the publication in London of his commentary on *Job* (1976). Into this compact work addressed to the general public Frank had distilled not only his precious alertness to the nuance of every Hebrew term, but also his own private anguish over the seemingly unanswerable challenge to the rectitude and irrational trust of Job himself. For the rest of his life Frank was to refine his understanding of Job. The revisions were translated into several other languages: Portuguese 1984, Arabic 1990, Chinese 1994, Bulgarian 2004. His final revision in 2011 was translated into Japanese in 2014. Contractual arrangements with Inter-Varsity Press made in 1974 prevent its publication in English. The original English edition continues to sell very well.

The Macquarie years 1975–1980 of course also saw the strong productive drive between FIA and his two ongoing collaborators, as it had developed from the preceding decade when he had been at CDSP, Berkeley. By 1978 Andersen and Freedman had sent to the press the large first volume of the Anchor Bible series of commentaries on the twelve minor prophets. *Hosea*, dedicated to Albright, appeared in New York in 1980. Its preface makes clear the give and take between Macquarie and Michigan, where the MS itself had been processed. In 1976 Andersen and Dean Forbes had produced another two volumes in their Computer Bible series that provided the *Linguistic Concordance* to biblical books. The twelve minor prophets were now completed, with the book of Ruth being coupled to Jonah for their *Hebrew Vocabulary and Idiom*. In 1978 a further two volumes covered the huge book of Jeremiah, split between *I Grammatical Vocabulary and Proper Nouns* and *II Nouns and Verbs*. The New South Wales ‘Antipodeans’ were not doing too badly. They had received financial and material support for their expansive program from the AIA in the wake of Andersen’s arrival. His Macquarie colleagues greatly regretted the loss of Frank to Queensland, where he was to stay longer (1981–1989).

The University of Queensland, in sharp contrast with the University of Sydney and Macquarie University, had not avoided the new-fangled conceit of ‘Religion’ as an academic discipline. It is hard to imagine Andersen falling for that. Yet he applied for the new chair they had advertised in it at Brisbane. Prior to the industrialisation of tertiary teaching the Professor was sovereign. There were no prescribed duties at all. One was a professional, free to decide alone on what, if anything, to do with such a break. The shift to Brisbane is marked in the Andersen c.v. by the intriguing six-year blank after the earlier flood of minor journal articles had stopped in 1977. The list resumes in 1983 with the very different style of the fifteen so-called articles that were produced within the five remaining Queensland years. The word ‘religion’ of course is missing as are any of those comparative themes now associated with that (e.g., worship, ritual, sacrifice). There is now only one article in a minor journal. Three are in new specialised text-related journals, the other eleven appearing in dedicated monographic collections. The individual titles of FIA’s contributions to these reflect his now intense concentration on Hebraic syntax and meaning.

The array begins with the Festschrift for Freedman’s sixtieth birthday (1982). This was sponsored by the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR, founded in 1900), with one hundred and forty different institutional members in the US and Canada. Its Jerusalem Institute bore Albright’s name, and ASOR publications had been much developed by his successor, Freedman, now to be honoured: *The Word of the Lord shall go Forth* (Eisenbrauns, 1983). Its fifty chapters are grouped under key terms: ‘Poetry’, ‘Prose’, ‘History’ and ‘Epigraphy’, but

not ‘Religion’. Most of the major US universities contributed, with Brisbane (FIA/Dean Forbes), Göttingen, Hamburg, Jerusalem, Paris, Rome, Uppsala, but not UK. In 1987 Eisenbrauns matched it for FIA’s sixtieth (1985) with *Perspectives on Language and Text*, edited by E.W. Conrad (Brisbane) and E.G. Newing (Sydney). Babbage and Freedman each wrote an ‘Appreciation’. There are thirty-one contributors, three from Melbourne, eight each in effect from Sydney (i.e. ex-Macquarie) and Brisbane (= UQ), then Berkeley four, Michigan two, minor US two, Jerusalem two, Papua-New Guinea and Stellenbosch one each. Absent are various major US figures, and anyone at all from Canada, Europe, and UK. FIA did not inherit the grand Albright/Freedman establishment. Or (more likely?) neither he nor his local editors cared to seek it. Their sub-title was ‘Essays and Poems’ (including Frank’s own soliloquies). Their chapter groupings (in order of size) were Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, Statistics and Linguistics, Semitics, and Religion. How did Andersen profit from becoming the ‘Professor of Studies in Religion’?

Andersen, though Professor, was not head of the department at Brisbane. That position was held by Ian Gillman, Senior Lecturer, who was therefore responsible for the curriculum and the teaching of it. His contribution to *Perspectives on Language and Text* was ‘Getting to know a religion through the heresies it spawns’. FIA’s five-year run of eleven chapters in other people’s collections is not only focussed on his own distinctive specialty but also mostly authored jointly with Freedman or Dean Forbes. The same goes for three of the books he published in the same pentad, following the 1984 Portuguese translation of *Job*. In 1985 with Dean Forbes he published *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, pp. 379). In 1989 the massive *Amos* commentary with Freedman appeared in the Anchor Bible series (New York: Doubleday pp. 979). Also, in 1989 there was added at Rome to their earlier *Spelling* an Andersen and Forbes *Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico pp. 721). These two now more intensively than ever sustained partnerships may have preoccupied him from the Brisbane department’s point of view.

As usual FIA was also taking supplementary appointments elsewhere. In 1983 he was with Freedman in Michigan to deliver *The Mitchell Dahood Memorial Lectures*. Dahood had died in Rome in 1982 after submitting for the Freedman Festschrift ‘The Minor Prophets and Ebla’. In the same year 1983 FIA contributed to J.H. Charlesworth’s *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol.1, pp. 91–221 on ‘2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch’. Also, in 1983 (date ambiguous in c.v.) he was Professor of Hebrew (honorary?) at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as Visiting Professor of OT at the New College next door. In 1986 he was (again?) Visiting Professor at New College, as well as Exchange Professor in the Faculty of Slavonic Philology, Sofia (Bulgaria). In 1989 he was Exchange Professor at Leningrad, USSR. He was now to retire as Professor of Studies in Religion



Frank with his friend and publisher, Jim Eisenbraun, at home in Donvale in June 2010.
Photo: C.J. Davey

at the University of Queensland (whether obligatory or not?). He informed me that the University would not allow him computer access in retirement. Apparently for this reason (at least) he would be taking the family once more back to California.

The second escape to Berkeley, this time around Frank's age of sixty-five, led the family not to the CDSP and GTU where he had once turned forty and stayed a decade, but to the New College for Advanced Christian Studies, a non-denominational body on the opposite side of the University and not yet affiliated with the GTU. That occurred later after the Andersens had barely stayed there one pentad. They had by then moved south in California to join Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena where FIA was given an endowed chair of OT Theology. The family stayed in Pasadena across much of another pentad before returning home finally to Melbourne where Frank would now still cultivate his multiple callings as he approached age seventy-five, or in the event almost to ninety-five! The University of Melbourne made him a Professorial Fellow in the Department of Classics and Archaeology, renewable from time to time. The publications list shows how actively the long-term projects were being maintained in retirement across nearly a third of a century.

While Andersen was at New College, Berkeley, the Arabic version of *Job* was published in Cairo (1990), and (with Dean Forbes) a second edition of *The Vocabulary of the Old Testament* was brought out in Rome (1992). In *The Computer Bible* series FIA and Dean Forbes produced vol. 34 (1992), *A Key-word-In-Context Concordance to Psalms, Job, and Proverbs*, ed. J. Arthur Baird and

Freedman (pp. 816). With both Freedman and Dean Forbes FIA produced *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography*, being vol. 2 (1992) in *Biblical and Judaic Studies* from the University of California, San Diego (pp. 328). As now perhaps 'Professor at Large' from New College FIA presented 'On marking clause boundaries' at the *Third International Colloquium: Bible and the Computer -- Methods and Tools* (Paris-Geneva 1992). He also contributed *The Second Book of Enoch* to Freedman's *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992) as well as *Amos* and *Hosea* to *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. B.M. Metzger (1993).

After the move south to Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, the production flow looks more like a flood. From 1994 to 1997 there are thirty-four titles listed in the c.v., all substantial. From 1994 itself comes the Chinese *Job*, then two chapters in R.D. Bergen's *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, one on 'Salience, implicature, ambiguity, and redundancy in clause-clause relationships', the other on 'The poetic properties of prophetic discourse in the Book of Micah'. From 1995 come *Scholarly editing of the Hebrew Bible* in a Modern Language Association *Introductory Guide to Research*, followed by six linguistic articles in a variety of biblical collections or journals, some with Dean Forbes, and culminating in his and FIA's own six volume set for *The Computer Bible* series, *A Key-word-in-Context Concordance to the Pentateuch* (pp. 1708). From 1996 come the sixteen volumes (unpublished) of the same concordance for the Hebrew Bible as a whole (pp. 9234), followed in 1997 by two submissions on the matter to the international conference

at Aix-en-Provence, ‘Towards a clause-type concordance of the Hebrew Bible’, and ‘Approximative Tree-Matching as an enabler of Example-Based Translation’.

This massively productive surge through Pasadena was not caused by Fuller Seminary cutting Andersen short. The opposite was the case. His ecclesiastical license to officiate as canonically resident in the diocese of California terminated in 1993 when he left Berkeley. Pasadena had long since been transferred to a new diocese of Los Angeles. Instead he was now (from 1994, and never to be revoked so long as he lived) canonically resident and thus licensed to officiate in the Diocese of Melbourne. But he only reached Melbourne in 1998. It is unimaginable that FIA, the world expert on what words strictly mean, muddled this in his c.v. (though the typing of dates that extend beyond one year is a little unclear sometimes). If one was looking for FIA to be a fundamentalist this might be it, the absolute sanctity of his call to the ordained senior ministry in Christ (the presbyterate in Edinburgh and Sydney, or priesthood in the *Book of Common Prayer*). The Archbishop of Melbourne must have been privy to it. So Frank retired from professional employment (in both Church and State) when he left Berkeley in 1993, anticipating the free life yet to come, but through the generosity of Fuller was able first to crash through the huge task with Dean Forbes before actually heading back down South. They did however set up house in Pasadena for three years.

In Melbourne from 1998 Andersen was not only Professorial Fellow in Classics and Archaeology at the University, but also Visiting Lecturer at Tabor College, while in 1999 the same applied at Ridley College. He gave the Walter J. Beasley Memorial Lecture for 1998 for the Australian Institute of Archaeology (which Beasley had founded and endowed), on ‘I have called you by name’. It was published in 1998 in *Buried History*, for which FIA was then made editor and a Fellow of the AIA. During 1999 seven more popular articles by him were published in it. FIA was concurrently made associate editor of *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* (formerly *Abr-Nahrain*), published by the University, and he presented four articles there. Ten other articles (seven of them with Dean Forbes) were published in collections or as chapters in books between 2002 and 2016, the last marked as ‘forthcoming’. For the *Anchor Bible*, commentaries were published in 2000 on *Micah* (with Freedman, pp. 637), and in 2001 on *Habakkuk* (as sole author, pp. 387). In 2004 (with Richard S. Hess) FIA published *Names in the Study of Biblical History* (Melbourne: AIA), while *Job* also appeared in that year in Bulgarian. In 2012 (with A. Dean Forbes) FIA produced *Biblical Hebrew Grammar Visualized*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 6 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns). The enormous *Amos* (with Freedman, in the *Anchor Bible*, originally pp. 979) had been revised for the Japanese edition of 2014.

It will be clear that this memorial is constructed essentially from Frank Andersen’s own c.v. along with a few reflections of mine. To take it as the record of a relentlessly pedantic academic would be a gross and absurd mistake. I have kept referring to his ‘family’ to hint at the fundamental reality of a joyful yet at times emotionally challenged life, inspired by the most generous convictions. For the authentic human experience of life with Frank see the many voices in *Anon*, and the personal tribute by Terry Falla provided electronically on the day of Frank’s funeral (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIRgK0EHLHg>).

E.A. Judge AM FAHA,
Emeritus Professor of History,
Macquarie University.

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Acknowledgement:

The assistance of Frank’s sons, David and John, is gratefully acknowledged for providing illustrations and commenting on situations referred to in the text.

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A Tribute:



Noel Kenneth Weeks 1943 – 2020

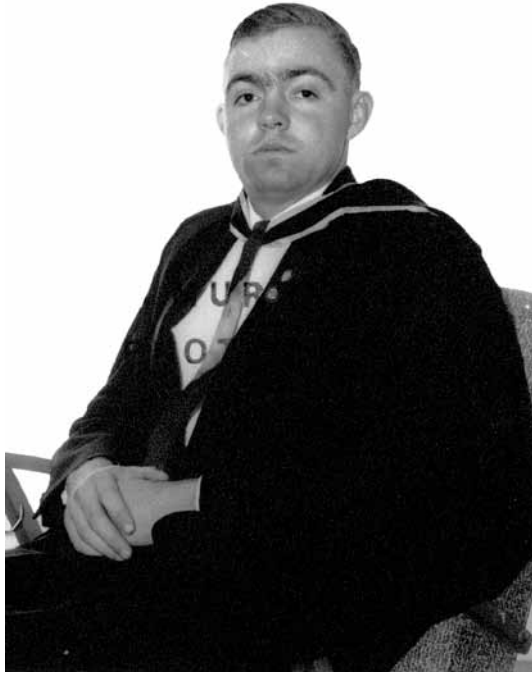
BSc (Hons) UNE, BD and ThM Westminster Theol. Sem., MA and PhD Brandeis

Dr Noel Kenneth Weeks passed away on 8 March 2020. His memorial service at the Shire Christian School celebrated many aspects of his life: father and husband, teacher, scholar, and his ministry.¹ The large crowd in attendance was testimony to the impact Noel had on those who encountered him in both his personal and professional lives. This tribute is written by two of his students who gained so much from his lessons, supervision, and personal connections; and it will concentrate on Noel Weeks' academic life.

Noel Weeks spent the majority of his career as Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Sydney (1971–2004) where he taught courses in Ancient Near Eastern history and religions, historiography, and Akkadian language. Noel served as Honorary Lecturer until 2012, and then as Honorary Associate at both the University of Sydney and at Macquarie University for the remainder of his life.

Noel was an outstanding teacher and scholar who saw many of his students pursue PhDs successfully. In addition to his work as an historian, Noel was equally a theologian and a philosopher. As one of the present authors said of Noel Weeks in the Preface of his published PhD: 'The concise and thoughtful manner in which he could inspire a path of inquiry, crystallize a series of thoughts, or rip to shreds an unfounded argument has been appreciated by and been of benefit to all of his students' (Jackson 2008: xi).

Noel Weeks was a remarkably generous man. In addition to his lecturing duties, he regularly taught interested students Amarna-Canaanite, Sumerian, Hittite and Hurrian outside of term time and always free of charge. He spent hours speaking with students about their papers, sharing ideas and encouraging them to pursue areas of interest further. He had a kindness and patience for students that is rarely seen.



*Figure 1: A Young Noel Weeks upon his graduation.
Photo: courtesy of the Weeks family.*

From Zoology to Assyriology via the Old Testament

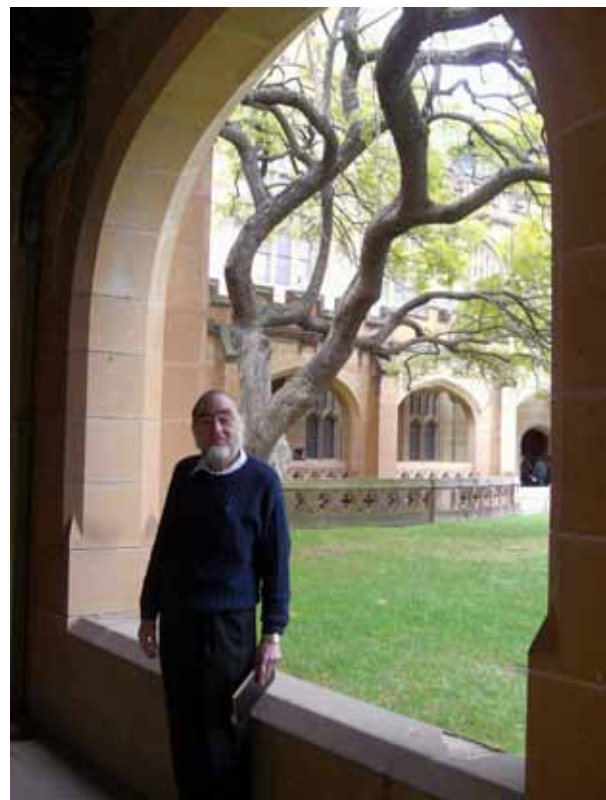
Noel Weeks was born in Grafton in northern New South Wales in 1943. His family recount stories of him running around town barefoot, only wearing shoes on one day of the year: the Jacaranda Festival. Noel's undergraduate study was in zoology at the University of New England in Armidale, in which he was awarded First Class Honours. It was during this time that Noel became a Christian and with this came a change of direction from zoology to theology, and from regional New South Wales to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, USA. Noel received a BD and a ThM, and discovered a deep interest in the Hebrew Bible. One suspects that Noel would have enjoyed a satisfying academic career with an impact on many students regardless of whichever field he pursued. However, Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern studies in Australia are incredibly fortunate that Noel found his interest in the Hebrew Bible during his studies in America.

Such was Noel Weeks' interest in the Hebrew Bible that he remained in the USA and enrolled in an MA/PhD programme in Mediterranean Studies at Brandeis University in Massachusetts. There he received training in the languages of the Ancient Near East, such as Akkadian, Sumerian, Egyptian, and Ugaritic, as well as courses in Near Eastern history and comparative Bible. In the later 1970s, Noel spent time at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where, in addition to his own research, he read Assyriology with Hayim Tadmor and learnt Arabic well enough to read the daily paper.

Scholarship

As students of Noel's we were entertained by many stories from his time at Brandeis and Jerusalem, but more importantly much of his education here shaped his understanding of the methodology of Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern history. Noel Weeks brought much from his own studies to the benefit of his students. Reputedly, one of his lecturers from this time, Cyrus H. Gordon, used to charge his doctoral students that if they kept writing the same old popular scholarship that they need not return and visit him. Gordon was arguably the leading Ancient Near Eastern and Hebrew Bible scholar in North America after Albright and was one of the first scholars to decipher and understand the Ugaritic language. Interestingly, Noel's thesis, actually critiqued Gordon's own scholarship, even though he was an examiner. This reflected an important maxim that Noel had picked up from Gordon himself: 'Any fool can amend a text, but it takes a true scholar to solve it as it stands.' Influenced by these early studies, two areas of essential advice Noel always gave apprentices in his class were: 1) always look at what is written in the ancient text, not what the secondary literature says about it; 2) attempt to uncover the hidden assumptions behind the secondary scholarship to better protect against it influencing the way you read the texts.

Two other influences on Noel Weeks' scholarship reinforced these two lessons. The first piece of advice was



*Figure 2: Noel Weeks near the famous Jacaranda Tree in the Main Quadrangle, The University of Sydney.
Photo: courtesy of the Weeks family*

also developed during his training in zoology, which led him to ask ‘what is the evidence?’ for any question put before him. The second piece of advice was also heavily influenced by Noel’s time at Westminster Theological Seminary, particularly his apologetics classes under Cornelius Van Til. Van Til’s emphasis on the importance of presupposition in scholarship struck a chord with Noel. He had recognised the difficulty in wrestling with the scientific approach which often saw the scholar forming their reading of the evidence according to the prevailing presuppositions.² This situation was also relevant to the constant struggle of historians to separate their reading of the observable past from their presuppositions. This tension between the inevitable role of presupposition and the importance of an authentic reading of the evidence led to the overall theme throughout much of Noel’s scholarly work, which often explored the way modern ideas had shaped scholarship’s reading of the Ancient Near East. While pointing out that most scholarly theoretical frameworks oversimplified a more complex reality evidenced in the sources, in his own scholarship Noel Weeks often asked whether there was a better paradigm that was more compatible with the actual evidence for the ancient Near East and/or the Bible.

Noel Weeks never published his PhD thesis on Nuzi (1972), but his journey during these years is indicative of his methodology. The thesis was supervised by the Nuzi specialist, Ernest R. Lachman, but its origins lay in the influence of Cyrus Gordon and his diffusionist thesis that saw a common background of the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean (see e.g. Gordon 1965). By the end of his thesis work, Noel found that the diffusionist model, as far as it concerned Nuzi and the Bible, was false and that models brought from outside did not explain the Nuzi data. Nuzi had to be unique in terms of the existing data (see Weeks 1975–1976). Interestingly, Noel Weeks’ findings coincided with the movement away from the hitherto dominant Albright School in North America, which sought to confirm the biblical account of ancient Israel through archaeology (see Machinist 1996).

Throughout his career, Noel Weeks used a close reading of the evidence to challenge the existing models that dominated Ancient Near Eastern studies and interpretations of the Bible.³ He was not a pure empiricist, and critiqued empiricism as a theoretical model due to its limits. He used to speak of such an approach as like having all the pearls and no necklace to string them on. He emphasised the evidence as paramount in history, and critiqued those who forced it into pre-existing assumptions or theoretical models; again he used the analogy of this approach being like having the string with no pearls to place on it. Though Noel certainly had his own set of presuppositions, he worked hard to ensure that this did not lead him to try and make the evidence say more than it actually did, being comfortable with less than certain, tentative conclusions. His articles contained significant critiques, such as that of the roaming nomadic model for



Figure 3: Noel Weeks at home characteristically writing lectures by hand.

Photo: courtesy of the Weeks family

understanding the appearance of new peoples in the Near East, whether that stemming from the influence of the Enlightenment fascination with nomads that goes back at least to Anne Robert Jacques Turgot and Adam Smith, or the anti-Semitic version in Hugo Winckler that linked nomadism to Semitism (Weeks 1985). Another assumption he critiqued was that there were inherent connections between myths and ritual practice in Egypt and the Near East (Weeks 2015). In his article on the care of officials in Old Kingdom Egypt (Weeks 1983), he also questioned the anachronistic presumption of a church-state rivalry as a key dynamic in ancient Egyptian history. Most recently, Noel challenged the assumed systematisation of Mesopotamian religion (Weeks 2019b).

Noel Weeks’ two major monographs were his greatest statements on methodology. The first was his *Admonition and Curse* (2004), which examined the relationship between systems of governance and treaty practice in Egypt and the Ancient Near East. Previously, scholars such as Meredith G. Kline (1963), and Kenneth A. Kitchen’s studies in the 1970s (see now Kitchen and Lawrence 2012) had turned the data to fit a scheme with the Mosaic Deuteronomy at its centre. Noel Weeks argued, however, that the data was more complex and that the overarching assumption in the previous studies was that an international treaty form hovered above the respective cultures and histories.⁴ The overlap between the Hittites and the

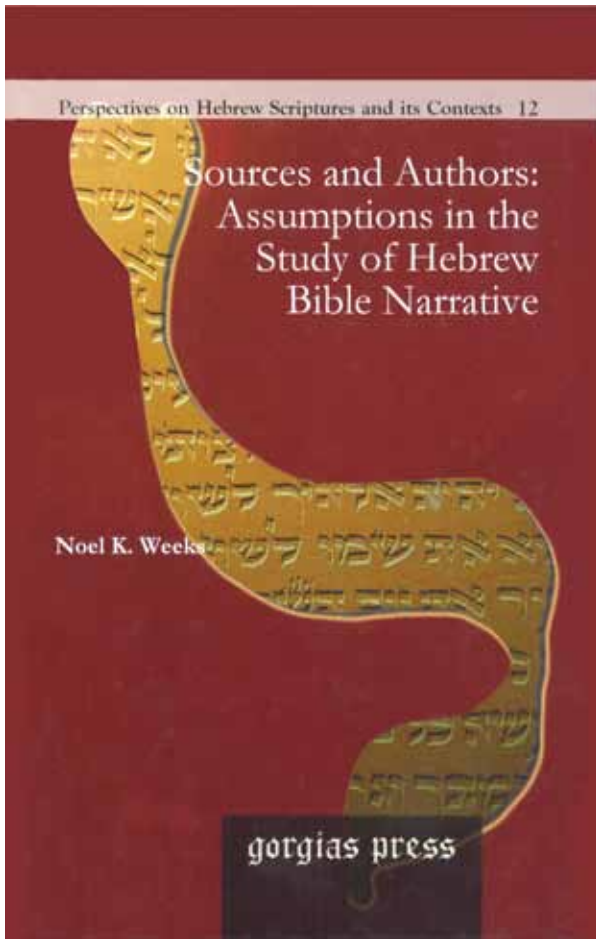


Figure 4: Noel's last book *Sources and Authors* (2001 New Jersey: Gorgias Press).

biblical treaty practice is a point where separate cultures have what seems a shared cultural system. The reasons for their taking this up are diverse. The Bible does not imitate Hittite practice, rather it utilises older forms because they fit its ideological context, just as the Hittites found a way of making treaties and historical records work together for quite different reasons. The Egyptians, on the contrary, were willing to use international treaty forms under Hittite pressure pragmatically, but did not use them for imperial purposes in their dominions, as evidenced in the Amarna Letters. Assyria shows the fascinating phenomenon of integrating treaty into its predominant paradigm of power, but then when it no longer had the power, attempted belatedly to rewrite the paradigm.

In *Sources and Authors* (2011), Noel Weeks examined scholars' presuppositions more explicitly. The traditional Documentary and Developmental Hypothesis saw the Bible through the framework of a culmination of Enlightened and Romantic theories of the development of religion. That is, religion arose out of primitive superstition, was then refined more in the direction of ethical monotheism, before being captured by the priesthood. Noel saw that much of the scholarly literature on

the history of the biblical text had been interpreted to fit this thesis. The Enlightenment, with its conflict with the church, saw priestly dominance as the great threat to freedom of religion. Therefore Chronicles, with its interest in the Levites and the priests, had to be a late phenomenon. On this particular point, Noel Weeks argued that the evidence points more to Chronicles' interest in priests and organisation in general as a concern for the weakness of the sacerdotal element in Israel at the time of the Return. Scholarship has tended to assume from this point that the earliest elements of the biblical text must be unsophisticated and lumped together under the influence of priestly reverence for tradition so that contradictions were ignored, hence the importance of the duplicate narratives to the Documentary Hypothesis. Noel argued instead that if one assumes the sophistication of the biblical author of whole documents and forgets the theory of late priestly dominance, one can better explain the same data. Namely, that apparent redundancies and contradictions are devices for literary effect rather than evidence of an inability on the part of the ancient authors to produce a sophisticated text.

Ministry and Theology

Noel Weeks' interests were wide-ranging. In addition to his Near Eastern scholarship, he contributed enormously to the Christian Schools movement in Australia, other forms of Christian ministry, and theology. Noel published the influential volume *The Christian School* (1988), was the founding Chairman of the Sutherland Shire Christian School's board from 1971 (with which he kept an association until his passing), lectured at the National Institute of Christian Education, and advocated against undue government interference in education. In addition to publishing *The Sufficiency of Scripture* (1988) and *Gateway to the Old Testament* (1996), Noel was a sought-after speaker regarding his favourite topics and their overlap: theology, the Bible, the Ancient Near East, and Science. This took him around the world from Vancouver to South Africa, and in recent times, back to his *alma mater* at Westminster Theological College to deliver the Gaffin Memorial lecture. He applied the same close reading of evidence along with critical analysis of current assumptions in this work. His interest in both theology and the Near East is also reflected in his role as Chairman of MERF (Middle East Reformed Fellowship) from 2005 until his passing.

Final thoughts

Noel Weeks was a gifted and generous scholar, yet he was humble. Noel's son, Keith Weeks, shared with the authors that Noel taught his family not to think too highly of his scholarly achievements. Keith went on:

That was difficult not to do, because he really was very gifted. But he understood the limits of his own understanding and human understanding in general, which was born out of his faith in an all wise, all knowing God. I still remember him addressing some Christian university students

and quoting Jeremiah 9:23–24 ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom...but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me.’ And then he said something like, ‘It’s very easy in a university context to take pride in learning and knowledge, but what matters most is the knowledge of God.’

Noel treated all his students with respect, provided support for them regardless of their circumstances, and had tremendous patience for, and confidence in, his students to develop over time. For many students, he was an important figure in their adult lives, and he will be dearly missed. He was an inspiration to so many and a role model for all.

Luis R. Siddall
Research Fellow
Australian Institute of Archaeology

Samuel A. Jackson
Head of History
Arndell Anglican College

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Endnotes

- 1 The memorial service was live streamed and can still be viewed at: <http://acl.asn.au/thanksgiving-service-for-dr-noel-weeks/>. The authors would like to thank the Weeks family, especially Noel’s wife, Jan Weeks, and his son, Keith Weeks, for their help and support in writing this tribute. All photos were supplied by the Weeks family.
- 2 Noel Weeks lectured on the influence of Thomas Kuhn (1962) on inductive reasoning in science and history. The process of the paradigm shift was of particular interest to him.
- 3 Fitting was Engle’s (2005) review of *Admonition and Curse* in which he commended Noel’s ‘breadth of scholarship with his treatment and personal translation of treaty/covenant texts from Egypt to Hatti that is truly noteworthy.’
- 4 This point also has been taken up in Weeks 2010 and 2020.

A Babylonian Astronomical Diary in the Abbey Museum, Caboolture, Queensland

Peter Zilberg, Hermann Hunger, Luis R. Siddall,
Michael Strong and Wayne Horowitz

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62614/zt216c23>

Abstract: The paper presents an edition of a Babylonian astronomical diary dated to the reign of Seleucus IV. The diary is dated on historic and astronomic grounds to 175 BCE and serves, thus far, as the earliest mention for the reinstatement of a royal representative over the Esagil temple in Babylon during the late Seleucid period.

Dedication: *The members of CANZ project acknowledge the passing of Dr Noel Weeks of the University of Sydney. Dr Weeks was the foremost lecturer in Akkadian and other cuneiform languages during his 40-year career. Indeed, the CANZ project has directly benefited from Dr Weeks in that Luis Siddall studied Akkadian under him for many years. We trust that this article on a scholarly cuneiform text is a fitting tribute to a man who did so much to keep the languages of the Ancient Near East alive for Australian students.*

Introduction

The Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology in Caboolture, Queensland, just north of Brisbane, Australia, is a small archaeological museum with holdings dating from prehistoric times through to modern times in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. It is best known locally for its annual Medieval Festival, held each Southern Hemisphere winter in July. The museum is the new incarnation of the Abbey Folk Park, in New Barnet, London, founded by Rev. John S.M. Ward. His innovative folk park closed after the Second World War and some of the collection came to Australia where a new gallery to house the collection opened in 1986 (Ginn 2011; Agnew and Strong 1986; Strong 2006; & Strong 2016).

Among the holdings of the Abbey Museum is a small, but significant collection of cuneiform tablets which Luis Siddall (LS), Peter Zilberg (PZ) and Wayne Horowitz (WH) visited and studied as part of the Cuneiform in Australia and New Zealand Project (CANZ) (Siddall and Horowitz 2013, Siddall 2015, and Horowitz et al. 2015). The CANZ project wishes to thank the Abbey Museum for permission to study and publish the tablets in the Museum's collections, in particular Edith Cuffe (Director), Michael Strong (Senior Curator) and Jan Nargar (Registrar) for their overwhelming hospitality and enthusiasm during our visits to the Museum and Caboolture.

Ward was an intuitive eclectic collector, whose acquisitions ranged from prehistoric flints and Roman pottery to Japanese wood cuts and medieval stained glass, from Victorian bric-à-brac to ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian antiquities. He was, perhaps, more interested in the human story than the artistic or cultural significance of his artefacts. From the 1920s, Britain experienced a growth of interest in collecting anything from postage stamps to antique porcelain. Previously, this had been

the domain of the wealthy but then even the less well-off could acquire collectables for their personal delectation (Egginton 2017). Only a few collectors, Ward among them, progressed these personal collections to become small innovative museums like his entrepreneurial Folk Park. Many of the objects in the Folk Park came by way of donation solicited by Ward through British newspapers (Abbey Museum Archives 1934-39). However, one source of museum quality artefacts was a London antiquities dealer, George Fabian Lawrence (AKA Stoney Jack), of Wandsworth. It is most likely that this was the source of Ward's small group of Mesopotamian clay tablets. He kept only scribbled lists of his acquisitions, but these show that the clay tablets were acquired between 1934-1937, two years before George Fabian Lawrence passed away. Although Lawrence was mainly interested in British antiquities, various British museums have records that cuneiform tablets were purchased from him (Hicks 2013: 457), and he is well known for selling the British Museum some of their Luristan Bronzes from Iran. The collection includes a fragment of an astronomical diary of the type edited in the series *Astronomical Diaries and*



Figure 1: Abbey Museum, Caboolture, Queensland.
Image: courtesy Abbey Museum.

Related Texts from Babylon (ADART) by Hermann Hunger (HH) and Abraham Sachs. An overview and edition of the earliest group of these texts is available in ADART I.

Initially, LS studied the collection and MS had provided photographs of the Astronomical Diary fragment to HH, who completed a preliminary edition of the tablet. This edition was made available to PZ and WH who collated the tablet and completed an improved edition, which was

then sent to HH for his comments and suggestions. The edition below is thus the product of all the contributors listed as authors of this paper, but final responsibility for any errors or misunderstandings in the edition, and the other parts of this article including the commentary, and discussion that follows are to be blamed solely on PZ and WH. A related article on the Juniper Garden of Babylon is published in this volume of *Buried History* Horowitz (2020).



Figure 2A: *Obverse, Babylon Astronomical Diary. Reg No W00589, Dimensions 97 x 73 x 26.*
Image: Courtesy of the Abbey Museum, Caboolture



Figure 2B: *Reverse, Babylon Astronomical Diary. Reg No W00589, Dimensions 97 x 73 x 26.*
Image: Courtesy of the Abbey Museum, Caboolture

Upper Edge

- 1'. [...]^mSe-lu-ku LUGAL
- 2'. [...]

Obverse

1. [...] x x x x x x x x x [...]
2. [...D]IRI.SAL.AN.ZA SI GIN 3 SAG.G[E₆ ...]
3. [...] x x 'SI¹ GIN 4 DIRI.SAL.AN.ZA SI G[IN...]
4. [...]x x x x x 'SAG HUN¹ 2 KÙŠ 30 x KÙŠ *ana* ÛLU SÍG x x [...]
5. [...] x ÛLU GIN x x x x [x TÙ]R KÁ-šú *ana* ÛLU BAD 'DIRI.AN.ZA¹ [...]
6. [...] x GÍR.GÍR 'GÛ-u MAH AN DUL-hat¹[x x] GE₆ 6 SAG.GE₆ 30 *ina* IGI MÚL.MÚ[L ...]
7. [... Z]A IM.DUGUD *i-ša ina* KI[N.SI]G DIR[I.AN.Z]A GE₆ '7¹ SAG.GE₆ 30 e GIŠ.DA (*is le₁₀*) 1 K[ÙŠ ...]
8. [...] x x x x x [x x] x x G[E₆ 8] SAG GE₆ 30 SIG šur GIGIR šá SI 2 KÙŠ [...]
9. [... G]E₆ 9 SAG GE₆ 30 e MÚ[L á]r še-^rpit¹ [MAŠ].MAŠ x KÙŠ 30 *i-ša ana* NIM DIB DIR.AN.ZA [...]
10. [... 30 TÙ]R NÍGIN ÛLU GIN x x x GE₆ 10 'SAG¹ GE₆ 30 *ina* IGI MAŠ.MAŠ IGI 2 KÙŠ 30 3 KÙŠ *ana* 'ULÙ SIG¹ [...]
11. [... DIR.A]N.ZA ÛLU.'NE 1-en bu²-tuq-tú^{d1}TIR.AN.NA TA ÛLU *ana* SI GIB GE₆ 11 SAG G[E₆ ...]
12. [... D]IR.AN.ZA 30 'TÙR¹ SAG NIGIN¹ ma-diš iq-tur₇ GENNA *ana* UGU¹ DUR-šú *ana* NIM GUB [...]
13. [... G]IN 1 1/2 KÙŠ *ana* SI NIM DIR.'SAL.AN¹.ZA 30 TÙR NU KÁD NÍGIN GE₆ 13 'SAG¹ G[E₆ ...]
14. [...] 'ZA ÛLU ŠÁR¹ GE₆ 14 6,40 ME DIR NU PAP SAG GE₆ ŠÚ ŠÚ ÛLU GIN [...]
15. [...] x x x x IGI.MEŠ È AN.BAR₇ AN UTAH *i-ša* GE₆ [...]
16. [...] x x x x x x SI GIN GE₆ 15 SAG G[E₆ ...]
17. [...] x x x x 16 GU₄.UD *ina* NIM *ina* GÍR.TAB ŠÚ NU.[PAP ...]
18. [... DIR]I.SAL.AN.ZA kal GE₆ ŠÚ ŠÚ ÛLU ŠÁR 1[7 ...]
19. [...] x x x 30 *ina* IGI MÚL e šá SAG G[ÍR.TAB ...]
20. [...] x x x x x x x [...]
21. [...] x ŠÚ ŠÚ x [...]

Reverse

- 1'. [...] x x [...]
- 2'. [...] '16¹ GU₄.UD *ina* ŠÚ *ina* ZIB^[me?] ...]
- 3'. [...EN] '6¹ 5 SI LAL PAP 7 na 'TA 7 EN 13 na¹ 8 x x [x (x)]
- 4'. [...] È 19 4 SI šá e ILLU ŠÚ LAL na *ina* KIN².SIG TA x [(x)]
- 5'. [...L]UGAL *ina* ^{uru}An-tu-ki-'a-a šá *ana* muh-hi [ⁱd]ma-rat-tu[m]
- 6'. [...] 'É¹ mil-ki šá *ina* GIŠ.KIRI₆ GI[Š.Š]IM.LI ^{lu}NAGAR^[mes¹] šá É-sag-gíl x [x]
- 7'. [... É]-sag-gíl ^mBa-rak-ku-a ^{lu}za-zak-ku u UKKIN šá LÚ.K[Ù.DIM.MEŠ]
- 8'. [... ^{lu}ŠÀ.TAM É-sag-gíl u ^{lu}]E.KI.MEŠ *ana* NÍG.GA É-sag-gíl KU₄-ub ITU.BI
- 9'. [... ^{uru}Se-lu-ke-'a]-^ra¹ šá *ana* muh-hi ^{id}IDIGNA u ^{id}LUGAL KIN-á[r]

-
- 10'. [...]
 - 11'. [MU 1 ME 36].KÁM ^mSe-lu-ku LUGAL

Upper Edge

- 1'. [...] king Seleucus
- 2'. [...]

Obverse

1. [...]. [...]
2. [...th]in clouds were in the sky, the north-wind blew, 3rd of the month, beginning of the nig[ht ...]
3. [...] . . the north wind blew. 4th of the month, thin clouds were in the sky, the northwind b[lew ...]
4. [...] 2 cubits behind the head of ‘the Hired Man’ (α Arietis), the Moon being . cubits low to the south . . [...]
5. [...] . the southwind blew [. a hall]o with its gate open to the south, clouds were in the sky [...]
6. [...]. lightning flashed, much thunder, rain . . [. .] night of the 6th, start of the night the Moon in front of ‘the Star[s]’ (Pleiades)...
7. [... thin clouds were in the sk]y a little fog, in the af[terno]on clou[ds were in the s]ky. Night of the 7th, beginning of the night, the Moon was 1 c[ubit] above the Jaw of the Bull (α Tauri) [...]
8. [...] [. .] . . Nig[ht of the 8th], beginning of the night, the Moon was 2 cubits below ‘the northern (variable star) of the Chariot (β Tauri). [...]
9. [... Nig]ht of the 9th, beginning of the night, the Moon was . . . cubits above the re[ar ... s]tar of ‘The [Tw]ins’ feet (μ Geminorum) the Moon passed a little to the east, clouds were in the sky [...]
10. [... the Moon] was surrounded by a [ha]lo, a southwind blew Night of the 10th, beginning of the night, the Moon was 2 cubits in front of the front ‘Twin’ star (α Geminorum), the Moon, 3 cubits low to the south [...]
11. [... clouds were in t]he sky, hot southwind, one section of a rainbow stretched from south to north, Night of the 11th, beginning of the nig[ht ...]
12. [... cl]ouds were in the sky, the moon was surrounded by a halo at its top, it billowed very much. Saturn stood on its (the halo’s) band to the east [...]
13. [... wen]t 1 and 1/2 cubits to the east, clouds were in the sky, the moon was surrounded by a halo that was not closed. Night of the 13th, beginning of the nig[ht ...]
14. [... clouds were in the s]ky, the southwind gusted. Night of the 14th, moonrise to sunset 6,40, cloudy, I did not watch. Beginning of the night, very overcast, the southwind blew [...]
15. [...] were seen, came out, around noon a little light rain, darkness? [...]
16. [...]the southwind blew. Night of the 15th, beginning of the nig[ht ...]
17. [...] 16th, Mercury in the east in ‘The Scorpion’ set. I did not [watch ...]
18. [... cl]ouds were in the sky all night, very overcast, the southwind gusted. The 1[7th ...]
19. [...] . . . the Moon in front of the upper star of the head of ‘The S[corpion (β Scorpii) ...]
20. [...] [...]
21. [...] . very overcast . [...]

Reverse

- 1’. [...] . . [...]
- 2’. [...] the 16th, Mercury in the west in ‘The Tails[s]’ (Pisces) ...]
- 3’. [... until the] 6th, 5 fingers the river level receded, total 7 was the *na*(-gauge). From the 7th to the [1]3th the *na*(-gauge) was 8 . . [. .]
- 4’. [...] . it rose. On the 19th, 4 fingers above the normal peak flood on the *na*(-gauge). In the afternoon from . [.]
- 5’. [... the k]ing in Antiochia which is on the Se[a]
- 6’. [... the hou]se of the council which is in the Ju[ni]per Garden, the carpenters of Esagil . [.]
- 7’. [... E]sagil, Barakku’a the *zazakku*-official and the assembly of the go[l]dsmiths]
- 8’. [... the administrator of Esagil and the] Babylonians has entered the treasures of Esagil. That month
- 9’. [... to Seleuci]a on the Tigris and the King’s Canal he sen[t]

10’. [(...)]

11’. [Year 136] king Seleucus

Notes

Obv. 1 The line is rather fragmentary, but one can suggest reading the preserved signs as: 'a-pir muš ina¹ x '... earthshine, measured ...'

Obv. 6 For DUL-*hat* as a yet unidentified weather phenomena, see ADART I 30.

Obv. 8 For this still unidentified part of the Chariot constellation see ADART I 29 = *našrapu*.

Obv. 15 GE₆ at the end of the line cannot begin the entry for the next night the 15th, which begins in the next line.

Rev. 5' For the equation of this toponym with Antiochia on the Orontes, see Van Der Spek 1997/1998; Horowitz and Gera 1997. For additional sources which mention this toponym see AD -155A; AD -149A; AD -143C; BCHP 12.

Rev. 6' *Bīt-milki* 'house of council/ deliberation house' is mentioned in cuneiform sources from the Parthian period. An astronomical diary (AD -93 obv. 25) mentions that the 'house of council' was the place where scrolls were read to the temple administrator (Akk. *šatammu*) and the assembly (Akk. *kiništu*) of Esagil (Boiy 2004: 202–204; Van der Spek 1998: 225–226). Thus, 'The house of council' might have served as a place where legal disputes were heard (Hackl 2013: 304–305), and as an important gathering place where orders from the king were read (Van der Spek 2009: 109, 113). Furthermore, the 'house of council' appears as the title of Raḥīm-Esu, who was designated as the 'guard of the council house' in several texts from the Parthian period (Van der Spek 1998: nos. 13, 23). However, as noted already by Jursa (1997: 131), his title probably referred to a council house of Esabad (temple of Gula in Babylon) and not that of Esagil.

Rev. 7' The *zazakku*-official is mentioned several times in the astronomical diaries: AD -168A r 14'; AD -168B r 13'; AD -168C1 r 6'; AD 163C r 17'. A deputy of the *zazakku* is also mentioned in a chronicle from the reign of Antiochus V (164–162 B.C.), which records a case of gold theft from the Esagil temple (BCHP 15). These instances date to the reigns of Antiochus IV and V, but none mention a *zazakku* official by his personal name. For the suffix *u'a* (=aw)/*u'ā* in West-Semitic and Late-Babylonian names, see Zadok 1977: §11251113; §112536.

Goldsmiths are mentioned once in an unclear context in AD -175B, which dates to the same year as our text (see below), and in two additional diaries from -168 B.C. (AD -168A and -168B), together with the *zazakku*-official. The latter two describe an event in which treasures and property of Esagil were given to the *zazakku*-official and the assembly of the goldsmiths.

For a discussion of assemblies (Akk. *kiništu*), see Hackl 2018.

Rev. 8' The treasures or property of Esagil (NÍG.GA *É-sag-gil*) are mentioned several times in the astronomical diaries: AD -330A r 5'; AD -168A r 14'; AD -165A r A6'^(?); AD -132C r 27'.

Discussion and Date

The obverse of the present text begins as expected at the start of what we suppose is month XI. Clear skies with some thin clouds allow for observations of the Moon and stars, but the weather has changed by the 5th of the month which is marked by a thunder-storm. As in the Jewish, Muslim, and some Christian liturgical calendars, the Babylonian day begins at sunset of the previous 24-hour period. Hence the Jewish sabbath on Saturday begins on Friday night.

A few nights of good weather follow from the 6th to the 10th, but by the day of the 10th the weather again changes, with an apparent wind blowing in from the south, bringing with it what must have been rain showers since the diary reports clouds, and then a rainbow (that) stretched from south to north. That night, the night of the 11th, the skies cleared allowing the astronomers to report observations of the Moon, Saturn, and Mercury. From the 13th onwards the clouds close in with light rain reported on the 14th of the month, but with enough clear skies for a report of Mercury in Scorpio on the 16th. After this, as the text breaks away towards the end of the obverse as overcast conditions predominate. The reverse of the tablet picks up with astronomical observations for the end of the last month of the diary with an observation of Mercury recorded for the 16th of Month XII. Although one would expect high day numbers at the end of a monthly paragraph, we assume that the statement regarding Mercury can be considered as part of the surviving planetary summary.

Lines 3'-4' of the reverse provide the reader with a report on the river level of the Euphrates at Babylon as measured on the *na*-gauge or scale (ADART I 34–36), followed by an historical notice (Pirngruber 2013; Tuplin 2019). The notice makes mention of the Esagil temple, the Juniper Garden and the house of council which was situated in the garden's compound in Babylon (Horowitz 2020). Furthermore, it refers to Antiochia on the Orontes, Seleucia on the Tigris and the King's Canal.¹ The partially preserved date formula requires that the diary be placed in the reign of Seleucus (I–IV).

The diary mentions the *zazakku*-official in connection with property of the Esagil temple in Babylon. In Seleucid Babylonia, this office seems to be attested so far only after 168 BCE, during the reigns of Antiochus IV–V. The *zazakku* was an official appointed by the king who served as the royal representative in the temple. The office seems to have been discontinued during the Achaemenid period and reinstated only in the late Seleucid period. The latest attestations of the *zazakku* in Achaemenid Babylonia are given by Kleber (2017: 703) and Beaulieu (1993), and for Neo-Babylonian and Seleucid times Dandamaev (1994),

Joannès (1994), MacGinnis (1996), Clancier (2012: 316–318), Monerie (2018: 383), Del Monte (1997: 79) and McEwan (1981: 27).

As stated above, this astronomical diary should be dated to the reign of Seleucus I–IV. Therefore, as all other attestations of this official date to the reign of Antiochus IV–V, the text should be placed in the reign of Seleucus IV, the older brother of Antiochus IV, who ruled the Seleucid empire between 187–175 BCE. Furthermore, the Mercury and lunar data that appear in the text clearly suggest that the text preserves observations for months XI–XII of 136 SE, i.e. 175 BCE. According to computation provided by HH, the Mercury phenomenon occurred on month XII, day 17, 175 BCE. This fits the preserved text on line 2' of the reverse and secures the date of the tablet.

Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary state of the text, the exact course of historical events is difficult to reconstruct. However, we can suggest that the office of the *zazakku* had already been reinstated during the reign of Seleucus IV. The reinstatement of a royal representative over Esagil might have been prompted, at least in part, by pressing financial needs and political instabilities. Boiy (2004: 210, 224) and Geller (1991: 2) have already suggested that the office of the *zazakku* was reinstated in order to tighten the royal control over the temple's income in Babylon. This seems to be the case also in other regions of the Seleucid empire during the reign of Seleucus IV, who appointed officials in temples, levied new taxes and abolished certain privileges across the Seleucid empire.²

Peter Zilberg,
Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Hermann Hunger,
University of Vienna

Luis R. Siddall,
Australian Institute of Archaeology

Michael Strong,
Abbey Museum, Caboolture

Wayne Horowitz
Hebrew University, Jerusalem

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Abbreviations

AD Astronomical Dairy

ADART A.J. Sachs, & H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

BCHP I.L. Finkel, R.J. van der Spek, R. Pirngruber, *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period*, Atlanta: SBL, 2020.

CIIP IV W. Ameling, H.M. Cotton, W. Eck, A. Ecker, B. Isaac, A. Kushnir-Stein, H. Misgav, J. Price, P. Weiß, & A. Yardeni, *Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, Volume IV: Iudaea/Idumaea, 2649–3978, Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2018.

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Endnotes

- 1 For Seleucia on Tigris see for example the following attestations: AD -171B; AD -178C; AD -179B; AD -181; AD -187A; AD -251. For Seleucia on Tigris and the King's Canal see AD -162; BHP 14: 5-6.
- 2 For a detailed discussion of the abolition of privileges on certain communities and the taxation of temples by Seleucus IV, in light of the so called Heliodoros stele (CIIP IV 3511-2) and additional documents, see Cotton-Paltiel, Ecker and Gera 2017. The financial constraints were caused, at least in part, by the Apamea treaty (McDonald 1967; Paltiel 1979; Gera 1997: 90). For a discussion of the well-known passages that preserve an echo of this episode in the book of Daniel (11 20) and 2 Macabees 3, see Scolnic 2016; Rappaport 2011. For temple despoliation as a standard procedure in the Seleucid empire, see Taylor 2014.

The Juniper Garden of Babylon and the Funeral of Alexander the Great

Wayne Horowitz

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Abstract: The Juniper Garden (GIŠ.KIRI₆ 𒌆ŠIM.LI), or perhaps better the Juniper Orchard or Juniper Grove of Babylon, was a large shaded open area within the walls of the city. Sumerian 𒌆ŠIM.LI = Akkadian *burāšu*, is both the juniper tree and the aromatic substance obtained from the juniper tree. The word is translated as ‘cypress’ in Sachs-Hunger *Diaries I* where the garden is referred to as ‘the Cypress Garden.’ Later volumes translate ‘juniper.’

Dedication: to Professors Leonard Muellner, Douglas Stewart, and Dr. Martha Morrison of the old Classical and Oriental Studies Department at Brandeis University, my teachers who first taught me to love Greek and Akkadian, and supervised my B.A. thesis on Alexander the Great romances, Gilgamesh, and similar matters.

The paper is yet another by-product of the Cuneiform in Australia and New Zealand project (CANZ), which is tasked with making available editions of all the cuneiform tablets and inscribed objects in Australian and New Zealand collections. In fact, it is a direct by-product of our edition in this volume of *Buried History* of an astronomical diary fragment held at the Abbey Museum, Caboolture, Queensland (pp. 17). The reverse of this tablet closes with a historical notice for Month VI (*Ulûlu*, corresponding to the Hebrew month Elul, our August–September) that makes mention of the Juniper Garden of Babylon which is the topic of the current paper.

While I was researching the Juniper Garden for the paper on the astronomical diary fragment, an article by Katherine Hall of Otago University in Dunedin, New Zealand, appeared in press discussing the Death of Alexander the Great (Hall 2018). This led me to a parallel investigation of another Babylonian astronomical diary fragment, the British Museum tablet, BM 45962 for –322 (323–322 BC, Sachs–Hunger *Diaries I*: 204–219, Source B) (Figure 1). The report below is the result of these two parallel investigations.

The Juniper Garden of Babylon

The Juniper Garden (GIŠ.KIRI₆ 𒌆ŠIM.LI), or perhaps better the Juniper Orchard or Juniper Grove of Babylon, was a large shaded open area within the walls of the city. Akkadian *burāšu*, the juniper tree and the aromatic substance obtained from the juniper tree. The word is translated as ‘cypress’ in Sachs-Hunger *Diaries I* where the garden is referred to as ‘the Cypress Garden.’ Later volumes translate ‘juniper.’

The garden is mentioned a number of times in Babylonian chronicles and historical notices in the astronomical



Figure 1: Clay tablet, a fragment of a Babylonian diary recording astronomical and meteorological phenomena observed during the year 323-322 BC, month 2. Mention is made of the death on the 29th day of the lunar month of Alexander the Great (Alexander III), who is referred to simply as ‘the king’. BM 45962, 60x46x30. Image: British Museum, Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

diaries, as well as administrative tablets (van der Spek 2006: 275–76). The Juniper Garden is often the setting for formal events, sometimes in conjunction with nearby buildings including the Old Treasury (*bît bušē labîri*),

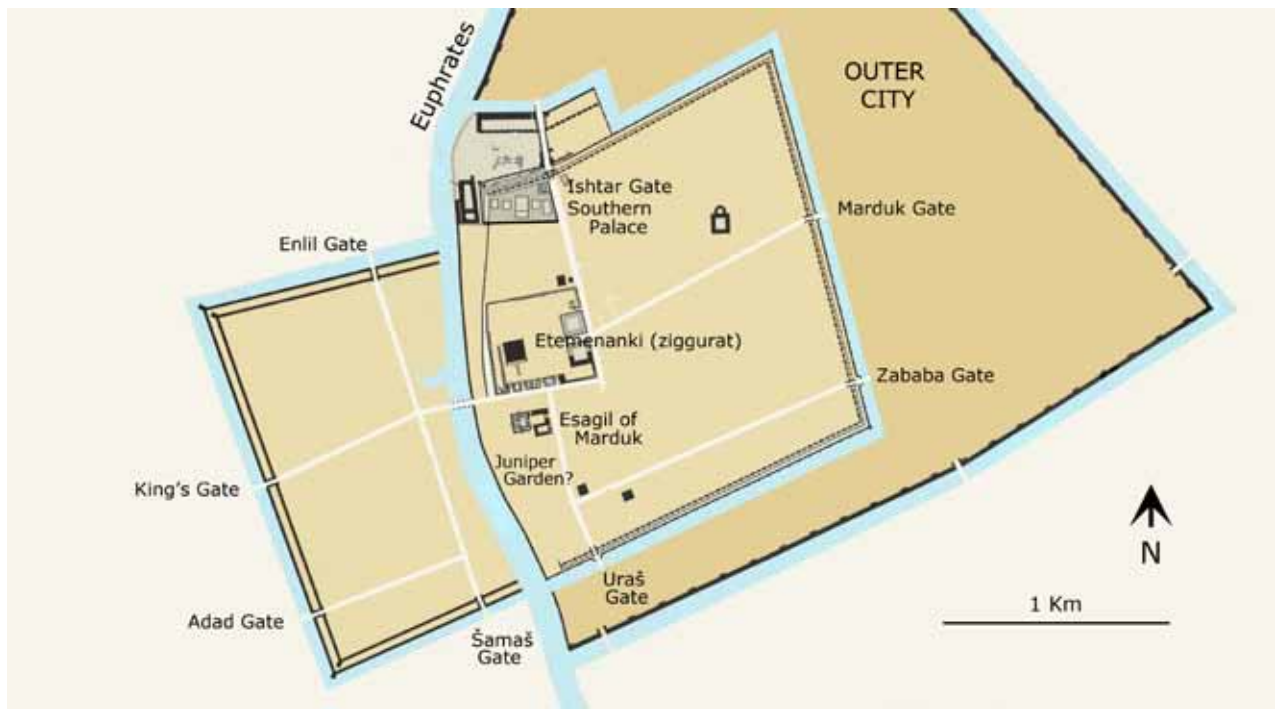


Figure 2: Plan of Babylon from recent archaeology.
After Finkel (2008: 40), George (1992: 17, 24) and Boiy (2004: 65).

and the Council house (*bīt milki*) where the Temple Assembly of Babylon (*kiništu*) met under the supervision of the *šatammu*, ‘the chief temple administrator’ in the late period. Examples include a historical notice for Month VIII (*Arahsamna*, the fall of 169 BC) that relates that the *šatammu* and *kiništu* of Esagil made a decision regarding temple property that had been held in the ‘Old Treasury’ of the Esagil in the Juniper Garden,¹ and the notice of the reading of an edict demanding that an *ilku dannu*, ‘heavy work obligation,’ be imposed on the population of Babylon in the ‘Council House,’ in or by the Juniper Garden in Month V (*Abu*) during the Summer of 94 BC (Sachs-Hunger *Diaries III* 430–31). More information would have been available in a very fragmentary text from the Hellenistic Period now known as the ‘Juniper Garden Chronicle,’ although the Juniper Garden itself is only mentioned twice in the fragment’s surviving 33 broken lines (van der Spek 2006: 296–99).² These references place the Juniper Garden on the east bank of Babylon with one boundary point of the garden being the Uraš Gate along the southern part of the city wall.³ The Uraš Gate is the closest gate to the Esagil (Figure 2). On the basis of this spatial evidence Boiy (2004: 84, 88, 204) assigned the Juniper Garden to the Esagil complex, but it could have extended well beyond the boundaries of the area on the east bank of Babylon assigned to Esagil.

Juniper groves existed in other places and other periods as well, providing not only a pleasant setting for human activity, but also to supply juniper incense for the cult and private use (George 1992: 306).

Alexander the Great and the Juniper Garden

I. The Diary for Month VI (*Ulûlu*) Seleucid Era 41

Two generations after the death of Alexander the Great, Alexander and the Juniper Garden of Esagil are connected in some way in a historical notice that reports a ceremony involving the rebuilding of the Esagil temple by Antiochus I (324/3–261 BC) in the month of *Ulûlu* in the late-summer/early fall of 270 BC. Month VI of the Babylonian calendar corresponds to the Hebrew month *Elul*, our August–September. The 15th of *Elul* was ideally the date of the full moon of the fall equinox.

The translation and transliteration below are adopted from Sachs–Hunger *Diaries I*: 352–355.

13. [. . . . lúMA]Š-MAŠ^{mes} u lúLAGAR^{mes} né-pe-šú šá a-ra-mu šá li- [li-si x x] x [. . . .]
- 14'. [x x x (x)] ù ^mA-lex-sa-an-dar ana lúDUMU^{mes} É^{ki} ú-x [. . . .] (traces) [. . . .]
- 15'. [. . . ina ^{gis}K]IRI⁶ ^{sim}LI i-te-ri-mu-ú ITU BI U₄-10-KÁM [. . . .]
- 16'. [lúMA]Š-MAŠ^{mes} u lúLAGAR^{mes} šá É-sag-gíl né-pe-šú šá e-nu-m[a]
- 17'. ʿlibʿ-bú ú šaṭ-ri ina pa-ni-šú DÛ-uʿ

- 13'. [. . . . The conj]urers and lamentation-priests, the ritual of the covering of kett[le-drum. . .] . [. . .]
- 14'. [. . . .] and Alexander to citizens of Babylon . . [. . . .] . . . [. . . .]
- 15'. [. . in the Ju]niper Garden they then covered it. That month on the 10th [. . . .]
- 16'. [the conj]urers and lamentation-priests of Esagil the ritual of Whe[n]
- 17'. as written in front of it performed.

The rituals in the passage above have been identified as the ritual for the covering of the kettle–drum (*lilissu*), and the ritual *enûma Anu ibnû šamê*, ‘When Anu Built the Heavens,’ the latter of which is a first-brick ritual for the building and restoration of temples. Both are attested in contemporary Hellenistic period Babylonian ritual instruction texts (Linszen 2004: 92–100, 100–109).

Although this historical notice dates some 50 years after the death of Alexander, we surmise that Antiochus I makes mention of Alexander in this context as his own reconstruction work on Babylonian temples, including the Esagil in Babylon and Ezida in Borsippa, was an attempt to complete projects planned by Alexander the Great more than half a century earlier. Alexander’s plans to rebuild Esagil have been published by Linszen (2004: 108). Bricks from the ruins of Esagil inscribed with the name of Antiochus were published by Horowitz (1991a) and the Antiochus I Soter Inscription where the king speaks in first person of his reconstruction of Esagil temple of Marduk in Babylon and the Ezida temple of Marduk’s son Nabu in Borsippa can be read at (www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamianchronicles-content/antiochus-cylinder/). George (1995) gives a more general study of the bricks of Esagil.

The Juniper Garden near Esagil was, of course, a very appropriate place for the priests of Esagil to celebrate the rituals for Esagil named in the astronomical diary.

II. The Diary for Month II (Ajaru), Alexander III year 12

A report of the death of Alexander the Great is found in a historical notice on a fragment of the Babylonian astronomical diary for Month II (*Ajaru*) of 323 BC. (The second month after the month of the Spring Equinox, May/June, corresponding to the Hebrew month *Iyar*). The actual death of Alexander is recorded on the 29th of *Ajaru* (June 11, 323 BC), with some further information provided afterwards (Sachs-Hunger *Diaries I* 206–207, the diary for –322, Source B). The relevant portion of the diary, known now only from the small fragment, BM 45962 (= SH.81–7–6, 403, copy LBA 209), is translated as follows in the Sachs-Hunger edition (Figure 1):

B ‘Obv.’ 7–12’

- 7'. [. . . .] clouds crossed the sky. Night of the 27th, clouds crossed the sky. The 27th [. . . .]

- 8'. [. . . .] stood [to] the east. The 29th, the king died; clouds [. . . .]
- 9'. [. . . .] ; cress 1 sût 4 qa, sesame 3 1/2 qa [. . . .]
- 10'. [. . . . Saturn was in Ge]mini at the end of the month in Cancer, Mars was in Vir[go]
- 11'. [. . . .] the Gate of Bel [. . . .]
- 12'. [. . . .] [. . . .]
- (Fragment breaks off following line 12’)

This very brief notice of the death of the king (Alexander’s death) is sandwiched between astronomical observations. Before is part of the observations for the 27th of the month and what is presumably the broken away portion of the diary for the 28th. We then move on to the 29th of the month, where we find the King’s (Alexander’s) death: LUGAL NAM^{mes}, a euphemism with the sense of ‘the King (went to his) destiny.’⁴

This is then followed on the same line by a notice of clouds (DIR AN):

. . . . 29 LUGAL NAM^{mes} DIR AN [. . . .]

. . . . The 29th, the king (went to his) destiny, clouds [. . . .]

The remainder of the fragment belongs to the summary section of the diary for Month II, consisting of the surviving pieces of a list of prices of commodities for the month, a report of planetary positions, and in obv. 11’–12’, at the very bottom of the fragment, what we take to be two most fragmentary lines from a historical notice for the month of Alexander’s death. The insertion of the very brief historical note (three cuneiform signs!) within the framework of the astronomical observations for the 29th of the month, rather than in the soon to come summary of historical events at the end of the monthly section is unusual, but can be explained by the momentous nature of the news.

Alexander the Great and BM 45962: 11’–12’

The Sachs-Hunger edition of lines 11’–12’ is able to read and translate only a single phrase, ‘the Gate of Bel,’ in BM 45962: 11’. Otherwise, Sachs-Hunger *Diaries I* 206–207 offers a trace from the end of a single sign before ‘the Gate of Bel’ in line 11, and traces of what appear to be three more signs in the transliteration for line 12’, without any translation or interpretation of these broken signs.

In 2018, Katherine Hall of Otago University in Dunedin, New Zealand, published a new theory concerning the death of Alexander the Great. In a convincing article entitled, ‘Did Alexander the Great Die from Guillain-Barré Syndrome,’ the question posed in the article’s title is given an affirmative answer based on the reports of Alexander’s death in classical sources including those of Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus, and Curtius (Hall 2018: 107–108). These sources note that Alexander became

increasingly paralysed as his fatal illness progressed from the 18th to the 28th of the month, and Curtius reports that Alexander's body did not putrefy for six days after his death despite the Mesopotamian heat, bringing us into the early days of the next month (Month III, *Simânu*).⁵ Hence, the diagnosis of Guillain-Barré Syndrome.

Soon after Katherine Hall's article was brought to my attention, I found myself in the British Museum in London with the opportunity to collate the tablet BM 45962. Based on the Sachs-Hunger traces, the photograph in Sachs-Hunger *Diaries I* pl. 34, the British Museum website photograph, and my own collations of the last lines of BM 45962, I propose the following reading for the two lines of the historical notice at the very bottom of the current fragment:⁶

- 11'. GÁ]N? KA.GÁL⁶EN . . . the fie]ld² at the Gate of Bel [. . .
 12'. . . .] x⁶ KIRI₆ s[imLI]] . the J[uniper?] Garden [. . .

The sign KIRI₆ (SAR) as copied in Sachs-Hunger *Diaries I* 206, at first glance, has more the shape of the Neo-Assyrian form which is what probably triggered my idea of reading KIRI₆ in this late-Babylonian text. Upon collation, and re-inspection of the photographs, the traces do allow for the set of *Winkelhaken* that form the first element of late-Babylonian form of KIRI₆. The traces copied in LBA 209 show a *Winkelhaken* and can be read . . . K]IRI₆ s[im These traces may be more reliable than later photographs and collations as they go back to hand-copies prepared at the very end of the 19th century when the tablets were most likely in a better physical state of preservation than today.

The gate-name 'Gate of Bel,' is one of a repertoire of popular names assigned to Babylonian city-gates in the late period. The exact correspondence between this repertoire and the traditional Babylonian names of the gates known from Tablet V of the series Tintir^{ki} remains uncertain, but this is almost certainly the same gate as Herodotus' 'Bel Gate' which can be identified with Tintir^{ki}'s 'Marduk Gate' see for example Boiy (2004: 68). The Marduk Gate was located along the eastern part of the city-wall and offers the closest access to the area of the Esagil from that direction, and so to the Juniper Garden by the Esagil as well (Boiy 2004: 56–58; George 1992: 22–23).

Unfortunately, the very truncated nature of the two lines does not allow us to know exactly what is happening here, nor when in the month of Alexander's death the events of lines 11'–12' took place, since historical notices at the end of monthly sections can summarize noteworthy events that happened at any time of the month. Yet, given the reference to Alexander's death on the 29th we suggest that lines 11'–12' refer in some way to this event. One possibility is that the restoration of the Juniper Garden in

line 12', together with the reference to Gate of Bel in line 11', might indicate that Alexander's body was brought to the Juniper Garden inside the city by way of this gate after his death on the 29th, and lay there in state until the end of the month and beyond. If the trace of the first sign in line 11' is read correctly, perhaps Alexander's body was brought to the Juniper Garden from open space outside the city wall by way of the Gate of Bel. However, it remains possible that these lines refer to the movements of Alexander himself, or others at the time of Alexander's illness and ensuing death, such as those reported in the classical accounts, in particular Plutarch (Plut. *Alex.* 76). In either case, BM 45962: 11'–12' appears to provide the first evidence from cuneiform sources for the events surrounding the death, funeral, and/or preparations for the funeral of Alexander the Great, which are known from the classical sources.

The setting of the Juniper Garden of Babylon for the funeral of Alexander the Great would fit the requirements for such a major event. The Juniper Garden was near the Esagil, the holiest site in Babylon, and was a traditional venue for important events. Further, the sweet aroma of the juniper in the garden, or juniper-based perfume, might have been desirable to mask any unpleasant odours emanating from the body of Alexander.

Finally, one last personal point for the Australian audience of *Buried History* and their neighbours one step to the east in New Zealand. The coincidence that the CANZ project brought the astronomical fragment W00589 at the Abbey Museum in Caboolture, Queensland to our attention, and the fact that the latest discussion of Alexander's death is by a scholar based at Otago University in Dunedin, the site of the largest collection of tablets in Australia and New Zealand, is, of course, pure coincidence. Horowitz and Zilberg (2016) have most recently discussed the Otago Museum's collection, which will be published as CANZ vol. II.

However, without access to the tablet W00589 in Australia by way of the CANZ project, and my interest in reading an article by a scholar based at Otago University on a subject that I have been interested in since my B.A. thesis on Alexander the Great at Brandeis University way back in 1975, it is unlikely that I would have had the opportunity to generate the discussion given above. This may serve as a reminder that it is always a good investment of time to read cuneiform tablets whenever and wherever you happen to find them, since as we see here, reading even a fragment of a cuneiform tablet in a small museum in rural Australia can lead to the development of important new information about one of the most famous personages of the ancient world, Alexander the Great.

Wayne Horowitz,
 The Hebrew University
 Jerusalem

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Abbreviations:

Assyriological abbreviations in this article are as in the CAD (*Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*).

Sachs-Hunger *Diaries*: A.J. Sachs and H. Hunger, 1988 *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, (Österreichische Akademie Der Wissenschaften Philosophisch–Historische Klasse Denkschriften 195), Wien: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

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Endnotes

- 1 Sachs-Hunger *Diaries II* 476–77. For the *šatammu* and *kiništu* of Esagil see Boiy 2004: 194–204. Akkadian *kiništu* is cognate to Hebrew *knesset*, the name used for the modern parliament of the State of Israel. The role of the *kiništu* in Persian and Hellenistic period Babylonia, and the adoption of this institution in the early Jewish Babylonian diaspora will be discussed in the forthcoming PhD thesis of Yehoshua Greenberg of the Hebrew University.
- 2 Soon to be republished as I.L. Finkel, R.J. van der Spek, R. Pirngruber, *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period*, announced for 2020. Here the text will appear as BCHP no. 8. For now see the online edition www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/bchp-8-juniper-gardenchronicle/. Mention is also made in the Judicial Chronicle (BCHP no. 17) in connection with theft, most likely from the 'Old Treasury,' (see the same web address but ending: . . . / [bchp-17-judicialchronicle/](http://www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/bchp-17-judicialchronicle/)).
- 3 See The Juniper Garden Chronicle rev. 19': . . . ⁶isKIR]I₆ ^{sim}LI *pa-na-at* KÁ.GAL ^dURAS x [. . . , . . . the Juniper [Garde]n in front of the Uraš Gate . [. . . The middle vertical stroke of the sign URAS (IB) is small and slightly tilted to the right on the photograph provided by the Livius on–line edition who therefore most cautiously read URAS⁷ (with the question mark). Earlier, van der Spek (2006: 298) read without the question mark.
- 4 For this idiom and numerous examples see CAD Š_{III} 16–18, *šimtu* 3, with identical formulations for the deaths of Sennacherib, Nabopolassar, and Nabonassar, who like Alexander were kings of Babylon (*ibid* 18 3 h).
- 5 For Curtius see *ibid* 107. The diary's section for Month III, with any possible historical notices, is not preserved.
- 6 In the spirit of full disclosure, I must admit that my collations did not take place under ideal conditions in the Student's Room as the tablet was on display when I visited the British Museum. Nonetheless, the signs in question were very clear and my readings could be confirmed by Ipad photographs that I took of the tablet through the glass of the display.

Diffusionism and the Hebrew Bible

Noel K. Weeks

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Abstract: The Diffusionist model has been used to explain cultural similarities in many fields of the humanities including anthropology, archaeology and ancient history. Diffusionism has often formed the presuppositions of those who have attempted to explain the similarities between certain elements of the Hebrew Bible and texts from other cultures of the Ancient Near East. This paper questions the appropriateness of Diffusionism as an explanation for common features found in ancient Israel and the Near East. Four particular cases of similarity are examined to test the merits of Diffusionism: accounts of the Flood, laws concerning the 'goring ox', biblical covenants and Near Eastern treaties, and creation accounts.

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The oral style has been retained.

Diffusionism played a brief role in the history of Anthropology.¹ It was an alternate answer to the puzzle of why societies wide apart on the globe showed similar features. The diffusionists maintained that an elite culture had made the breakthroughs, which were spread by subsequent diffusion. The alternate evolutionism held that all societies go through the same stages in their evolutionary progression. Modern 'primitives' are to be seen as people in arrested or delayed development. Each position implied something about the nature of humanity. Are humans inherently inventive and, given similar conditions and/or similar stages of technological progress, people without connections will make similar inventions? Or is genius rare? A small group of elites must have made the discoveries and then, by various means, those discoveries were diffused to other areas. The contemporary implication is that the brilliant few should be given leadership.

While evolutionism tended to predominate it too was superseded. There was a reaction against the depreciation of non-European 'primitive' cultures seen as people stuck in an early stage through their own deficiencies. It was claimed that experience of living with such people revealed integrated societies, in which customs and institutions are not evolutionary left-overs or heterogenous imports from outside, but parts of a functioning society adapted to its environment.² Thus, functionalism replaced both diffusionism and evolutionism. In turn functionalism has come under fire as static, ignoring the fact that societies experience change, and are constantly adjusting to pressures from outside.

Thus, Anthropology has had its controversies as it tried to understand commonness between cultures. Fashionable models have subsequently lost favour. Studies of the Hebrew Bible face similar questions, but the debate has seldom progressed beyond arguments over particular cases. That has left the model for understanding commonness more implicit than explicit, and that model has been Diffusionism.

There are historical reasons for this. The decipherment of hieroglyphs and cuneiform led to dramatic claims of commonness. I will concentrate upon Mesopotamia and cuneiform because they had the greatest impact. Pan-Babylonianism was quite explicitly diffusionist: the prior and 'superior' culture of Mesopotamia passed on its achievements to the later and 'culturally inferior' Hebrews. Even without the Anti-Semitic motivations of



Figure 1: *The Ark tablet, c 1700 BC. Recently translated by Dr Iving Finkel. It gives instructions for building a boat as a means to survive the impending flood. Photo: Douglas Simmons/The British Museum.*

Pan-Babylonianism the time was right for a diffusionist model. The decipherment of these scripts and languages coincided with the great European cultural and colonial push into the rest of the world. That movement was coterminous with seeing a contrast between advanced Europeans and backward others. It is plausible to suggest that that model was transferred to the Middle East and became the lens through which the cultures with copious extant written evidence, especially Mesopotamia, were seen in contrast to those without such extant evidence. That conceptualisation must influence the way we see any commonness between Mesopotamia and the Bible.

Just because diffusionism is out of favour in Anthropology it is not a reason to ban it in Biblical Studies. The question is whether we have sufficient evidence to justify having it as our basic model. Often the implicit position has been that if the clear cases are explainable in diffusionist terms, then other less convincing overlaps should be seen the same way. Diffusionism must exclude the rival interpretations of common inheritance from a third party and independent invention.

Two issues are crucial. Do we know the way the cultural item was transferred in the clear cases? Do we know the cultural level of the receiving culture? This second question becomes entwined in controversy because there are many hypothetical reconstructions of the religious and cultural history of Israel. An argument of the form, 'Item X was readily accepted in Israel, because at that time Israel had no equivalent' depends on knowledge of the Israelite culture of the time. If that knowledge is conjectural, then the whole proposition depends on the truth of the conjecture. (Note also: the anti-functional postulate of an incomplete culture.)

Mode of Transfer³

I have chosen, as cases for later consideration, instances where our knowledge of commonness is based on written texts. Most of the claimed overlaps are of this form. Was the Hebrew knowledge of the foreign cultural item based on somebody reading a cuneiform text or did the written text reflect a more extensive oral culture? There is no certain answer to this question.⁴ General assertions about the relationships of written and oral forms do not necessarily apply to Mesopotamia. There are some hints that scribal culture may have been elite (Beaulieu 1992). Instructions to restrict access to information occur, but their meaning is debated (Lenzi 2008; and Stevens 2013). Even if there were no formal restrictions, common culture and learned culture do not always overlap.

We know something of the extensive education involved in learning to read and write cuneiform (Gesche 2001). It was not easily acquired, especially as the educational method necessary for a complex script required extensive memorisation. An interesting example has emerged of a merchant, who saw himself as not a scribe, yet had enough familiarity with the written language to write a somewhat unorthodox letter (Parpola 1997). We may expect that

many people, though not trained, may have had enough experience through daily and professional life to read and write at a basic level. Yet that may not have been the same as competence in literary written Akkadian. Even in an age of general literacy, many people struggle with text in higher cultural or technical registers, even in their own language. We must not read our widespread literacy into the past.

If the mode of transfer had to be an Israelite reading of a cuneiform text, or even if it was the oral tradition behind the text, when might Israel have encountered it? There are effectively three windows of most likely opportunity: when we know cuneiform was used in Palestine in the second millennium, during Assyrian domination of Israel, or when Jews were in Babylon during the Exile and later. They present different situations.

In the second millennium cuneiform was being written in Palestine. Our best evidence comes from the later period (the Amarna Age). The Amarna Letters from Canaan attest a very sophisticated system of using Akkadian verbal roots but declining the verb according to a form of West Semitic grammar. Thus, the verbs show modal endings as present in Ugaritic, but not in Akkadian. There is also a series of person and number markers in the various prefixed verb forms. While individual letters show inconsistent use of this system, sometimes mixing Akkadian forms with West Semitic ones, the system as a whole marks letters from the area the biblical text designates as Canaan. It is theoretically possible that somebody with only an oral experience of West Semitic invented this system, but familiarity with written text is more plausible.

Can we form some sort of an idea of what level training in cuneiform the Canaanite scribes reached? K. van der Toorn (2000) is of the opinion that it was at a fairly low level. The letters to pharaoh were fairly standard in form. Of course, Rib-Addi of Byblos forms an exception, but his correspondence is characterised by much repetition. Van der Toorn's opinion is strengthened by his interpretation of the 'Canaanite glosses' in the letters. Not infrequently a regular Mesopotamian form, generally a Sumerogram, is glossed by its Canaanite translation. Why does that happen in a letter written to Egypt? Was the Egyptian 'Colonial Office' staffed by Canaanites who needed help with Akkadian? Van der Toorn's alternative is that the product of the scribe would need to be checked by the city ruler, the nominal author of the message. It is unlikely that he would have any knowledge of Akkadian, so it would need to be translated for him. The gloss is then to assist in that process. Whether the translator was the original scribe, trying to save himself on-the-spot embarrassment, or another scribe, it does not attest a high competence. Yet this explanation is hypothetical.

Other evidence complicates the picture. There have been studies of the petrography of the clay used in the Amarna letters (Goren *et al.* 2004). J.-P. Vita (2015) has combined this data with studies of the palaeography of the letters and

other evidence. The result is that at some sites a number of scribes was involved in the production of the letters. Given the time involved and possible impact of throne change and scribal death, this in itself is not surprising. It contrasts with the fact that in other cases letters from different cities were written by the one scribe. This could indicate special local circumstances⁵ or that not every city had its own scribe. Both on the basis of script and language different scribal schools seem indicated. As one moves south in Syria-Palestine the scribes show more influence from their native Canaanite language. Similarly, as one moves from the centre of cuneiform into Palestine and Egypt, the care taken in preparing the clay and firing tablets decreases (Goren *et al.* 2004: 318–319).

The site of Amarna itself yielded the sort of scholarly tablets that one expects where scribes have been trained (Izre'el 1997; and Goren *et al.* 2004: 76–87). The clay of most shows that they were copied in Egypt, though a few were imported from Mesopotamia. Whether we can derive anything from the lack of similar archives from Palestine is a question. Chance finds, such as the Megiddo Gilgamesh text mentioned below, point to some such activity. Among the cuneiform texts found in Palestine itself there are some that relate to scribal training, such as liver models, lexical and mathematical texts (Horowitz *et al.* 2006: 29–32; 42–43, 66–68, 73–74, 78–80). Thus there were in Canaan, in the Old Babylonian period, but probably towards the end of that period, and during the Middle Babylonian or Amarna Period, people trained in cuneiform. We do not find any evidence in this material of the involvement of Israelites. Whether we think Israelites or proto-Israelites were present at that time depends on our view of the history of Israel.

There are some cuneiform texts from Palestine from the period of Assyrian dominance (Horowitz *et al.* 2006: 19–22). There are fewer than from the Amarna Age and finds are heavily slanted towards Israel rather than Judah. No texts indicative of scribal education are included. This is meagre evidence but on the basis of it, this would seem a less likely period for cultural interchange, *if it depended on written texts*.

No cuneiform texts found in Palestine come from the Neo-Babylonian period. There are a few, but only one tablet, from the Persian period (Horowitz *et al.* 2006: 23). If this was the period of cultural transfer, it most likely happened in Babylonia rather than Judah.

A combination of many factors during the Babylonian exile the period gives rise to the idea that Israel adopted Babylonian elements into the Bible. It fits the tendency to give late dates to the biblical text. If the Mesopotamian written tradition had an oral basis, Israelites could easily have been exposed to it. It is also possible that Jews were trained in cuneiform, though the shift to Aramaic makes this less likely. We know from the Murašû archive and the tablets from Al-Yāhūdu that later Jews made use of cuneiform. Yet these are all possibilities rather than certainties.

The ideal intermediary for cultural interchange in this period would be Daniel or his friends. Their training would have exposed them to a wide range of Babylonian texts. However, the reliability of the information given in the book is often doubted. In particular the portrayal of their traditional orthodoxy is called into question. Is it legitimate to declare a source inauthentic but to take from it what suits our thesis? If we exclude the information in the book of Daniel we are left with only the general probability that Jews may have been trained in Akkadian. The crucial question becomes how they may have responded to being exposed to items from the Babylonian tradition. That makes the next section significant.

The Cultural Level of the Receiving Culture

There was a time in the nineteenth century when it was expected that non-European cultures would simply abandon their customs and take on the totality of European culture. It is now realised that such take-up has been sporadic and selective. The functionalist explanation is that the receiving cultures were not empty, just waiting to be filled. They adopted what they could use without abandoning things they wished to keep.

I have suggested that the model that has been adopted to explain the relationship of the Bible to other cultures has been diffusionist. Practically that means that we cannot avoid the question of what was there before the Babylonian influence came to bear. Otherwise, we risk a circular argument: 'Cultural item X came to Israel from Babylon at some late stage. Therefore Israel did not have that item before the late period.' Alternates would be, 'Israel adopted X from Babylon in the late period, because it added a minor component to what it already had' or 'Babylon and Israel shared X in the late period because they shared it in a far earlier period'. Unless we know, on some independent basis, the culture of Israel prior to the crucial contact, we cannot choose between explanations.

We run then into the plethora of hypothetical reconstructions of the history of Israel. However, there is a somewhat different question that can be asked. Should we conclude from the paucity of extra-biblical texts from Palestine that there was no significant culture there prior to stimulus from the 'great cultures' of Mesopotamia, Egypt and later Greece?

The literary similarity between Ugaritic texts and later biblical texts is well known (Fisher *et al.* 1972–1981). However, a question has to be asked about the Ugaritic texts themselves. Did they come out of nowhere? Or are they evidence of a significant culture in the western Levant? There is evidence that we should reconsider the relationship of Mesopotamia and the west.

It was formerly assumed that writing came to Anatolia as a borrowing from Mesopotamia. Hittite (or Luwian) hieroglyphs were seen as a later phenomenon. There are now arguments that we should see Hittite cuneiform

as parallel to autochthonous hieroglyphs (Waal 2012).⁶ What is certain is that cuneiform texts from Anatolia refer to texts on wooden boards, seemingly wax covered boards (Symington 1991). Due to lack of preserved examples we cannot be certain whether the script used on these boards was hieroglyphic or cuneiform, or both (Symington 1991: 115). References to the content of such boards make it clear that they were used to record ritual and administrative information, and for letters.⁷ An ivory board excavated at Nimrud (ND 3557) preserves four lines of the well-known astronomical text *Enūma Anu Enlil* and is explicit evidence that literary/scholarly texts were recorded on this medium, see Mallowan (1954: 99, pls xxii-xxiii).

Were there also an existing West Semitic writing system and literary tradition in parallel with the appearance of cuneiform texts in the Levant in the second millennium BC? The texts in alphabetic cuneiform from Ugarit and other places suggest there were. A number of arguments has been presented for interpreting the cuneiform alphabetic signs as based upon existing West Semitic written signs (Stieglitz 1971; and Dietrich and Loretz 1988). The scattered texts in variants of the alphabetic cuneiform script suggest that there was a much wider and varied use of the West Semitic script (Bordreuil 2012; and Sanders in Horowitz *et al.* 2006: 157–160). The literary sophistication shown in the Ugaritic literary texts points to a prior tradition.

Keeping in mind the Anthropological debate, two consequences follow. If the biblical text adopted something which had a Mesopotamian origin, it most likely indicates a congeniality between what was appropriated and what was there originally. To put it another way, we cannot conceptualise the west as a blank space waiting for Mesopotamia to form some culture for it. Even ‘primitive’ cultures adopt selectively.

A second consequence is whether this western cultural development had early contact with what developed as Mesopotamian culture. That question is analogous to the debate set off by what look like very early contacts with Mesopotamia around the time of the unification of Egypt, and the anthropological realisation that cultures can be in contact for a very long period with each pursuing a distinctive approach. Cultures can be active and dynamic, not just passive and receptive.

If there was an Israelite culture in the west, sharing the cultural level of other western societies, to what extent was it imbued with the orthodoxy that we find in the biblical text? Note the qualification below on my use of ‘Israel’. Many theories of the development of religion in Israel answer that question for us, but they remain at the theory level. If we reject the blank page implied by diffusionist theories then there are two possibilities. One is that there was a developed religious system that absorbed only those Mesopotamian elements that could be fitted to what already existed. The other is that the system was

so well developed that an importation from a recognised pagan source was impossible. The implication is that the obvious overlaps came from much earlier, in whatever way it was that they came to be shared.

Particular cases

Issues of terminology arise. The biblical text is clear that the ideology, which lies behind the text we now have, was often a minority position. Thus, talking about ‘Israelite’ society and belief is problematic. To avoid long circumlocutions, I will use the term ‘Israelite’ to mean the culture, which lay behind the Bible.

I will examine four cases of claimed commonness between the Bible and Mesopotamia. I think three are real: the Flood, the Goring Ox, and Covenant and Treaty. I doubt that the creation account in Genesis is dependent on *Enūma Eliš*.

The Flood

We need to look at both the Mesopotamian situation and the biblical side, and each in its total context. The Flood story is restricted to Mesopotamia and the Bible in the Ancient Near East (ANE). Yet surprisingly similar stories come from places outside of the ANE. Naturally that gives rise to debate as to whether these other sources depend upon missionary spread of Bible stories, but the ancient Greek version seems excluded from that explanation.⁸

The lack of an Egyptian flood story could be explained by the separation of Egypt, but the lack of a Hittite story is more interesting, given Mesopotamian cultural influence in Anatolia. Functionalism gives us a factor we need to keep in mind in all these cases. Both the Bible and the Mesopotamian tradition had ways to integrate the Flood story within fundamental theological themes, but they were different themes. In Mesopotamia it fits with the unreasonableness of the gods. In the Bible it fits with the contrast of God’s righteousness and human sin. Whereas both Mesopotamia and the Bible can pick out an individual as particularly righteous or favoured, in an Egypt it would have been more difficult to set a pharaoh apart from the whole state apparatus. In making conclusions from presence or absence we must note that cultures both accept and reject.

The Flood appears both in historical literature and in literary versions in Mesopotamia. In the Sumerian King List it is placed relative to rulers and dynasties but uncertainties over these figures prevent us from making anything of that.⁹ Modern explanations often see the source of the story in a flood of the Tigris-Euphrates system. The biblical and Mesopotamian versions agree in placing the final destination of the boat north of Mesopotamia (George 2003, I: 516). Riverine floods propel objects downstream, not upstream. Here we have conflict of etic and emic perspectives. From the etic perspective of modern scholarship, we make the story more plausible to us. The story itself says something different. Mesopotamian versions tend to stress rain as



Figure 2: Neo-Assyrian clay tablet, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet XI, from the Library of Ashurbanipal, 7th century BC. Size 152 x 133 x 32. Photo: CJ Davey, courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum.

a cause of the flood, and the rainstorm as something terrible to experience.¹⁰ We cannot say rain was the only cause, as there are some obscure terms in the description (Gilg. XI: 100–105). It would be unwise to say lower Mesopotamia never experienced severe storms, but one would think their experience of flooding would be as floodwaters from further north. That there are elements in the story, which do not fit Mesopotamia, does not disprove a Mesopotamian origin. However, we must be careful to let the text speak for itself and not to read in what we expect. There was a version of the flood story in the Old Babylonian *Atra-ḫasīs*. Whether it is the oldest version is uncertain because there is a partially preserved Sumerian story of the flood (Civil in Lambert and Millard 1969: 138–145). On the basis of palaeography that text is not earlier than Late Old Babylonian. We cannot therefore assert that the Sumerian is earlier than the Akkadian flood stories. In *Atra-ḫasīs* the Flood is the culmination of a number of attempts by the gods to reverse the invention of humans, who have now proved annoying. Enlil's earlier attempts at destruction (drought, pestilence and famine) were foiled by flattery of Enki, the god favourable to man, but crucial to the destruction. So too in the final attempt, Enki's instruction to build the boat is conveyed indirectly to the hero *Atra-ḫasīs* in a way that circumvented Enlil's plans.

Excerpts from speeches related to *Atra-ḫasīs* occur in what I. Finkel (2014) has called the *Ark Tablet* (Figure 1). Finkel suggests that its collection of speeches and nothing else probably reflects that it was intended for some sort of public performance (Finkel 2014: 235). It is also characterised by instructions for construction of a very large coracle, similar to those used in the marshes of Mesopotamia.

There is a similar story in the *Gilgamesh Epic*, often seen as derived from *Atra-ḫasīs*.¹¹ There are Old Babylonian and later versions of the *Gilgamesh* story. The complication is that the parts of the story which contain the Flood in the later Standard Babylonian Version, and which therefore might have contained it in the Old Babylonian version, have not been found. The recovered bits of the Old Babylonian version are close enough to the later, Standard Version that we are justified in saying that they are versions of the one story. Whether the Flood story in the Standard Version is closer to the biblical version than the story in *Atra-ḫasīs* is open to question, especially when we add to *Atra-ḫasīs* the details found in the *Ark Tablet*. If all of *Atra-ḫasīs* had been preserved, that might not have been the case.¹²

It is possible that the Old Babylonian version of the *Gilgamesh Epic* had no Flood story.¹³ That makes the

story in the Standard Version a later innovation and its agreement with the biblical story would place their common version in the first millennium.

It is important to note, however, that an Akkadian tablet fragment from Ugarit (RS 94.2953) contains a flood story with the motif of the release of birds from an ark to find the shore, as instructed by Ea (Darshan 2016). Hence, this second millennium text has similarities with both the Standard Version of the *Gilgamesh* story and the biblical account. We know that training of scribes in cuneiform involved copying out passages from various texts, including literary texts (Gesche 2001; and George 2003, I: 35–36). Since cuneiform was obviously being taught in the west in the second millennium, we might expect a version of the *Gilgamesh Epic* to be involved. Confirmation of this comes from the finding of a fragment of the *Gilgamesh Epic* at Megiddo (George 2003, I: 339–345; and Horowitz *et al.* 2006: 102–105).

Since copying of texts was part of the curriculum essential for scribal training, we cannot assume that the presence of these literary texts in the west meant that they were integrated into the native culture.¹⁴ That opens the door to another possible interpretation. In Mesopotamia and in the Bible we have two separate versions of the widespread Flood tradition, each adapted to the theological view of the respective literary tradition. The restriction to Mesopotamia and Israel in the ANE reflects not derivation but the ability of those particular cultures to accommodate the story.

If the Old Babylonian version did not contain the flood, what is the source of the distinctive story in the Standard Version, that has affinities with the biblical story? We have no idea. The thesis that it was composed specifically for that later version and from there taken into the biblical text has no advantage over a number of other possibilities.

The crucial issue is the completeness of our present knowledge of the Mesopotamian literary tradition. Many of the episodes of the *Gilgamesh Epic* come from separate Sumerian stories about Gilgamesh. The Flood story does not. Besides *Atra-ḫašīs* there is a Sumerian Flood story which has no explicit connection to Gilgamesh in what has been preserved. Nobody knows if it is the ultimate origin of the Akkadian story or a translation into Sumerian of the Akkadian story. Seeing it as having an Akkadian origin would go against the normal trend of regarding Sumerian stories as being given Akkadian translations, but in such cases we often have an earlier Sumerian version. In this instance we cannot say the Sumerian version is earlier.

An episode which does not seem to fit the logic of the main story, has been attached to the Standard Version as Tablet XII. It is a fairly literal translation into Akkadian of a Sumerian text that otherwise does not play a role in the Standard Version. The significant thing is that there is no extant evidence of this story between its Old Babylonian period Sumerian text and its appearance in translation as an addendum to the Standard Version. This

gap goes against the assumption that our knowledge of the Mesopotamian tradition is fairly complete. George's comprehensive treatment of the *Gilgamesh Epic* shows large variations in the versions of the story.

Finkel thinks that the period of the Babylonian Exile is the time when the Mesopotamian story passed to the biblical by a process of direct copying. He puts forward the biblical story of Daniel as depicting the circumstance in which this could have occurred, though he is conscious that there has been a tendency in scholarship to deny the reliability of that story (Finkel 2014: 177–204). Since he sees the process as a direct copying of the Mesopotamian text, with some religious changes, he needs to identify a time when Jews were learning Babylonian and cuneiform and the book of Daniel gives him that.

He rejects the possibility of parallel Mesopotamian and biblical traditions from Old Babylonian times on the ground that the two versions would have diverged more from each other in that time. However, if both had been preserved in writing that might not apply. On similar grounds of the closeness of the accounts, he rejects the possibility that the Jews picked up the story by oral transmission. There the argument is stronger. He bolsters his argument by suggesting that the shock of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile led to the gathering of existing material, such as is preserved in Kings and Chronicles, supplemented by Mesopotamian material to fill the gaps of earlier history. He suggests that the tower of Babel story reflects the impact of the ziggurat of Babylon on the less developed Hebrews and adds the parallel of the Moses in the bulrushes story with the legend of Sargon and the long lives of early figures as Mesopotamian contributions. He accepts the traditional separation of the biblical story into J and P sources and postulates separate cuneiform sources for them, each a version of the *Atra-ḫašīs* story. He does not interact with the traditional dating of those sources, which places J before the Exile.¹⁵

These issues are an illustration of the main thesis of this paper that the Comparative Method has employed an unstated diffusionist premise. Mesopotamia was the superior culture, which created a strong impression on the traditions of the Jews. Finkel is happy to accept the sources of Kings and Chronicles as having existed prior to the Exile, but is not specific on anything else. How can we be sure that the prior Jewish traditions were weak on the early history? What about the prophetic material?

The problem is crystallised by the selective use of material from Daniel. He appropriates the fact that Jews were trained in cuneiform Akkadian. He sees no significance in the fact that the text describes the rejection of aspects of Babylonian culture, and more than just rejection of idolatry. Was there a pre-exilic culture that was sufficiently confident of itself to be exposed to Babylonian literature but see itself as superior? This possibility can be negated by a theory of the gradual development of Jewish religion, which places dogmatic certainty very

late. However, that is theory and requires a large neglect of the text itself. It is akin to the diffusionist theory that views all the cultures outside of Mesopotamia and Egypt as being inferior and conscious of their inferiority.

If we step away from theory and go with bare data, we have the following evidence. Versions of a flood story were present in Mesopotamia from at least the Old Babylonian period. At least one was concerned to conform the craft involved to a Mesopotamian model. We do not know if the Old Babylonian version of the *Gilgamesh Epic* contained a flood story and therefore whether that was closer to the biblical story. Among those who posit direct borrowing from the Mesopotamian story, opinion is divided as to whether the foundational Mesopotamian account was *Atra-ḥasīs* or the *Gilgamesh Epic*. The variety of versions and the gaps in the extant texts make these questions uncertain. What is often overlooked is that both biblical and Mesopotamian traditions are incorporating the story within their fundamental theological perspectives. There is also in the *Ark Tablet* assimilation of the story to local ship building practice.

The Goring Ox

Like several ANE cultures, the Hebrew Bible has laws. While there are overlaps of topics, there is only one clear case of verbal similarity. It is in the laws dealing with attack by an ox.¹⁶ The passages at issue are Laws of Eshnunna (LE) 53, 54/55, Laws of Hammurabi (LH) 250-52, and Exodus 21: 28-32, 35, 36. In particular the ruling for the case where one ox has killed another ox is practically identical between LE 53 and Ex. 21:35. Another close parallel exists in the case of failure to guard an ox that was prone to gore, whose owner had been warned of the danger (LE 54/55, CH 251, Ex. 21:36). LH 250 resembles Ex. 21:28 in absolving the owner when the ox was not previously known to attack. LE has no equivalent provision. R. Yaron (1988: 293–294) suggests that the similarity is due to all being ‘derived from common Near Eastern legal practice and tradition.’ This solution is rejected by M. Maul (1990: 113–151) who claims that the close verbal overlap of LE 54/55 and Ex. 21:36 can be explained only by copying on the part of the biblical author.¹⁷

In this debate there is a number of unresolvable issues: were Mesopotamian law codes a reflection of, or contribution to, actual legal practice or were they literary documents aimed to enhance the prestige of the royal ‘author’.¹⁸ How can we tell at this distance? One detail is puzzling. The Mesopotamian Law Code that is well known to modern scholarship and was copied throughout Babylonian history was that of Hammurabi. On this topic Hammurabi’s code shows similarity of treatment, but not verbal correspondence. The closeness is still significant, particularly as the topic does not come up in later codes such as the Middle Assyrian Laws and the Hittite Laws. The verbal closeness appears in the Laws of Eshnunna. The Laws of Eshnunna are dated c. 1770 BC. There is no

evidence that they were copied later and Eshnunna was not a significant city in later times.

Here is a mirror-image situation to what confronted us previously. In that case, if we conclude that the source was the *Gilgamesh Epic* then, purely on the basis of the dating of the most relevant text of that story, we would place the time of overlap with the biblical tradition in the first millennium. In the case of the goring ox, on the same basis, we would place it in the second millennium.

These laws in both Mesopotamian and biblical versions fit with the surrounding laws in having an emphasis on responsibility. Laws of Eshnunna 56/57 and 58 are formally close to the ox laws and the law in Exodus 21:33–34 is also formally similar to the biblical ox laws. Once again, the common element is not a foreign body in either culture.

Covenant and Treaty

George Mendenhall (1955) and others drew attention to the fact that some biblical covenants show a close formal relationship to specifically Hittite treaties. The late second millennium date of the Hittite treaties would then place some biblical covenants in that period. The use in Hittite treaties of an appeal to history for the vassal’s motivation contrasts with treaties of the Assyrian period.

The Developmental Hypothesis about the origins of the Pentateuch reordered the history of various parts of the biblical text on the basis of a theory of the development of religion. Both the sequence of events and the dating of those events are hypothetical. A potential connection to real history exists in the suggested placing of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah, thus in the Assyrian period. However, both Ken Kitchen (1966: 90–102, and 1977: 79–85) and Meredith Kline (1972) drew attention to the importance of history in Deuteronomy, thus linking it to the Hittite treaties.

Mendenhall’s theory involved a way in which Israelites could have become familiar with the Hittite treaty form. Rather than being a specifically Hittite form he saw it as the form of a certain period. The Egyptian Empire would have used that same form in governing its vassals. Since what later became Israel had been part of that Egyptian Empire, they would have been familiar with that form.

Kitchen later developed an elaborate model to trace the history of the biblical covenant form (Kitchen and Lawrence 2012).¹⁹ He postulated an origin in Mesopotamia that then spread to Syria and Egypt. Moses would have become familiar with it from the Egyptian court and taken it with him when he became the Israelite leader. Thus, while defending his original position of placing the Pentateuchal covenants in the second millennium, he was moving from the original form of that position which stressed the connection to the Hittites.

Those, who wanted to place Deuteronomy in the Assyrian period, had to nullify Mendenhall’s argument.



Figure 3: Clay tablet. The cuneiform inscription documenting the Egyptian-Hittite treaty between Pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt (in Thebes) and Hattušili III of Hattusa (in modern-day Turkey), mid-13th century BCE. Photo: Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin, courtesy Neues Museum, Berlin, Germany. Vorderasiatisches VAT 7422.

A fragmentary Assyrian treaty came to light with brief appeals to history (Deller and Parpola 1968). This was seized upon as nullifying Mendenhall's argument. Attempts were made to see parts of Deuteronomy as dependent upon Assyrian texts.

This debate must be placed in a broader context. While a very individual and creative scholar, Mendenhall's work was within the general context of the Albright period where the tendency was to find substantial historicity in the early biblical text. As the Albright synthesis collapsed, ironically partly because it depended on poor use of comparative data, there was a reaction. That reaction tended to drag the origins of the biblical text into a very late period. Even an Assyrian period placing of Deuteronomy was too 'conservative'. Thus, defenders of the Developmental Hypothesis and the Assyrian dating of Deuteronomy were not just holding out against the conservative implications of Mendenhall. They were arguing against a far more radical redating of the text in the other direction (Perlitt 1969).

I attempted a re-evaluation of the evidence and came to conclusions which did not align clearly with either position (Weeks 2004). The tendency of scholarship had been to see 'treaty form' as something that hovered above national culture, available to all to use. Over time this universal form changed so that one could speak of a second millennium form and a first millennium form.

I argued that, while there must have been, way back, a general inheritance, treaty form was much more a reflection of national cultural tendencies. The Hittite use of history turned up in other genres of texts and the Hittite state structured internal state relationships by treaty forms and concepts.

As a form responding to internal dynamics, the treaty form within a culture could change over time. Thus the late use of history in Assyrian treaties was accompanied by a shift in the rhetoric of the royal inscriptions. For the first time an Assyrian ruler started talking about the 'good' he did for vassals. A consequence of thinking of treaty form as a generalised international thing was the assumption that the Egyptian Empire would have governed its vassals in the same way that Hittite and Assyrian Empires did: by treaties. That seemed even more likely in that a parity treaty existed between Egypt and the Hittites. However, I could not find clear evidence of Egyptian use of vassal treaties. The Amarna Letters, where we would expect to find it, speak of treaties between the vassals but not with the Egyptian sovereign. What is claimed by others to be evidence appears to be a case of scholars finding what they expected to find.

The problem is that we are trying to understand the meaning of overlap between biblical text and surrounding cultures without thinking historically about these cultures. Why was history so important to the Hittites, but appeal

to history was absent in Assyrian treaties until just before their empire collapsed? I think we are looking at the difference between the two empires and their methods of control. Whether those differences sprang from something in the pre-imperial stage of these countries, I am not in a position to decide. Hittites used history to teach lessons and appealed to history to establish the reasonableness of obedience. The contrasting role of curse in Assyrian treaties reflects reliance on power. As Assyrian monopoly on power became threatened they started to shift to another rhetorical strategy. In terms of the debate within Anthropology my concerns have a relationship to functionalism in that national cultures must be seen as wholes, but in line with objections against functionalism, cultures are not unchanging.

This understanding raises a fundamental question: is the overlap between some biblical covenants and Hittite treaties an accidental product of the fact that both use history as motivation? If it were only the concentration on history, we might argue accidental similarity. However, Mendenhall's original case pointed to the close correspondence in form. That is more convincing with the covenant of Joshua 24 than with the Sinai covenant. Nevertheless, it is a strong argument for connection. J. Berman (2011) has pursued the connection of the Bible to Hittite treaties.

A biblical connection to Hittite treaties has been countered by questioning the possibility of connections between Israel and the Hittites. That is a serious question, especially as I would argue that the Egyptian Empire cannot be used as the intermediary. We are thus faced with a situation with some similarity with the overlap between Exodus 21 and the Laws of Eshnunna: a close correspondence but a mystery as to how the overlap took place.

Those who want to place Deuteronomy in the Assyrian period appealed to similarity between the curses of Deuteronomy 28:26-35 and the curses in the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon 410-430 (Wiseman 1958; and Weinfeld 1965). Weinfeld claims the order of the curses, followed in both texts, is especially significant because it follows a common Mesopotamian ordering of the gods. B.M. Levinson and J. Stackert (2012) have added to this an argument that Deuteronomy 13 is based on Esarhaddon's treaty. It is hard to see why a passage that is focused on opposing idolatry should have a clear connection to Esarhaddon's treaty, especially as they admit, prophecy is not a major concern of the Esarhaddon treaty. Their theory also involves seeing Deuteronomy as an attempted replacement for the Covenant Code in Exodus, which has its own problems.

If we accept, for the moment, Weinfeld's argument, it presents us with an individual item in Deuteronomy when the thrust of the whole document, with its massive focus on history, points more to affinities with Hittite treaties. As I have pointed out previously, in the reign of Ashurbanipal we find a new Assyrian interest in the 'good' they do for

the vassal. That element is not in the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon, but it is in Deuteronomy and in Hittite texts.

Perhaps an early whiff of the shift in Assyrian rhetoric that becomes public in the texts of Ashurbanipal could have reached the biblical author of Deuteronomy, who was also influenced by the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon and who combined these various influences in his Deuteronomy. That is theoretically possible, but the text as a whole gives prominence to themes that we associate more with the Hittites. There have been attempts to find the order of a Hittite treaty in Deuteronomy, but the fact that it is an address rather than a treaty blurs the formal characteristics. Should the correspondence of Joshua 24 with Hittite treaties influence our judgement on Deuteronomy?

What is clear in the various attempts to align Deuteronomy with the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon is the fact that there is very little overlap claimed. Since it is often claimed that the purpose of the biblical author was to use the Assyrian text to undermine the imperial claims of Assyria, we would expect more engagement with the Assyrian text. For a use of an Assyrian form to undermine Assyrian imperialism to be effective would require wide knowledge of the Assyrian text, not just knowledge by the few Jews trained in Akkadian. If the knowledge was based on oral proclamation, would the average hearer remember these small details?

In making a decision whether we align Deuteronomy with Hittite treaties or with Assyrian ones, issues raised above become relevant. What was there in Israel before Josiah and Deuteronomy? The Developmental Hypothesis gives an answer, but it is a hypothesis. Were the themes of history and the good that God did for Israel unknown before Israel came under Assyrian influence? If they were not present, what was there instead? I ask these questions because, going back to the old diffusionism, I think we have tended to see Israel as a blank space ready to be written on by the more advanced cultures. Even if the curses of Deuteronomy were shaped by Assyrian influence that would not prove the source of the rest of the document. Critical approaches to the Hebrew Bible have many examples of inconvenient texts being assigned to later editors.²⁰

It is completely plausible that a Jew might have had some access to versions of the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon.²¹ For an Israelite editor to adapt the forms of curse embedded in an Assyrian text would require some access to cuneiform, either directly or indirectly. That is not impossible but, as mentioned above, would have been more likely in an earlier period.

The great argument against aligning biblical covenants with Hittite treaties has always been the question of how Israel knew of Hittite treaties. I have difficulty accepting the solutions proposed by Mendenhall and Kitchen to overcome that problem. Yet the two cases considered previously revealed gaps in documentation. If, as suggested previously, there was a significant Levantine culture, the

problem is lessened. That would also increase the possibility that the curses in question belonged to a wider treaty culture and their usefulness for dating is limited.

The Creation Accounts

Once again it is important that we look at the big picture and not fit the evidence into what we would expect. Was there a serious interest in the details of creation in the ANE? Our culture has a fascination with the details of the process, whether we think of them in religious or secular terms. We tend to read our concerns into other cultures and suppose that they must have had similar concerns. I suggest that with respect to creation it was not so. Basically, we have references to creation in Mesopotamian and Egyptian texts. The detailed Egyptian one, the Memphite Theology (Breasted 1901), is more interested in the origin of the gods than in the origin of the physical world. I know of no Hittite text which touches on creation. Some scholars have been so convinced that creation was a major theme in the ANE that they find it in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, even when there is no textual evidence.²²

When we turn to Mesopotamia, we find a varied situation. Creation may be mentioned as a backdrop, and in some sense, a justification for an incantation (Lambert 2013). It can also appear as a prelude to what really seems to interest the author, namely the way in which the skills and institutions of society come from the gods. The former approach is an attempt to grant authenticity to a ritual. The latter is an attempt to justify the present order of society. In these uses the important thing is not the details of the creation process, but creation as backdrop to the real concern.

That means that *Enūma Eliš* and the first few chapters of Genesis stand out as special. Given the presuppositions of Pan-Babylonianism and the model of advanced Sumerians and backward Hebrews, it is understandable that the former was made the source of the latter. If we take away that presupposition, is the resemblance close enough to see overlap?

Gunkel in his *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* shifts to a consideration of other biblical passages which show a conflict between God and the sea or sea creatures. He is trying to resolve the problem of deriving a story characterised by its lack of conflict from a story where conflict is a major element. Yet logically his argument should 'prove' the derivation of the other biblical stories, in which conflict exists, from *Enūma Eliš*, rather than Genesis 1 from the Babylonian story. If Genesis 1 had the conflict elements removed from it because of their polytheistic associations, why were they not removed from the relevant passages in the psalms and prophets?

Now that the Ugaritic texts have revealed similarities with these biblical texts another possibility appears, more in line with the tenor of this paper. The Ugaritic texts and the biblical texts where sea and sea creatures appear as opponents of a divinity are other example where two dif-

ferent cultures were able to incorporate a similar element because each could adapt the element to their ideology. In the Ugaritic texts they are the enemies of Baal, which he must overcome to establish his position. In the biblical text they stand for the enemies of God's people, which God fights against.²³

One can escape from such dilemmas by proposing a very mixed biblical text with inconsistencies. Gunkel does not really wrestle with the problems because his presupposition is that all these texts sit upon a mass of oral mythological traditions. What we make of those other biblical texts is a separate question. However, the Ugaritic texts have shown that their imagery has closer affinities with West Semitic texts than with Akkadian texts. Once again one can save the hypothesis by a theory where theomachy is intrinsic to creation. However, as Lambert (1965) has pointed out, that is refuted by the early Mesopotamian evidence. I have insisted that we have to be agnostic about a supposed oral tradition underlying the written tradition in the ANE. Yet if it did exist and it was the source of the later written tradition, then we would expect some written evidence of it. The great enigma of *Enūma Eliš* is its source and especially the role of Tiamat (Lambert 2013: 236–240). If there had been an oral tradition behind it, it was well hidden. Thus, the greater role we give to oral tradition the more *Enūma Eliš* appears as a separate production by an intellectual and the sophisticated language points to that.

Thus, the presuppositions, out of which Gunkel created his theory, do not fit his starting point. If *Enūma Eliš* could be an independent production, then so could Genesis 1.

The theory of an Israelite borrowing has been bolstered by debateable assertions about the possibility of Israelite knowledge of the *Enūma Eliš*. Many have claimed that the story was dramatised in the Babylonian New Year Festival (e.g. Bidmead 2004). The extant ritual does not clearly indicate this and proponents have not been able to agree on where to place the supposed dramatization (Weeks 2015: 103–105). It is claimed that the story was read publicly at the festival. The text actually says it was read to Marduk in his temple (Pongratz-Leisten 1994: 52). Even if it had been read publicly it is problematic how much a Jew would have understood, even if that Jew had had the knowledge of Akkadian necessary for everyday life. It is an esoteric text. Added to that is uncertainty about the extent to which Aramaic was the everyday language during the Exile.

I have included the creation stories in my survey to make the simple point that there are cases where some sort of relationship to an external source is obvious on the face of the texts. There are others where a whole series of doubtful supplementary hypotheses are needed to argue a relationship. We have enough problems explicating the clear cases without including the highly unlikely.

Conclusion

We are not in a position to say precisely how similar elements appeared in biblical and other ANE texts. We might think we know the dates of connection, but the gaps in the evidence mean that these are uncertain. On the basis of extant documentation, the goring ox belongs to the second millennium. I suspect that many will not be willing to accept that and I raise it merely to make the point of the uncertainty of our documentation.

The reality is that there are huge gaps in our evidence. My suspicion is that a very doubtful diffusionist presupposition has allowed us to fill the gaps in the evidence by doubtful conclusions.

It may be purely an accidental result of the cases I chose to examine, but something links the clear ones. The common element could fit into both the outside culture and the biblical culture, but not necessarily in the same way. There is a point to functionalism, in that what cultures accept has to fit.

Suppose there were to have been a wider culture or cultures, which we now cannot see because of the loss of documents. It is tempting to postulate that if we had those texts we would see that the biblical flood story did not originate until the first millennium, or that copies of the Laws of Eshnunna survived until late, or that there was a significant knowledge of Hittite culture in Canaan in the late second millennium. However, we cannot make the invisible say what we want it to say.

In what follows I am assuming that the significant overlap of covenant form is with the Hittites and not the Assyrians. I have made the point that the three cases of commonness, which I think are real, fit into the biblical culture and the culture of the other society, as far as we can tell from the written remains. Is this the clue for explaining their commonness? Since I am not a diffusionist I cannot be certain of the origin of each and I wonder if it is important. The more crucial thing is that it could fit the cultures in which the element is found lodging.

Enūma Eliš as the model creation story does not meet this test. The God of the Bible does not have to struggle for his position. Those passages that show a conflict between God and the sea and/or sea monsters belong to the problem of commonness between the Bible and West Semitic culture. I suspect they may be another case of a common item that will fit in two cultures, but in different ways.

Noel K. Weeks

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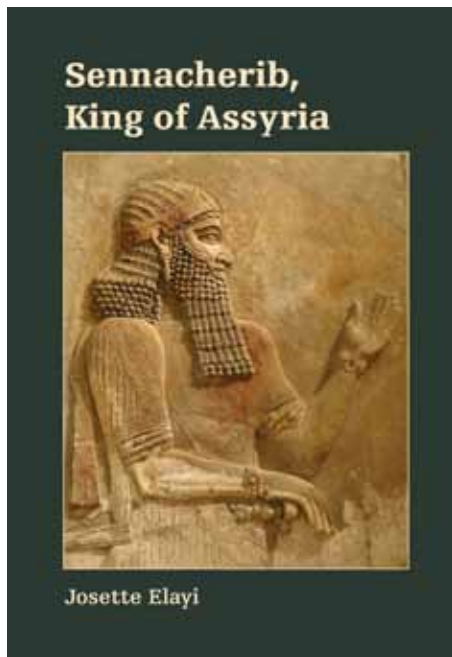
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Endnotes

- 1 For examples of diffusionism see Perry 1923; and Elliot Smith 1911. For the history of Anthropology from different perspectives see Kuper 1999 and 2005; and Harris 2001.
- 2 For functionalist influence in biblical interpretation see Talmon 1977 & 1978. For critique of this position see Maul 1990, 42-46.
- 3 Tigay (1993) saw this as unproblematic. Israel and Babylon were in the same world and so borrowing would have been straightforward. He argues that Akkadian texts from the periphery display as much difference from homeland versions as claimed biblical borrowings do from the Mesopotamian original. I think this underestimates the problems of cultural distinctions and gaps in our sources. Sometimes the issue is not whether there is a connection but when and what the commonness means for both cultures.
- 4 Foster (2007: 49) questions the belief that an oral background lay behind Babylonian mythology on the grounds that the Babylonian tradition favoured the written over the oral. For a study which shows the difficulty of proving oral tradition behind Mesopotamian written texts and argues for a bare oral communication between scholars, see Elman 1975. It is possible oral tradition functioned differently depending on period and genre of material.
- 5 Goren *et al.* (2014: 323) suggest they were sent from Egyptian administrative centres in Syria-Palestine. Vita 2015: 146–149 disagrees.
- 6 For a more controversial form of this thesis see Woudhuizen (forthcoming).
- 7 The pattern seems to be that temporary records were kept on the writing boards, more permanent ones on clay tablets. The waxed boards, being easier to correct and amend would be more suitable for preliminary records. For the same reason there was concern about the security of the waxed record. I had earlier wondered about the use of clay tablets when native media were available (Weeks 2018: 53). To the durability suggested there I would now add security.
- 8 Lambert and Millard (1969: 17) reject any connection to such accounts. For a listing of such accounts see Filby 1970: 45–58.
- 9 For the section of the list involving the flood see Jacobsen 1939: 58–68. For an attempt to interpret the list see Michalowski 1983.
- 10 Heidel (1949: 261–264) emphasises the prominence of rain in the account over against assumptions of a simple Mesopotamian origin.
- 11 For comprehensive treatment see George 2003.
- 12 For example the place where the sending out of the birds might have been described, is lost in the extant text, but the *Ark Tablet* mentions animals coming two by two. Finkel (2014: 176) sees *Atra-ḥasis* as the background to Genesis rather than the Gilgamesh Epic.
- 13 George (2007: 75) suggests this on the basis that an early Neo-Assyrian text had no room for it. However, Old Babylonian versions already contain mention of Gilgamesh’s search for Utnapishtim, the Babylonian flood hero George 2003, I: 272–281.
- 14 For the complex relationship between Mesopotamian and Hittite divination and evidence of indirect reception of Mesopotamian sources plus continuation of indigenous

- techniques see Archi 1987.
- 15 There seems an ambiguity in the treatment in that, though he is specific that the Genesis story is based on *Atra-ḫasīs* (Finkel 2014: 176), when it comes to the copying in the Neo-Babylonian period the discussion focuses on the *Gilgamesh Epic*. That is explicable in that the commonly copied text in that period was the *Gilgamesh Epic*, but it weakens the argument. We cannot deny that versions of *Atra-ḫasīs* may have existed, but it is more likely that, if there were two sources of the biblical story the popular *Gilgamesh Epic* would have played a role.
 - 16 For discussion and comparison see Jackson 2008: 208–212.
 - 17 Maul sees this case as the definitive example that will prove biblical authors copied Mesopotamian texts.
 - 18 That they may have been ignored in practice says nothing about aim. Practical failure has been many lawmakers' fate.
 - 19 For my critique of this position see Weeks 2019: 290–292, 295–298. For other reviews of this work see Stol 2013; Boeckel 2014; Siddall 2015; and Von Dassow 2016.
 - 20 Paradoxically texts so treated include prophetic passages which would place treaty concepts before Josiah, such as Hos. 6:7 and 8:1.
 - 21 The discovery of a copy in a temple in what is today eastern Turkey increases the probability that copies were distributed around the Assyrian empire. See Lauinger 2012.
 - 22 See the introduction and edition of the Baal Cycle by Parker 1997: 81–176.
 - 23 Further exploration of this would diverge from the intent of this paper, but this line of thought could fit with the thesis that the Western conflict of a storm god with the sea provided a crucial part of the story of Marduk and Tiamat Jacobsen 1968. This would be an example of an element derived from an outside source to meet a need created by the shift to imperialism. On this thesis the relationship between *Enūma Eliš* and biblical accounts of a conflict to a divinity and the sea is an indirect one. One needs the Ugaritic texts to see the true relationship. Naturally Gunkel did not have that advantage but it is a lesson to us to realise how much of the total picture is still hidden to us.

Reviews



Josette Elayi, *Sennacherib, King of Assyria*, *Archaeology and Biblical Studies* 24, Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018; pp. 233 + xxii, ISBN: 9781628372175; Paperback, USD37.00.

Reviewed by Luis R. Siddall

At last a monograph on the life of Sennacherib (r. 705–681 BC), arguably Assyria's most famous king, has appeared. This is Josette Elayi's second book devoted to the life of an Assyrian king and it seems it has been written as a follow-up to her previous study of Sargon II. The fact that biographies of Assyrian kings (and other Ancient Near Eastern rulers) are so rare reveals more about the discipline than the source material, which admittedly has its limits. At the outset, Josette Elayi states that her purpose in this book is to provide the first history of Sennacherib that examines all aspects of his reign from politics to art.

It is worth pondering the nature of the task of writing a cradle to the grave biography of an Assyrian king. Mary Beard (2014: 103–174) has highlighted the difficulties encountered when going beyond accounts of the ancient biographers to write about the lives of the prominent people of the Classical world and questioned the value of repeating accounts of ancient historians when writing about the lives of the Julio-Claudians. Marc Van De Mieroop (2005: 136–145) went further when he drew attention to the difficulty of ascertaining the context of, and motivations behind, the actions of the rulers of the

Ancient Near East. Elayi is all too aware of the difficulty of writing the biography of a Near Eastern emperor, a task more difficult without an Assyrian Tacitus or Suetonius. Elayi describes her approach as one that draws on all factors in a multidisciplinary way (political, military, religious), stays as close to the sources as possible and is followed by an historical synthesis. It is interesting that Elayi structures her book in the manner of a Neo-Assyrian royal inscription, beginning with the royal persona, family background and succession (chs. 1 and 2), the political and military events (chs. 3–6), and reports on building and technological innovations (chs. 7 and 8). She concludes the book with an evaluation of the Assyrian king (ch. 9).

As is customary, Elayi introduces her book with an overview of Sennacherib's life and the sources available for undertaking research into his reign. The latter is particularly well handled and gives a good account of the material and stylistic development of the royal inscriptions. However, Elayi's summary of modern scholarship does not provide an insight into historiography, and this is a feature of the book more generally (as will be discussed below). For instance, the reader gets no sense of the great differences between Kirk Grayson's Sennacherib and that of Eckart Frahm. Recognition of the different interpretations of the king is hinted at on p. 8 when Elayi states that Frahm's psycho-historical approach has received only some level of acceptance, though she does favour Frahm's ideas about the psychological effect of Sennacherib's alleged Father Complex. What results is a study that offers a fairly standard empiricist account of Sennacherib's reign, never straying far from the royal inscriptions and often quoting them.

The first two chapters chart Sennacherib's early life and his rise to power. In chapter 1, the textual evidence is carefully examined to outline Sennacherib's family background, his marriages and subsequent children. This is not an easy task as any effort to reconstruct the period of Sennacherib's life is likely to produce contentious interpretations, such as the assumption that the temple administrator, Hunni, was Sennacherib's tutor (pp. 14, 18), or whether Sennacherib ever resided in the House of Succession (p. 30). The chapter closes with an attempt to identify Sennacherib's personality. Elayi gleans a picture of Sennacherib from his royal inscriptions and the images presented in the palatial reliefs. While she identifies what can be recognised as the key aspects of Sennacherib's personality, she does not explain whether they derived from his individuality or were the result of his engagement with the political and ideological forces of the time. For instance, did Sennacherib really enjoy building and technology more than waging war? Was his emphasis on cultural matters and innovation a response to his recognition that expansion of the empire was beyond his military capabilities with the result that his ideological expression shifted from military expansionism to building and technological innovation. This dynamic is left unresolved.

In chapter 2, Elayi uses the corpus of letters Sennacherib wrote to his father Sargon II to discern what can be known about Sennacherib's early career as crown prince and she concentrates on how he came to be appointed, his undertakings in this role, and what this may tell us about the relationship between Sennacherib and his father. Elayi's account of these years following Sargon's accession to the throne verges on an apology for both Sargon and Sennacherib. The whole affair is framed by her view that Sargon did not usurp the throne. This is a striking interpretation because it flies in the face of a well-understood text, the Ashur Charter, in which Sargon all but states that he usurped the throne from his brother, Shalmaneser V (see Chamaza 1992). This interpretation makes it difficult for Elayi to reconcile her interpretation of Sargon's succession with the 'massive opposition' the new king experienced in Assyria. The more straightforward reading is that the Ashur Charter reports that Sargon's usurpation led to civil strife – a recurring feature of this Assyrian dynasty. Elayi's view also steers her away from considering what Sennacherib's role was in the overthrow of his uncle. This is an unexplored topic in Neo-Assyrian studies, but it stands to reason that those in the royal family who received the highest appointments from Sargon were most likely to have been a part of the faction that overthrew Shalmaneser V. In this light, Sennacherib, as crown prince, and another brother of Sargon, Sin-aḫu-ušur, who became the commander of the western army, stand out as likely co-conspirators.

The third chapter concerns Sennacherib's succession to the throne and his 'priority campaigns' from 704–701. Elayi's treatment of military affairs is excellent. Upon Sargon's death during his Anatolian campaign in 705, the whole empire rose up in revolt. As Elayi outlines, it took four years of campaigning to re-establish Assyrian authority across the Near East. The greater portion of the chapter examines the vexed issue of the third campaign to Syria-Palestine (Hatti), accounts of which reach their climax with the siege of Jerusalem. Elayi handles not only the difficulties of the conflicting biblical and Assyrian accounts well but also provides an excellent coverage of the vast scholarly literature on what has recently been called 'the first world event' (Kalimi and Richardson 2014). Here Elayi's expertise in Levantine archaeology and history come to the fore with her interpretation of the nature of the western campaign: that it was not against a unified revolt but a response to three separate centres of rebellion, namely Tyre, the Philistine cities and Judah. This is an interpretation that runs against the history of western coalitions opposing Assyria from the ninth century.

The fourth and fifth chapters continue the examination of Sennacherib's military career and correctly divides the periods of Sennacherib's wars into those that consolidated the empire (700–695, ch. 4), and the later wars against Babylon and her allies (694–689, ch. 5). The accounts of the campaigns are detailed and often provide insights into the course and nature of the annalistic accounts.

However, there are some explanations of overarching historiographical matters that could have been of benefit to the reader. For instance, the discussion of the how the accounts of the Babylonian wars were rewritten to omit earlier policies and set-backs is dealt with all too fleetingly and matters such as this are often dismissed as mere propaganda. It is a missed opportunity for Elayi to provide an insight into Sennacherib's temperament or, at the very least, an aspect of his ideological point of view.

The narrative of Sennacherib's reign concludes in the sixth chapter, which covers the last eight years of his life until his assassination in 681. The lack of Assyrian inscriptions following the sack of Babylon in 689 makes this the most difficult period of Sennacherib's life to reconstruct. Elayi focuses her attention on the status of Babylon following the destruction and Sennacherib's changing arrangements for successor(s) to the throne. The reader is treated to a meticulous study of the Babylonian chronicles and archival documents revealing that the major cities of the south were able to manoeuvre away from Assyrian authority late in Sennacherib's reign. However, one should be cautious with Elayi's suggestion that the absence of wars between Assyria and Elam in this period is indicative of peace between the two states. Recent research has shown that the contemporary situation in the west of the empire saw Egypt encroach upon regions subject to Assyria in the southern Levant (Zamazalová 2011). Hence, a picture is now emerging of the edges of Sennacherib's empire receding towards the end of his reign.

The faltering authority on the frontiers of the empire were certainly compounded by Sennacherib's shifting succession policy and the king's untimely death at the hands of his son(s). The difficulty in establishing the accession order of both of Sennacherib's crown princes and his marriages is handled as well as the sources allow but Elayi perhaps relies too heavily on the eventual successor, Esarhaddon, who gave an account of his time as crown prince and the assassination, allegedly at the hands of his brothers. While there seems to be a correlation between Esarhaddon's account and biblical reports (II Kings 19:37 // Isa. 37: 38 and II Chron. 32: 21), in recent years there have been some serious challenges to Esarhaddon's innocence, which are not considered by Elayi (e.g. Dalley 2007: 38–46; and Knapp 2015: 320–324).¹

The seventh and eighth chapters shift away from the military narrative and consider the impact Sennacherib had on the empire. The interest in how Sennacherib balanced Assyrian traditions with his own reforms (ch. 7) is where we find the greatest level of interpretation and at times one feels Elayi may be making more of Sennacherib's character than the sources support. Elayi paints Sennacherib as a great reformer of the empire in the areas of royal ideology away from legitimacy via genealogy, and imperialism centred on consolidation over expansion; as well as pragmatically developing the army, economy, and the administration. Due to the relative lack

of archival documents from Sennacherib's reign, there is little hard evidence for the practical reforms to the empire. Further, Sennacherib's shift away from genealogy as a point of legitimacy may be a reflection that his early inscriptions were often copied verbatim from Sargon II's annals, as discovered by Frahm (1997: 42–43), and thus they were more formulaic than an innovative statement of ideology. Elayi is on firmer ground in her discussion of Sennacherib's religious reforms, which saw the state god, Ashur, promoted to the head of the pantheon over Marduk, following the destruction of Babylon in 689BC. The discussion is well supported by the evidence and provides a clear account of Sennacherib's actions, particularly regarding the role the religious reforms played in compensation for a lack of military expansion.

Sennacherib considered himself a master builder and a technocrat. Appropriately, Elayi pays the same meticulous attention to Sennacherib's building programme and technological innovations as she does to his military affairs. An excellent coverage is given to the nature, extent, and chronology of his construction work at the new capital, Nineveh, and other centres of the empire. Readers are treated to a discussion of Sennacherib's claims of technological advances in artistic styles in palace art, bronze smelting, and hydraulic engineering. While Elayi does not discuss these feats in this light, it is in these chapters that the reader will get a sense of the legacy of Sennacherib's reign as the monarch who built the world capital of his time, managed to construct aqueducts long before the Romans, and might have even developed the Archimedean screw.

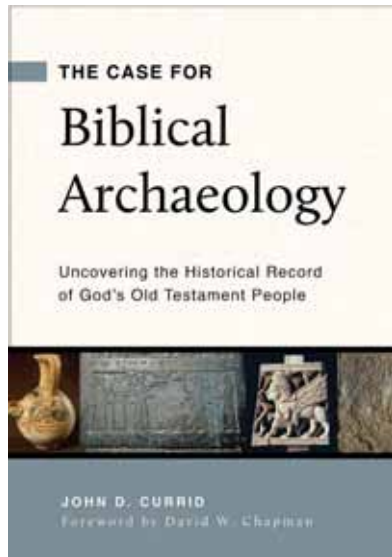
Elayi concludes her study by asking the question that all biographers must: who actually was the subject? The picture that Elayi paints draws together the main findings presented throughout the book but her final statements go beyond what is demonstrable and lack consistency. For instance, could Sennacherib have been 'not very interested in warfare' and also a 'realist' who recognised that the empire needed to move to a period of imperial consolidation? Further, how well can we ascertain that Sennacherib had a complex relationship with his father that affected his adulthood and his reign? To return to a point raised at the beginning of this review, how well can we know an ancient Assyrian ruler? Without private documents and diaries, we will always struggle to write a biography. Yet, to this end, Elayi has produced a book that goes a long way to providing a biographical study of Sennacherib. While the reviewer may be at odds with some of Elayi's reconstructions and conclusions, he acknowledges that she has produced a treatment of Sennacherib that will leave her readers with the knowledge that there is far more to the Assyrian king than Byron's 'wolf on the fold.'

Luis R. Siddall
Research Fellow
Australian Institute of Archaeology

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1. Disclaimer: The reviewer with Stephanie Dalley have published a new edition of the text at the centre of the debate and a new historical reconstruction in the forthcoming edition of *Iraq*. Elayi could not have known of our study.



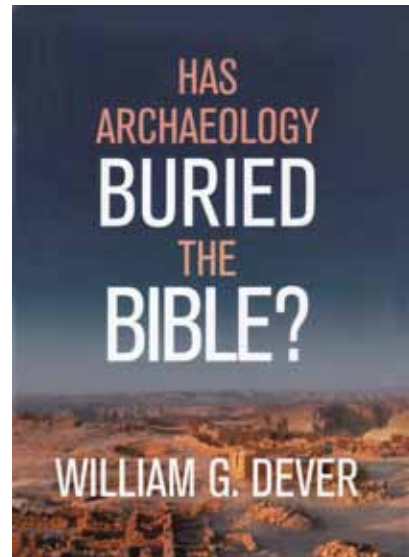
John D. Currid, *The Case for Biblical Archaeology: Uncovering the Historical Record of God's Old Testament People*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2020; Paperback, pp. 288, illus. maps, ISBN 978-1629953601, USD 46.

William G Dever, *Has Archaeology Buried the Bible?*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2020; Hardback, pp. 158, illus. maps, ISBN 978-0802877635, USD 40.

Reviewed by Christopher J Davey

It is some years since a book on Biblical Archaeology was published, so it is interesting that two such books have appeared in the last twelve months. Both authors have extensive excavation experience in Israel but have had different teaching roles, Dever is professor emeritus of Near Eastern Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Arizona, Tucson, while Currid has been on the faculty of the Reformed Theological Seminary for much of his teaching life and has taught in the area of Old Testament. Both books are only concerned with the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Old Testament, but that is about all they have in common.

John Currid is the Carl W. McMurray Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, where he has taught for over 20 years. He has a PhD from the Oriental Institute Chicago and has excavated in north Africa and Israel for many years. He states immediately that *The Case for Biblical Archaeology* is for students and 'In a nutshell, my goal is to provide an initial overview of the main areas of inquiry, discovery, and study of archaeology as it relates to the Hebrew



Bible' (p. xv). The Introduction follows G.E. Wright, 'Our ultimate aim must not be 'proof,' but truth' and states that 'Biblical archaeology serves to confirm, illuminate, and give "earthiness" to the Scriptures' (p. 3). The applied concept of archaeology is what is referred to as Culture-History, and post-modern processes are deemed deconstructionism and are dismissed. When explaining the nature of archaeology, the examples include Ras Shamra, Megiddo, Hezekiah's Tunnel and the Lachish Ostraca.

The first Part sets the scene by dealing with the geography of the Holy Land, the history of archaeology, excavation of a tell and the pre-history and history of the lands of the Bible. Geography is a correct archaeological place to start. The chapter is illustrated with good maps that would have benefitted from the inclusion of more place names, especially those referred to in the text. The geographical description is cursory and rather over-shadowed by political and historical themes. The chapter on archaeology describes the development of the discipline from Herculaneum until the arrival of the 'New Archaeology' in Palestine and, unlike many American treatments of the subject, it recognizes non-American contributions. Archaeological work on biblical sites outside Israel is overlooked with the exception of Heshbon.

Tell Excavation discusses tell formation and the nineteenth century discovery of tells as places of occupation. There seems to be an assumption that archaeologists know what is being found at the time of excavation. This is often not the case, so excavators must record every action so that they can revisit the excavation process when identifying and interpreting what was found. While it may be assumed that the students who read this book will perform labouring duties on site, to make the most of their experience they should be introduced to the complete archaeological process. The short history of the lands of the Bible begins with the Neolithic period and concludes with the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Part 2 has short discussions of about forty-eight sites. As may be expected, many significant sites are not mentioned and some of those that are, are not shown on the maps. Further reading is suggested for each site.

The final Part deals with aspects of society that may be examined by archaeology. These include: agriculture and herding, water, architecture, ceramics, the Hebrew language in archaeology, burial practices, and small finds. There are a few photos included in this section, but the brief captions limit the information they provided. The Part would have benefitted from drawings of objects and plans of features under discussion. Archaeology should not be taught as a literary exercise, as so many books on Biblical Archaeology have attempted to do. Students should be exposed to objects and architecture. Yosef Garfinkel's popular book on Khirbet Qeiyafa (*In the footsteps of King David: Revelations from an Ancient Biblical City*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 2018) sets the standard for archaeological illustration in non-technical literature. Currid overlooks the important site of Khirbet Qeiyafa, Dever does not.

The Case for Biblical Archaeology concludes with appendices containing a Basic Timeline of the Ancient Near East, a list of the Kings of Israel and Judah and Extrabiblical References to the Kings of Israel and Judah. There is a glossary, selected bibliography and indexes.

After some time as a Gospel preacher, Bill Dever became a student of G.E. Wright at Harvard where he studied and researched in archaeology. He excavated at Shechem and became director of the Gezer excavation in the 1970s. After introducing himself and providing some scene-setting comments, Dever begins *Has Archaeology Buried the Bible?* with a brief sketch of American archaeology in the Holy Land and the advent the 'biblical revisionists in Europe, often called "minimalists"' (p. 4). He appreciates the pointlessness of the nihilism of those who consider that the Bible *cannot* be 'true' and believes that there must be middle ground between them and those who believe that the Bible *must* be 'true'. Although most of the nihilists are equally dismissive of archaeology asserting that, 'archaeology can tell us nothing', Dever argues that 'archaeology will be central to the task of writing our own revisionist histories of ancient Israel' (p. 6). He also argues that archaeology represents 'primary' evidence whereas the Old Testament text does not include eyewitness accounts because it has been edited for 'twenty centuries or more'. This is an oversimplification and an overstatement but it does make the point that archaeology is a source of valuable data often contemporary with the biblical narrative.

The major portion of the book summarises the 'main events of the biblical stories' and then evaluates them 'in the light of current archaeological evidence' (p. 6).

Dever aims to show how a 'more balanced historical portrait of ancient Israel can have maximum meaning'. It is envisaged that the Bible will need new 'critical readings', which may involve metaphor and allegory. The selection of main events is based on those identified by Albright: the Patriarchs, the Exodus, the religious event at Mt Sinai, settlement of the Promised Land, the United Monarchy, and the nation of Israel.

The stories of the Patriarchs are reviewed and considered to be 'fictitious' and 'imaginative tales'. Dever follows G.E. Wright by placing their setting in the Middle Bronze Age II period in association with the Amorites. After mentioning some of the contemporary evidence such as the texts from Mari and Nuzi, Dever acknowledges that they fit the 'general historical and cultural context' of the second-millennium and so are not 'fanciful' and 'invented', 'These are didactic stories, designed to teach us what we need to know to get on with life, to be fully human' (p. 24). This is rather mistaken. The writers wrote for their first readers, not for people of today. Dever seems to be applying a culture-history model that focusses on the historicity of the text from the perspective of present-day scholarship. However he also says 'If we archaeologists have forced new readings, we also point the way ahead, because in digging up a more *realistic* ancient Israel, we are not burying the Bible' (p. 25 emphasis in the original), which does imply some latitude in his approach.

The narrative of the Exodus and Conquest/settlement is described with all the archaeological anomalies. Dever does not dismiss the story but sees the Judges' account to be more convincing. He argues that the Exodus may have been the experience of one group of Israelites that became the formative narrative of all Israel, just as the experience of the *Mayflower* puritans has become Thanksgiving Day, a core tradition in the United States.

Chapter 4 discusses the end of the Late Bronze Age empires and the period described in the Book of Judges the circumstances of which, according to Dever, 'fits well into' recent archaeological evidence (p. 54). To support this position Dever discusses: settlement patterns, site types, house type, social and economic structure, political structure, technology, art and aesthetic, art and aesthetics, external relations and ethnicity.

The United Monarchy has been another contentious period. Dever discusses the inscription from Tell Dan that refers to David, the water shaft and *millu* at Jerusalem, and Khirbet Qeiyafa in relation to David, and the Tell Qasile ostrakon, Syrian temples and copper sources in connection with Solomon. The low dating proposed by Israel Finkelstein is rejected and he concludes that 'the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon are reasonably attested' (p. 91).

The three-hundred-year history of the divided monarchy is reviewed and contemporary archaeological data

mentioned. There is a large amount of archaeological data for this period but Dever does not give it very much more space than the other periods for which there is less archaeological data, so the subject is considered rather briefly. This imbalance has long been a feature of scholarly study of the Old Testament period. He makes the point that ‘without archaeology, we would know next to nothing about the lives of the largely rural classes and village populations,’ (p. 119). It is archaeology that testifies to the religious practices and behaviour of the population that raised the ire of the prophets.

The subject of religion continues in the final chapter. Dever suggests that ‘the Hebrew Bible is a minority report’ (p. 126). The prospect of the prophets being like precogs as depicted in the film, *Minority Report*, is fascinating but is not developed. Instead, he describes the ancient Israelite polytheistic practices, the Bull cult, *asherah* tree groves, standing stones, the model temples, offering stands, figurines and so forth. The Kuntillet ‘Ajrud inscription and Khirbet el-Qom texts add weight to the argument that for most Israelites, Yahweh was one god among many. Dever does not comment on the presence or absence of pig-bones at excavated sites and the trends in Israelite personal names that incorporate divine appellations. The ambiguities of the Spielberg film are certainly not unlike those of the Old Testament, which are even more profound. Dever does not intend to be the final word, but he has laid the groundwork for further study and contemplation.

The idea that the Hebrew Bible-Old Testament can be studied purely as a literary construct is still common but has become somewhat outdated. Archaeological data, some of which is discussed and reviewed in these two books, provides significant contemporary historical data that no serious study can overlook. Students commencing biblical studies now need to develop an awareness of archaeological methodology and data as well as linguistic skills.

These two books are places to begin the study of Near Eastern Archaeology but their roles are different. Currid’s book provides information about archaeology of the biblical period in Israel without introducing current controversies and engaging with any of the historiographical issues associated with the nature of Biblical Archaeology. It is pitched at a secondary school - first year undergraduate level of understanding. Dever by contrast grapples with the apparent inconsistencies within the evidence and expresses views that many readers will want to debate. It offers a tertiary level approach.

Christopher J Davey
Australian Institute of Archaeology

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