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work, though she may not have intended to declare herself, the answer is a resounding “no.” We are fortunate that she has rescued us from over-intellectualizing warfare.⁸

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becomes merely a literary reflection, one of words and not, as the reliefs indicate, one of deeds. The latter, a true virile experience, must be viewed as complementing the record of the “Poem,” if not setting up another perspective.

⁸ I believe that this is the only interpretation that we can take, following Heinz. Most certainly, one finds no role (active or passive) for Amun in these depictions; neither is there any indication of the desertion of the king by his army. Therefore, a major criticism can be leveled against Assmann’s stress on the king’s piety. Present in the literary narrative of the “Poem,” it is basically absent in the captions and the reliefs. Much more happened to the king at Kadesh than a transcendental religious experience. Blood, sweat, and tears must be included, lest we view human conflict and the ensuing destruction as mere philosophical-religious events.

These reliefs demonstrate the glorification of Pharaoh in military conflict; carnage is a word that can also be applied. Salutary in this respect are the words of the military historian John Keegan, who refers to the ignorance of museum curators who reflect their “civilian attitude” to military conflict: “I constantly recall the look of disgust that passed over the face of a highly distinguished curator of one of the greatest collections of arms and armour in the world when I casually remarked to him that a common type of debris removed from the flesh of wounded men by surgeons in the gunpowder age was broken bone and teeth from neighbors in the ranks” (*A History of Warfare* [New York, 1994], 90).

Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition. By ESTHER FLÜCKIGER-HAWKER. *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, vol. 166. Fribourg, Switzerland: UNIVERSITY PRESS; Göttingen: VANDENHOECK & RUPRECHT, 1999. Pp. xviii + 384, illus. FS 120.

This volume, a reworked version of the author’s dissertation, contains fresh editions of all known Urnamma hymns and the composition known to modern scholars as *Urnamma’s Death*.¹ The first chapter (“Introduction”) contains three unre-

lated sections discussing preliminary matters. In the first section (Historical Background) the author summarizes the little we know about the beginnings of the Ur III empire, and discusses the chronological problems of the end of the Lagaš II dynasty (see now also C. E. Suter, *Gudea’s Temple Building: The Representation of an Early Mesopotamian Ruler in Text and Image* [Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000], 15–28). In section 2 the evidence for the reading namma (LAGABxHJAL) in the royal name ^{(d)ur-d}namma is collected and evaluated. Section 3 gives a succinct history of the publication of Sumerian royal hymns followed by an outline of the study at hand.

The second chapter (“A General Survey of the Urnamma Hymns”) begins with a discussion of the conventional typology of hymns in Sumerological literature. Although the author expresses some dissatisfaction with this typology (p. 15) no alternative is proposed, and the usual classification (Type A; Type B. II; etc.) is used throughout the book. Section 2 (Catalogue) provides all bibliographical details of the texts studied, most of which information is repeated in the editions in chapter 5. Section 3 (Orthography) demonstrates one of the extraordinary features of this particular corpus: the high frequency of unorthographic spellings, only partly due to the fact that some of the sources come from Susa (*Urnamma A*, sources Sb1, Sb2, and Sb3). The final section of chapter 2 briefly lists and discusses the glosses in the Urnamma hymns.

Chapter 3 is called “On the Historical Correlations of the Urnamma Hymns.” It includes a list of the deeds of Urnamma referred to both in hymns and in other sources. The author is critical of D. R. Frayne’s theory that *Urnamma C* is a chronological summary of Urnamma’s reign. The new edition of *Urnamma C* and a re-evaluation of Ni 4375 enables the author to demonstrate that Frayne’s hypothesis cannot be upheld.

Chapter 4 (“Continuity and Change in Royal Hymnography”) is devoted to the place of the Urnamma hymns in the history of Sumerian literature. In section 1 (Legitimacy and Kingship) the author traces various ways of expressing royal legitimacy in texts from the Pre-Sargonic to the Isin-Larsa periods. This prepares the background for showing the specific manner in which the Urnamma hymns treat this topic. The remaining two sections of this chapter compare the Urnamma hymns with other text groups. Section 2 (Urnamma and Iš-medagan) is a brief but interesting discussion designed to show that “Išmedagān’s literary portrait was not solely modeled on Sulgi but also on Urnamma” (p. 68). Section 3 (The Urnamma Hymns and Related Genres) discusses relations between Urnamma hymns and various other texts and text groups: hymns

rather than with royal hymns. This is acknowledged by the author in the section called “The Urnamma Hymns and Related Genres” (chapter IV.3), where *Urnamma A* is treated separately (“Urnamma A and Lamentation Literature,” chapter IV.3.3).

¹ *Urnamma A*. Notwithstanding the traditional classification, the composition seems to group with lamentation litera-

(3.1); statues, stelae, and self-laudatory hymns (3.2); and lamentation literature (3.3). The latter section focuses specifically on *Urnamma A* (*Urnamma's Death*). This chapter contains much interesting material and displays the author's broad familiarity with Sumerian literature.

The final chapter, the major part of the book, presents editions and translations. One hymn is edited for the first time (*Urnamma G*); for other hymns important new manuscripts are presented. *Urnamma A, D*, and *EF* are known in different versions. This presents major editorial problems that the author has solved in a most satisfactory way. She has not tried to reconstruct an original behind the versions. Rather, by presenting both the individual versions and a synopsis, she enables the reader to grasp easily how the versions complement each other without sacrificing the individual differences.

The book closes with several useful indexes and twenty-five plates, including two plates of hand-copies and collations and twenty-three plates of splendid photographs. These photographs present some of the most interesting tablets, such as the Susa version of *Urnamma A* and the syllabic version of *Urnamma B* (AO 6316 = TCL 15 38).

The volume presents an important group of texts. It contains a wealth of data and will retain its value, especially for its editions and the glossary. The chapters of analysis, however, are dominated by annotated catalogues that make the book difficult to read. The translations are equally uninviting. "The faithful shepherd utters a silence-imposing lament concerning himself" (*Urnamma's Death* 155) is an awkward and, unfortunately, representative example.

The book emphatically illustrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of the positivist approach in Assyriology. This approach is text-based and is more interested in collecting data than in conceptual analysis.² To a considerable degree, the difficulties inherent to this research tradition are due to the expectation that texts can speak for themselves. I will illustrate this point by discussing three topics of some importance to the present study: history, orthography, and transliteration.

Owing to the lack of proper historiographic texts, modern historians of the Ur III and Isin-Larsa periods have extensively used literary texts, including royal hymns. The author explains the epistemological debate concerning such use of literary texts (chapter 3) and tends to side, though not without criti-

cism, with W. W. Hallo and D. R. Frayne in their assertion that royal hymns indeed provide valid historical data. This position is problematic for various reasons. Though some or all of the *Urnamma* hymns may go back to contemporary compositions, there is little reason to assume that the Old Babylonian versions are faithful copies of these "originals." Quite to the contrary, the extant Ur III fragments include a hymn not attested in the Old Babylonian corpus and a section from *Urnamma B* that may have existed as an independent composition.³ *Urnamma D* exists in versions that differ so much from one other that any attempt to reconstruct an "original" is futile.⁴ Even if we could establish the Ur III version of our hymns, the status of the historical data in these hymns remains problematic. The author's method is to find events that are mentioned in the hymns as well as in other texts (royal inscriptions, year names, etc.). These events include such diverse activities as "the care of the gods," "maintenance of overland and maritime routes," and "territorial (military) operations." Such bits and pieces, extracted from the actual composition in which they occur, say little or nothing.

The author's conception of history—nowhere made the subject of reflection—appears to be a catalogue of facts, of things happened. In the ongoing discussion about the nature of that history, two elements seem to be indispensable: context and change. What is historical is that which can be shown to relate to other phenomena of the same period, and to contrast with similar phenomena in other periods. The fact that in his hymns *Urnamma* mentions canal digging—an activity confirmed by other sources—is merely anecdotal, but might be transformed into history by placing this canal digging in a wider context. Additionally it might be analyzed why this king was actually telling the truth.

"Correlations" between history and literature are not to be found primarily on the level of textual content. Literature is a form of human behavior that relates to its context and that changes; therefore it is part of history. The historicity of literature is not restricted to compositions that somehow explicitly mention historical events. The analysis of the way history is reflected in literature should be undertaken on a more abstract level—that of a literature as a whole, its uses, its social location, its ways of expression, its language, its topics, or its imagery. From a historical perspective, the Old Babylonian literary corpus may be interpreted as the creation of a Sumerian "national" heritage. The unity of the Babylonian city-states, as

² For a succinct discussion of positivism in the field of cuneiform literature, see now J. A. Black, *Reading Sumerian Poetry* (London: Athlone Press, 1998), 6–7. See also A. Loprieno, "Defining Egyptian Literature," in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the 21st Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference*, ed. J. S. Cooper and G. M. Schwartz (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 211–12, on the history of literary studies in Egyptology.

³ See M. Civil, "Literary Texts about Ur-Namma," *AuOr* 14 (1996): 163–67. This article appeared too late for the author to utilize it fully.

⁴ See now S. Tinney, "Ur-Namma the Canal-Digger: Context, Continuity, and Change in Sumerian Literature," *JCS* 51 (1999): 31–54, not available to the author.

expressed in the *Sumerian King List*, was an ideal that for most of the Old Babylonian period contrasted with the reality of political fragmentation.

On a literary—or perhaps academic—level this unity was realized through a curriculum that was roughly identical in different Babylonian centers and included “histories” of a variety of Sumerian cities. The Gilgameš narratives, for instance, were not only copied in Uruk, but became part of the “national” Sumerian heritage that was used in schools throughout Babylonia. The history of Uruk thus becomes Sumerian history—very much in line with the concept of history in the *Sumerian King List*.

The very use of the Sumerian language in the scribal schools represents the creation of a form of intellectual unity that was not often feasible on the political level. Consonant with this “historical correlation” is the fact that Sumerian literature is hardly used to vilify a former (Babylonian) enemy. This reconstruction of a possible historical role and function of Sumerian literature should be elaborated in much more detail and may well be shown to be in need of qualification. I believe, however, that any historical analysis of Old Babylonian literature should accept the tablets for what they are: artifacts of the Old Babylonian period, providing data for Old Babylonian history.

A second topic that may be discussed in this context is the author’s treatment of orthography. In chapter 2.3 the author distinguishes between “archaic orthography” and “non-standard orthography.” Within the latter she makes distinctions between non-standard spellings that are semantically non-conditioned; semantically conditioned non-standard spellings; reinterpretations based on phonetic affinity; and source B of *Urnamma B*, written entirely in syllabic spelling. The author is surely justified in her intuition that orthography is a complex phenomenon and that the simple dichotomy of orthographic/non-orthographic lacks explanatory power. The value of her distinctions, however, remains unclear, since the conceptual background of her categorization is not discussed, hence the author’s treatment of the topic does not go beyond a mere listing of all examples. In many cases the rationale for attributing a case to one or another category is not clear, at least to this reader. An interesting suggestion thus ends in a blind alley.

Closely related to the topic of orthography is the author’s treatment of the cuneiform writing system, which is often refreshingly unorthodox. There is certainly something to say for a reading dur_{11} (TU) or $para_{10}$ (BARA₂). Unfortunately, the author does not explain her choices and one is left wondering why not kug (KU₃) and $šag_4$ (ŠA₃)? Presumably the readings are based on a collection of available glosses and unorthographic spellings, but how this data is used remains unclear. The author’s use of the transliteration $z/sulu(m)hu/i$ (SIG₂.SUD) (e.g., *Urnamma A* 98) may be meant to include all available data on the pronunciation of this word, without weighing

one option against another.⁵ This, however, suggests that the uncertainty about the correct reading of this particular word is an exception, rather than the rule.

There can be no doubt that our present transliteration conventions leave a good deal of room for improvement. However, before introducing haphazard innovations, it must be resolved just what linguistic level a transliteration is supposed to represent.⁶ It is impossible, and probably undesirable, to devise a transliteration system intended to represent the phonemics or even the phonetics of Sumerian. Sumerian uses a mixed logographic-syllabic writing system and we should, therefore, not pretend to be able to go beyond the level of the representation of lexemes. Morphophonemic or phonotactic changes are rarely represented in writing, so that any attempt on our part to represent such changes in transliteration

⁵ I believe there is evidence that the initial consonant is /z/. Sumerian /z/ appears in early Akkadian loans as /s/ (see I. J. Gelb, *Old Akkadian Writing and Grammar*, 2nd ed. [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961], 32–34) but as /z/ in loans that entered the Akkadian language in Old Babylonian and later periods. The most common form of the word in Akkadian is *sulumhû*, with variant *zulumhû*. The latter form of the word may be understood as arising due to interference from the contemporary understanding of the Sumerian consonantal system. Sumerian glosses with /s/ may similarly be understood as due to interference from the Akkadian. If the Sumerian initial were /s/, the glosses with /z/ and the Akkadian *zulumhû* would remain unexplained. P. Steinkeller (“Sheep and Goat Terminology in Ur III Sources from Drehem,” *BSA* 8 [1995]: 66 n. 55) has pointed out that $udu/tug^2SIG_2.SUD$ does not appear in Ur III sources, even though the word is attested in both earlier and later periods. An alternative writing may perhaps be found in the unexplained $u^2ZU.BU$ in Ur III Girsu texts (see H. Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen zur neusumerischen Textilindustrie* [Rome: Istituto per l’oriente, 1972], 158, 162; TCTI II 3398 and 4146). This would support the reading with initial /z/.

⁶ The basic discussion remains M. Civil, “The Sumerian Writing System: Some Problems,” *OrNS* 42 (1973): 21–34. See also the introduction to S. J. Lieberman, *The Sumerian Loanwords in Old-Babylonian Akkadian*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena and Evidence* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), with many telling observations, even though his subsequent treatment of the Sumerian system in the main part of the book seems to ignore most of these insights. Both studies understand writing as presenting a coded version of a spoken message. Now that this position has been largely abandoned by students of writing (in favor of asserting the independence of writing as a communication system), the distance between a written text and its vocal realization may appear to be even larger.

implies a phonemic and grammatical analysis of the data that should be reserved for a transcription. If we accept that the citation-form of the word for “heart” is /šag/, then the most suitable transliteration is šag₄, regardless of the fact that under some circumstances the final /g/ was dropped. The writing system encodes the lexeme, not its realization in speech, and there is no obvious reason why a transliteration should go beyond this.

Establishing the citation-form of a word is both complicated and urgent and will require a good deal of research in the next decades. It will be necessary to evaluate all evidence from glosses and syllabic spellings and to formulate rules that may explain the variance. My point is not that the author should have undertaken such analyses (an impossible requirement),⁷ but rather that her innovations are haphazard, presumably exclusively data-driven, and not based upon a clear concept of what a transliteration intends to do.

My criticisms are only partly directed against this particular study. A positivist approach with its associated neglect of conceptual analysis generally leads to problematic results. The author has pushed a strong tradition of research in our field to its extremes, thus involuntarily demonstrating its weak points. The strong aspects of the positivist approach, including reliable editions, useful glossaries, extensive commentaries, and exhaustive bibliography, are equally well illustrated here. The Urnamma hymns are now available in one handy volume with useful indexes and provided with many splendid photographs. Anyone discussing the history of the royal hymn will gratefully rely on this work. The author has made an initial contribution to this discussion in the lengthy section on the treatment of several core themes in the Urnamma hymns as compared to related text groups. For all this we owe her our sincere thanks.

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⁷ In fact, this is among the tasks of those compiling a dictionary.

Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction. By BARBARA GREEN. SBL Semeia Series, vol. 38. Atlanta: SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, 2000. Pp. vii + 205. \$24.95 (paper).

“Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) was arguably the most original and yet the most misunderstood Russian thinker of the twentieth century.” Thus begins G. Morson and C. Emerson’s entry on Bakhtin in *The Johns Hopkins Guide*

to *Literary Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993). Bakhtin is hard to categorize in terms of literary schools or movements. Structuralists and Marxists have claimed him, though he criticized both camps. In some ways he is a post-structuralist (long before post-structuralism was born), though he probably would have been uncomfortable with that label. The concept for which he is most famous is “dialogized heteroglossia.” By “dialogized” or “dialogic,” Bakhtin meant, first of all, that utterances are shaped not only by the author/speaker, but also by the reader/listener (not far from reader response theory). Another, more important aspect of “dialogic” has to do with the interacting voices in a text. Bakhtin developed his criticism around the interrelationships of these voices, and this dialogic nature of the text is what is so applicable to the Bible. “Heteroglossia” refers to the many languages that each person has, as a result of the multiple identities of that person (professional, ethnic, geographic, etc.).

Bakhtin’s major work (especially *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* [1929, revised 1963] and *Rabelais and His World* [1965]) has been known and used by biblical scholars, but not as extensively as the work of other literary theorists. Barbara Green wants to promote more interest in Bakhtin among biblicalists by showing how his work may be used to interpret the Bible. Towards this end she offers a brief biography of Bakhtin and the context from which he emerged, followed by an explanation of Bakhtin’s ideas and their usefulness for the study of the Bible. Green then presents her own Bakhtinian reading of 1 Sam 17:55–20:42. The book concludes with an overview and critique of four other scholars who have applied Bakhtin to the Bible: Kenneth Craig, who brought to bear the notion of the carnivalesque, developed in *Rabelais and His World*, on Jonah and Esther; Carol Newsom, who wrote two short but sophisticated pieces, one on Job and the other on Isaiah and Lamentations; Ilana Pardes, a feminist literary critic who writes about the Bible; and Robert Polzin, who makes more use of Bakhtin than other biblicalists in his work on Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, where he centers his interpretation on the interaction of the different voices in the text.

The center of the present book, physically and thematically, is Green’s application of Bakhtinian theory to a section of the Saul story, 1 Samuel 17:55–20:42. She examines the dialogic and polyphonic speech, posing the questions as: What did Saul say, what is said to Saul, and what is said about Saul? She notes how speech creates and plays off of the relationships among the characters and the narrator, and how one speaker makes use of the speech of another. Her readings are insightful and free of jargon, and, while her work is informed by Bakhtin, there are few specific references to him in this chapter. This is the most enjoyable part of the book, and the one that proves Green’s point that Bakhtin’s approach is useful to biblicalists.

Green does not naively appropriate Bakhtin’s theory. She consciously, even self-consciously, asks and answers questions