

those details to overarching patterns or systems embedded in Scripture. It is precisely these overarching patterns that comprise the systematic effort.

In conclusion, I believe Chou's *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* is a compelling and much-needed work in the area of hermeneutics. Thankfully it is also an easy and enjoyable read, accessible for all lovers of Scripture—whether layperson, pastor, seminary student, or seasoned scholar. And while the reading is at times not seamless (Chou humbly admits he is not the greatest writer), he more than makes up for any lack in that area by providing the reader an exhilarating and interactive experience, where the sheer volume of texts analyzed will require reading with Scripture close at hand, ready to record the many wonderful insights gleaned.

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Fink, Sebastian, and Robert Rollinger, eds. *Conceptualizing Past, Present, and Future: Proceedings of the Ninth Symposium of the Melammu Project Held in Helsinki / Tartu, May 18–24, 2015. Melammu Symposia 9*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018. viii + 659 pp. Hardcover. USD 180.00.

*Conceptualizing Past, Present and Future* represents a broad treatment of issues concerning the historiographical representation of past, present, and future in pre-modern literature. The book, edited by Sebastian Fink and Robert Rollinger, brings to the public the general proceedings of the Ninth Symposium of the Melammu Project held in Helsinki on May 18–24, 2015. The volume is comprehensive in its reproduction of all the presentations of that symposium, having forty-two specific presentations adapted into chapters. It is to be placed among studies organizing and exploring nuances of Mesopotamian historiography (e.g. Mario Liverani, *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, Studies in Egyptology and the Ancient Near East [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004]) and that of Greek compositions (e.g. Carmine Catenacci, *Il tiranno e l'eroe: storia e mito nella Grecia antica*, *Lingue e letteratura Carocci 145* [Roma: Carocci editore, 2012]). Unlike most of its predecessors, however, the volume brings together studies dealing with temporal perceptions of cultures spanning from five thousand year-old Sumerian documents to the Greek historiography of the seventh century BCE.

The volume is divided into eight parts, each of which contains an introduction, chapters developing the topic under discussion, and a final response to them. Such an arrangement seems to reflect the particular disposition of the conference underlying the composition of the book itself. The first section of the book (9–74) elaborates on the role of narratives for conceptualizing the past in pre-modern compositions. In the introduction to the section, John Marincola observes presentations of this section are particularly informed

by the perspective that ancient historiographies demonstrate a concern with impacting the audience by dealing with history seeking something with “a greater applicability” (10–11). Accordingly, Carolyn Dewald explores Herodotus’s attention to Babylon as an important historical pivot for political and power displacement and consequent imperial shift (13–30). Emily Baragwanath elaborates on Xenophon’s *Hellenica*’s operative framework as connected to a complex perception of history, one that does not allow for closed circularity but emphasizes the lack of simple historiographical answers. Jared L. Miller’s interesting chapter analyzes the literary dynamics connected to the use of quoted speech structures in Hittite historiographical narratives. Miller demonstrates the clear authorial intention in these documents to convey the sense of a well-thought and accurate textual composition for its audience. The use of quoted speech structures for referring to the Hittite kings’ mental emulation of what foreign rulers would have thought of them is especially intriguing. This literary device, when combined with a genuine quotation, leaves in the reader the sense that the king had supernatural access to the thoughts of his enemies. As a result, such power could be used to justify military incursions onto their territories as endorsed by their deity.

The book’s two-chapter second section deals with Neo-Assyrian examples of literary structuring of the past (75–124). In its first chapter, Shigeo Yamada keenly observes the use of Neo-Assyrian eponym lists to integrate a view of temporality attending to pragmatic purposes. Accordingly, he shows that short spans of few years were used in connection to legal issues, while longer periods were correlated to a “chronological record of kings’ reigns and Assyrian dynastic history” (93). Yamada’s chapter is particularly suggestive in its observation of the intrinsic difference in ideology between Neo-Assyrian eponym chronicles and royal annals, the first being freer from the typical royal propaganda that the latter heavily displays. Simonetta Ponchia adds to Yamada’s discussion by demonstrating how ancient Sumero-Akkadian and Early Babylonian history were of interest in later Assyria and Babylonia possibly due to “the paradigmatic value of ancient kings’ experiences” (114). He convincingly demonstrates how chronological thought functioned as a structural backbone for the reappropriation of ancient history already in Antiquity. I find this perspective valuable to the study of history in connection with other historical material such as the Hebrew Bible, for it suggests careful maintenance of conservative and modificative tendencies in tension for the casting of new texts.

The third part specifically elaborates on the junction point where the past meets the present (125–232). I find this section an important development on the book’s overall argument, for it explores the limits of temporal reasoning as that which was regarded as past reached the time of a specific composition and/or group of authors. As a result, the choice of heroic deeds of an important royal figure of the past is shown by Hannes D. Galter (131–143)

as a paradigmatic concern of new royal figures in Assyria. Galter's paper uncovers the apparent motivations for casting monumental royal inscriptions and, therefore, suggestively supports the idea of a careful selectivity on the depiction of royal figures in ancient Assyria. Seth Richardson elaborates on such use of the past by demonstrating "how 17<sup>th</sup> century Babylon in the north invoked the 19<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century south-Mesopotamian past" (145). As a consequence, 17<sup>th</sup>-century Babylonian scribes developed a textual cache comprised of Sumerian motifs, terminology, and specific ideologies to battle a competing ideological influence over parts of the Babylonian territory. The importance of the concept to which such demonstration points cannot be overestimated in the study of how the past is reused in ancient texts. Often in ancient texts, archaization breeds legitimacy, communicating a sense of trust and continuity that are fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of ancient royal dynasties. The book also explores such dynamics in connection with Roman (187–206) and Greek compositions (207–228).

It is to the problem of generic distinction in ancient literature that the fourth part of the book turns. This section explores an important issue in the study of the literary treatment of time in Ancient compositions, for it deals with the question of how the literary representation of time intersects the notion of genre. Thus, Greeks and Romans are shown by John Marincola (239–260) as not using as much authorial energy to categorize the types of histories as modern scholars do. In connection to such differences in taxonomy Jason M. Silverman demonstrates how the same specific text can be repeated in different generic mediums (261–278). Silverman's observation raises the question of categorization of texts in connection to the way they are recorded altogether with their wording. The relevance of this observation resides in the fact that texts represented differently in Antiquity could be considered concomitantly as a different and a common genre, thus exerting an equally common communicative strategy. Specifically, Martti Nissinen's perspective (279–299) keenly approaches different technically defined genres as conceptual keyholes into the larger social phenomenon of prophecy in Antiquity. I find Nissinen's conclusions important for the process of making the needed distinctions between literary time representation and pragmatic time perceptions in everyday society, for it allows the reader to understand specific genres as windows to selected features of a given social phenomenon.

The fifth section deals with questions concerning the relationship between author and audience (309–362). Three essays discuss related topics such as the authorship of king lists in Ancient Mesopotamia (319–333), the authorship and audience of the Babylonian chronicles (334–346), and the historiographic capacity of Roman compositions in the fifth century CE (347–360). These essays are insightful, leading the reader to apprehend the relatively scarce emphasis on the identification of the author in Antiquity, especially, in the Mesopotamian king lists and Babylonian chronicles. Accordingly, Nicole

Brisch suggests a collaborative conceptualization of authorship (329), noting that authors would be mentioned in Ancient Mesopotamia only rarely. I concur with the need for a more nuanced perspective on authorial intentionality for ancient documents defended by the author and also find suggestive Caroline Waerzeggers's observation that specific copies of given texts must be brought to their specific productive milieu before any analysis is done (344). I find it equally important, however, to observe that more elaborate theories about textual conflation must be carefully considered in face of the remarkably stable process of copying attested by several documents in Mesopotamia. The phenomenon of textual reappropriation does not necessarily breed total literary transformation but intentionally brings an aura of antiquity to a given discourse due to specific purposes as shown in the texts studied in the section. Thus, conservation plays an important role in the archaization process, for it allows the needed pattern recognition the reader needs to make sense of such literary resources, as the interchangeability between Sumerian and Akkadian in Mesopotamian cuneiform texts demonstrates.

The relation between Ancient cosmogonies and literary expression of reality is explored in the seventh part of the book. Among the papers comprising the section, Marc Van Mierop's contribution caught my attention with its keen observations on the titular section occupying the last 200 lines of the *Enuma Elish* epic (381–390). The paper explores the connection between that portion of the text and Babylonian lexical texts, demonstrating that Marduk's title is tied to a rich web of meanings intended to be read in all their polyvalent force. Such insistency on utilizing symbols as a programmatic filter of observable reality is at the root of ancient literary reuse. Thus, one is led to observe that, for the author of the *Enuma Elish*, empiricism towards the created world is connected to the divine multivalent literary representation of the deity's qualities, an essential feature of several other ancient texts.

The last two parts of the book are respectively represented by the general section (441–550) and the young researchers' workshop (551–608) of the ninth Melammu project conference. Together these sections are comprised of papers exploring the conference's overall topic from various angles and reinforce the weighty contribution it represents. Therefore, *Conceptualizing Past, Present, and Future* is both a broad assessment of a cutting-edge scholarship and a wide introduction on issues related to time and history representation in Ancient literature. The reader will find in it an invaluable tool for the study of the past in Antiquity, as well as an introduction to the rich cache of documents studied by the fields of Assyriology and Classical Literature.

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