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Kyle R Greenwood (Development Associates International)

ABANDONED SHIPS:
A SYNTACTIC AND LEXICAL RECONSIDERATION OF JOB 40:31[*]

ABSTRACT

Job 40:31 is comprised of six Hebrew words, two of which are hapax legomena: שכות *and* צלצל*. Both lexemes are nearly universally understood as pointed projectiles used to impale Leviathan. This interpretation is aided by the fact that these nouns are prefixed by the preposition* ב*, suggesting that Leviathan's* עור *(40:31a) and* ראש *(40:31b) function as the direct objects of the transitive verb* מלא *and that* שכות *and* צלצל *are implements with which Leviathan is filled. This essay argues against this interpretation on two counts. First, when Biblical Hebrew wishes to express instrumentation of Piel* מלה/מלא*, it prefers to do so via the adverbial accusative. The syntax of Job 40:31, then, indicates that Leviathan is not filled with something, but that Leviathan fills something. Second, building on the work of Kinnier-Wilson, as well as an appeal to the textual witnesses, the lexemes* שכות *and* צלצל *are best understood as terms for a boat with which Leviathan's head and hide are filled.*

Young Bok Kim (University of Chicago)

THE FUNCTIONS OF KIRTA'S EPITHETS: A PHILOLOGICAL AND LITERARY ANALYSIS[*]

ABSTRACT

This paper conducts a philological and literary analysis of all the epithets attributed to Kirta (KTU 1.14-1.16), highlighting their literary functions within the epic. While the epithets used of divine characters have received much attention in earlier studies, the epithets of Kirta have only been sporadically treated in comments. I show that each epithet highlights different facets of Kirta's character, role, and status mainly with respect to his relationship with Ilu. These epithets were placed by the author in strategic positions so that the readers might anticipate what is coming and be reminded of what happened previously.

Kathryn McConaughy Medill (Towson University)

IS THIS DIRECTIVE *HE* INAPPROPRIATE?
THE DIRECTIVE *HE* AND FICTIVE MOTION IN BIBLICAL HEBREW[*]

ABSTRACT

In most cases, the directive he *suffix in Biblical Hebrew indicates objective movement toward a physical goal. However, Hebraists have also identified a substantial number of examples in which the directive* he *is not associated with objective movement, as for example in Leviticus 1:11, where the word "northern" in "He shall kill it on the northern side of the altar" is marked with the directive* he. *These examples have been described either as irregular uses of the clitic or as evidence of a location-marking function for the directive* he. *However, a close examination of these clauses shows that almost all are expressions of fictive motion to a goal – an environment in which the use of the goal-marking* he *would be expected.*

Dmytro Tsolin (Ukrainische Katholische Universität)

ZUR VERWENDUNG DER VERBALFORMEN IN SYRISCHEN BEDINGUNGSSÄTZEN.
TEIL 1: DIE FAKTISCHEN KONDITIONALSÄTZE[*]

INHALTSANGABE

Die Vielfalt der Prädikatformen in syrischen Bedingungssätzen fordert eine ausführliche theoretische Erklärung und deutliche Bestimmung ihrer morphosyntaktischen Funktionen, da manche von diesen Prädikatformen austauschbar zu sein scheinen und sich für ihre Alternierung in den vorhandenen Grammatiken keine ausreichenden Erklärungen finden lassen. In diesem Artikel wird eine Analyse der alternierenden Verbformen in Hinblick sowohl auf ihre temporalen, aktionsartigen und modalen Charakteristiken als auch auf ihre diskursiven Funktionen in Bedingungssätzen geboten. Berücksichtigt werden dabei auch moderne theoretische Ansätze zur Logik der Konditionalität. Außerdem werden einige wichtige Schlüsse bezüglich der Haupttendenzen der Entwicklung der syrischen Verbmorphosyntax gezogen, deren wichtigste Aspekte die zunehmende Verwendung des Partizips und der zusammengesetzten Verbformen darstellt.

Christo H J van der Merwe (Stellenbosch University)

AN EVALUATION OF THE FRONT MATTER[1] OF THE DICTIONARY OF CLASSICAL HEBREW. VOLUME 1. ALEPH. REVISED.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this review is to critique the front matter of the Dictionary of Classical Hebrew Revised (= DCHR) as objectively, but also as constructively, as possible. I accordingly turned to the field of modern lexicography, in particular to a sub-field called "dictionary criticism". It turns out that determining the function of a dictionary and the competencies of its potential users are pivotal in evaluating its design features. Here I argue that, given its real-world constraints, the DCHR is an LSP (= Language for Special Purposes) dictionary. The guidelines for compiling a manual for an LSP dictionary are used to evaluate the front matter of the DCHR. As far as the content, structure and presentation of the front matter are concerned, it was found that the assumed role of the editors in deciding what their users need, and an apparent complacency about the validity of these assumptions, contributed to assumptions about the competencies of potential users of the DCHR that could be called into question. As a result, it could be argued that a better informed profile of the competencies of its potential users and greater insight into "the best practices in LSP dictionaries" would have helped the editors to structure the contents of the introduction, and in particular the user's guide to the DCHR, more effectively to unlock the potential wealth of information recorded in this dictionary.

BOOK REVIEWS

Boyd, S L 2021. *Language Contact, Colonial Administration, and the Construction of Identity in Ancient Israel: Constructing the Context for Contact* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 66). Leiden / Boston: Brill. xx + 493 pages. ISBN 978-90-04-44875-9 (Hardback); 978-90-04-44876-6 (E-Book [PDF]). €280.00 / US$336.00.

Boyd's book offers an exceptional perspective on the socio-historical functioning of multiple languages in Ancient Israel. As a doctoral dissertation, his work tackled the very complex problem of relating language contact, colonial administration, and the construction of ancient Israelite identity to one another – an ambitious undertaking, indeed. Right at the beginning of his book, he states the wider scholarly context within which his inquiry takes place: "Language contact is part of the human experience. Even in the earliest stages of writing we can trace how evidence of such interactions helps to understand the complex histories between different communities. Indeed, studying language contact situations reveals how people often use language to cultivate a sense of identity by incorporating elements of a foreign language into native dialects" (p. 1). This certainly also applies to the languages and human interactions in ancient Western Asia. Boyd indicates that – since antiquity – "contact between ancient Israelites and other ancient Near Eastern groups result[ing] in foreign linguistic and grammatical features in the Bible" (p. 3) has been noticed and investigated. However, he argues, the approaches followed in earlier investigations were not always adequate to deliver sound results. His study therefore sets out to find and illustrate the most appropriate approach to investigate this complex dynamism with reference to the writings of the Hebrew Bible. Of necessity, such an approach will have to be multidimensional and multidisciplinary. To study the dynamism and interplay of cultural and language contact in biblical times, and its effect on identity negotiation, is indeed a complicated matter. In general, Boyd succeeds in doing so.

In chapter 1, the author discusses the comparative method that had been in vogue in earlier studies, as well as earlier attempts to search for the scribe. He also evaluates the linguistic approaches that had been followed in many earlier studies to investigate language contact in the Hebrew Bible. He criticises the earlier comparative methods as follows: "Language cannot simply be understood as though vocabulary and morphosyntax

autonomously and linearly evolve. Rather, people use language and writing systems in ways that complicate simplistic models of development" (p. 24). The wider debate that should be conducted is rather "about how Israel had contact with the literary material of Mesopotamia and how the scribes of the Hebrew Bible embedded literary and linguistic traces of this contact in their own religious texts" (p. 28). Furthermore, although there is much value in following a linguistic approach in studying the influence of other languages (particularly Akkadian and Aramaic) on the Hebrew of the First Testament, earlier studies did not incorporate sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and sociohistorical perspectives into their investigations. Boyd therefore describes the uniqueness of his study as follows: "First, this book provides a more robust analysis of the spread of Aramaic as a lingua franca in order to trace, through time and in space, how the language functioned in the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods and what this process means for analyzing language contact in the Hebrew Bible. … Second, this book incorporates linguistic theory and diachronic literary considerations of biblical texts. … Third, I examine not only lexemes, but also other types of borrowings (such as calques and pattern borrowings) as well as structural influence, particularly in Isaiah, and what that influence reveals about underlying sociolinguistic situations" (p. 33). These are indeed the strong points of Boyd's book, namely careful attention to diachronic matters and the incorporation of sociolinguistic insights. In addition, Boyd leans towards some postcolonial insights (particularly as used in William Morrow's work) in order to give account for the political power relations involved in the interaction of Israel with the great empires.

Chapter 2 focuses on Contact Linguistics, as a branch of Sociolinguistics. He provides a brief history of the field and gives an overview of the major types of contact and debates in the field. He also legitimates his approach when asking whether Language Contact theory can indeed be applied to ancient languages. He concludes at the end of this chapter: "When the pertinent sociohistorical background is explored, even though such information is not as abundant as desired, a better picture of Israel's and Judah's engagement with the ancient Near Eastern neighbors emerges. This background then helps us to understand, given the typologies of contact-induced change discussed, which types of change we should expect given Israelite and Judean interaction with Arameans, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. Since the rise of Aramaic as an administrative language during the Iron Age, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods is both an under-examined part of this debate (at least in detail) and since this background is

vital for understanding language change in the Hebrew Bible, I explore this contact situation in more detail …" (p. 113). In light of Holger Gzella's book (2015) on the history of Aramaic, it might be too bold a claim to make that this remains an "under-examined" aspect in the debate. However, Boyd is right that Gzella's work does not have a detailed focus on contact situations and resulting identity negotiation processes.

In chapter 3, the author deals with the sociohistorical context within which contact between Akkadian and Aramaic took place. After examining various textual and historical sources, he concludes: "In sum, despite the later, pervasive appearance of Aramaic in a variety of genres, a limited use of the language is evident in both the center and the periphery of the empire in the Neo-Assyrian period, the very era of the development of many biblical texts and traditions that show contact with Mesopotamian traditions. Given the limited uses of the language in Mesopotamia, particularly in the Neo-Assyrian period, and given the restricted conveyance of Mesopotamian traditions in this language, suggestions that Israel and Judah had contact with a wide variety of texts in Aramaic in this era overextended themselves" (pp. 173-174).

Chapter 4 investigates the contact between Aramaic and Akkadian in more depth. First, a linguistic definition of Aramaic is provided, from its earlier dialectical variety to the later standardized Official Aramaic. Thereafter, the linguistic data are investigated in order to explore the contact between Akkadian and Aramaic. A next sub-section identifies certain contact-induced lexical and structural changes that can be observed in both languages, before providing a description of the linguistic processes of Akkadian/Aramaic contact. Boyd concludes at the end of this chapter: "Though one can generalize and discuss 'Akkadian' and 'Aramaic' trends over time in some fashion, the actual nature of the contact occurs in the form of dialects, and studies that ignore this facet cannot do justice to the complexity of the situation (nor to the complexity of the data)" (pp. 226-227).

This outcome of chapter 4 lays the foundation for the further study. Boyd argues convincingly that "this sociolinguistic portrait of parts of a dynamically bilingual Mesopotamian society is particularly foundational for understanding language contact in the Hebrew Bible. It is the historical, linguistic, and sociological situation outlined above that would have been the reality for an Israelite or Judean in Mesopotamia, either brought there for diplomatic purposes or by exile" (p. 227).

Chapter 5 investigates the book of Ezekiel in order to observe whether there are any signs of language contact in the book. Boyd dates the book in the sixth century BCE, in the "political situation of the Judean exiles in Babylon and the surrounding areas" (p. 233). He agrees with those scholars who detect a very peculiar style of language in Ezekiel and argues that "[s]uch phrasing indicates that the author or authors of Ezekiel existed within a specific priestly social location within Judean society. Yet, parts of the book suggest external, Mesopotamian influence and thereby invite comparison with Babylonian language and culture" (p. 238). Boyd traces signs of language contact in Ezekiel (with both Akkadian and Aramaic) that are analogical to the contact seen before between Akkadian and Aramaic. He argues that the textual data "cannot be isolated and set apart from the real, lived circumstances of the exiles in a region where a language of prestige, law, and economy (Akkadian) and another language of law, economy, and inter-community communication on its way to becoming a lingua franca (Aramaic) existed concurrently" (p. 302). This makes the book Ezekiel, stemming from the Neo-Babylonian exilic context, such an appropriate starting point to investigate language contact in that time period.

Chapter 6 focuses on possible language contact in the book of Isaiah. Boyd summarises his observations on this book as follows: "The linguistic data cited and discussed … present a picture of the development of Hebrew through the book of Isaiah. … [T]he data have been analyzed from the perspective of the changing contact situation evident in the ancient Near East more generally, and how this larger cultural and political situation affected ancient Israel and Judah as the succession of Mesopotamian empires cast their shadows on the Levant. In this manner, the contact-induced changes in the layers of Isaiah are windows into historical, political, and sociological realities of the people who wrote the Hebrew Bible. The identification of contact-induced changes in Hebrew … not only explains the linguistic data, but also highlights how much Hebrew had developed as a language of identity" (p. 369).

The last chapter, chapter 7, provides the synthesis of the study. It is here where the author employs insights from postcolonial theory most clearly. Boyd argues that "[l]anguage contact in the Hebrew Bible bears witness to larger processes of real-world interactions given the changing landscape of the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires and their claims on the Levantine corridor. The traces of contact-induced change, whether as the intentional adaptation of foreign motifs or the unconscious structural

patterning of grammatical constructions due to a lingua franca, all attest to the variety of ways in which the authors and scribes of the Hebrew Bible navigated their identities in the face of the real changes" (p. 386). Boyd then relates these contact-induced changes to the phenomena of hybridity and resistance. When identity is navigated in the face of colonial and imperial pressures, these language changes can be described in terms of deliberate attempts to show allegiance to the imperial overlords by means of linguistic adaptations, but simultaneously, the same use of language contributed towards subtle processes of undermining the power of the empire. Boyd therefore rightly argues that "resistance and hybridity are two sides of the same coin, and each can function as part of the ways in which threatened and governed communities construct and articulate their identities in the face of power imbalances" (p. 388).

Boyd concludes with the expression of hope "that the combination of linguistic data, historical critical perspectives, and contact linguistic (as well as sociolinguistic) theory has moved the field forward beyond previous assumptions and linguistically structuralist constraints" (p. 410). This is indeed the case. The combination of these insights into a multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach, provides a very useful methodological entry into the multilingual ancient environment within which the biblical materials originated. Recently, another study edited by this reviewer and two other colleagues (Jonker, Berlejung and Cornelius 2021) voiced a similar call to bring together biblical studies and studies of multilingualism in ancient contexts. Boyd's work provides a huge step forward in bringing insights from sociolinguistics – particularly, contact linguistics – into the reading of biblical (and other ancient) texts, and in focusing on language in relation to identity issues in colonial/imperial contexts. Language and textuality are never isolated phenomena, but they are always embedded in sociological realities. Boyd's work contributes very clearly towards emphasizing this aspect in our interpretations of biblical data. Not only his very meticulous exposition and use of linguistic theory, but also his application of the theory to the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah, counts among the strong points of this work. His sensitivity for diachronic matters, in combination with linguistic matters, as well as for power differentials in those contexts that brought forth the biblical writings, should be lauded. Boyd's book is certainly of great value in this regard.

However, some criticism may also be expressed, as is the expectation in a review such as this one. First of my critical points is his use of the category of identity in his study. Although he is very thorough and meticulous in

spelling out the details of contact linguistics, and although he makes the claim that language change often contributes to processes of identity negotiation, a theoretical underpinning of this claim is lacking in the book. Understandably, one would not want to overburden the reader with theoretical discussions (although Boyd comes close to that) and would therefore rather concentrate on the novelty of the approach, it could have benefited the study in totality if this aspect was better developed. Particularly the notion of "textual identities" could have strengthened his arguments (Jonker 2016: chap. 2).

Furthermore, Boyd's overall argument lets the reader wonder whether he is not stepping into the trap of circular argumentation. First, some socio-historical context is described; then, some textual features are related to that socio-historical context; and lastly, those textual features are seen as indications of identity negotiation process in that same socio-historical context. I do not think that Boyd does indeed step into that trap; however, his fairly vague reference to identity issues could open up that danger.

In general, however, Boyd has done the study of ancient language environments in general, and of biblical texts in particular, a huge favour with this multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach. The book is therefore strongly recommended to all those scholars with an interest in these fields.

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Jonker, L C, Berlejung, A & Cornelius, I (eds) 2021. *Multilingualism in Ancient Contexts: Perspectives from Ancient Near Eastern and Early Christian Contexts*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.

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Wagner-Durand, E & Linke J (eds) 2020. *Tales of Royalty: Notions of Kingship in Visual and Textual Narration in the Ancient Near East*. Boston / Berlin: De Gruyter. 325 pages. ISBN 9781501515552 (Hardcover), ISBN 9781501506895 (eBook). €99.95.

This volume stems from the workshop of the same name which was organized by Elisabeth Wagner-Durand and Julia Linke and which took place during the 61st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, "Text and Image", held in Geneva and Bern in 2015. After the Introduction (pp. 3-15), the first nine chapters are the papers which were read at this workshop. Three main topics on narratives of kingship are discussed, with one chapter focusing on the visual sources, a second on the textual sources, and a third serving as a response to the preceding two chapters. These main topics are "The Righteous Guided King: Tales of the Wise, the Pious and the Lawful One", "Tell Me How to Live: Narrating Royal Building Activities in the Ancient Near East", and "Warrior Tales: The Royal Hero Fighting the Evil in the Ancient Near East", or, more simply, "the king as the wise man/shepherd", "the king as a builder" and "the king as a warrior". The main question which both the workshop and this volume have attempted to answer is "whether narratives, both visual and textual, may have been used to create and legitimate royal authority in the Ancient Near East" (p. 3). While this question is posed to encompass the entire ancient Near East, the participants in the workshop all coincidentally chose to discuss Mesopotamian sources.

   Under the topic of "the king as the wise man/shepherd", Wagner-Durand (pp. 19-48) examines how, or whether, the king is depicted as engaging in "direct matters of royal law, piety, and wisdom" (p. 23) in the visual record of the fourth to first millennia BCE. Nicole Brisch (pp. 49-63) considers the motif of the learned king through examining the rulers who represented themselves as literate, asking what literacy could portray about the king. Frauke Weiershäuser (pp. 65-73) offers a brief response to these two contributions. Regarding "the king as a builder", Linke (pp. 77-90) explores images of the king engaged in building projects, primarily through the motif of the ruler carrying a basket of mud-bricks. Claus Ambos (pp. 91-99) discusses building projects undertaken by non-royals and how these refer to the king. Marlies Heinz (pp. 101-105) responds to these papers. For "the king as a warrior", Barbara Couturaud (pp.109-137) examines how kings are depicted in hunts and battles before the Akkadian Period, and Carlos Langa-Morales (pp. 139-154) examines the historiographic elements of the

narratives in the campaign reports of Šū-Sîn. Dominik Bonatz (pp. 155-161) offers a response to these two contributions.

After these papers are additional contributions, comprising of two case studies by Herbert Niehr (pp. 165-183) and Natalie N. May (pp. 185-239), two discussions on terminology by Seth Richardson (pp. 243-260) and Wagner-Durand (pp. 261-286), and a summary by Wagner-Durand and Linke on the viability, limitations and potentials of applying narratology and narration to ancient Near Eastern sources (pp. 289-313). Niehr analyses royal inscriptions to uncover some narrative topics of royal legitimation in the Aramaean kingdoms. While this is an excellent example of how narratology can be applied to ancient Near Eastern sources, it seems somewhat out of place in this volume because it is the only contribution which does not deal with notions of Mesopotamian kingship. May's contribution examines the adoration of the king's image as a strategy of royal legitimation during the Neo-Assyrian Period. As the longest contribution in the volume, it is perhaps not surprising that it is the most successful. It is also the most thorough, examining textual, archaeological and pictorial sources to find the overarching narrative. In what may become the volume's most influential paper, Richardson convincingly argues that the term "validity" is better suited than "legitimacy" when applied to ancient Near Eastern notions of royal ideology.

As with any book, there are gaps in knowledge and debatable hypotheses. Just one example of each will be presented. Couturaud states that Woolley's original interpretation of the Standard of Ur as a standard "has almost never been questioned, despite the fact that it is not based on any serious archaeological or functional element" (p. 114). However, Collon (1995:65) and Hansen (1998:45; 2003:33) both explicitly state that the function is unknown, and most scholars refer to it as the "so-called Standard of Ur" (e.g., Hansen 1998:45; Canby 2001:8; Marchesi and Marchetti 2011:217; Evans 2012:184, see also Marchesi and Marchetti 2011:61 *et passim* who write "Standard of Ur" within inverted commas) or the "so-called Royal Standard of Ur" (e.g., Bahrani 2001:60), indicating that they do not follow Woolley's interpretation.

Linke (p. 87) suggests that banquet scenes, even those not associated with the king carrying the basket of mud-bricks, "allude to this ritual sequence or storyline [of building and banqueting] and implicate the royal act of the construction of an official building, most often a temple". There are other examples, such as the Standard or Ur, which Linke herself mentions (p. 85), in which banquet scenes are clearly contextually related

to battle scenes. Therefore, while the Ur-Nanshe plaque reveals that the banquet may sometimes be associated with building activities, this is not always the case.

This volume raises many questions about how "narrative" and "narratology" may be applied to the ancient Near Eastern sources. The application of modern theories and methodologies to ancient sources has rightly been questioned, but recent studies have shown that such studies can have value (see for example Perdibon's *Mountains and Trees, Rivers and Springs: Animistic Beliefs and Practices in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion*, published in 2019 and reviewed by this reviewer for *JSNL* 47/1). As Helle, who applies queer theory to the *Enūma Eliš* states, sometimes applying such theories "is indeed inappropriate, but that this kind of impropriety is also fundamentally necessary to uncover the deeper ideological structures" (Helle 2020:64). Still, it is the application of narratological theory to the ancient sources which raises the most questions. I will mention here some which are not addressed in the volume.

It is stated throughout the volume that single-scene images cannot be considered "narratives". This is an important and valid finding, but it may also depend on which definition of "narrative" one chooses to use. As Wagner-Durand laments, "there is an obvious lack of consensus on what constitutes a narrative" (p. 266). Similarly, Langa-Morales (p. 142 n. 17) notes that the definition that he uses "ist jedoch nicht beabsichtigt, die Gültigkeit anderer Definitionen je nach Fach oder Wissensbereich zu bestreiten". If there can be multiple definitions depending on field or discipline, then why was a definition more suitable for the visual sources not chosen when dealing with these sources? Or, put another way, why did the scholars who discuss the visual sources use a maximalist understanding of "narrative", rather than a minimalist understanding? And if the scholars prefer a maximalist understanding, why did they choose to discuss single-scene images, rather than multiple-scene sources which may (or may not) be classified as "narrative"? For example, Linke, while discussing the visual sources of the royal builder (pp. 77-90) does not mention the stelae of Ur-Namma or Gudea, which, although fragmentary, have multiple registers which record building projects, and which have been discussed at length by Canby (2001) and Suter (2000) respectively. If the intention of the workshop and this volume was to ascertain "whether narratives, both visual and textual, may have been used to create and legitimate royal authority in the Ancient Near East" (p. 3), surely it would have been better to analyse visual sources which could be described as "narrative", such as

the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs (see, for example, Nadali 2007; 2018 for the narrative reliefs of the Battle of Til Tuba in both the North and South-West Palaces)? Studying images which can be better described as "descriptive" or as "evoking a narrative" will skew any findings. But the problem may run deeper: Wagner-Durand and Linke (p. 294 n. 22) dismiss the Neo-Assyrian images cited by May as "technically static and not narrative", and one is then forced to ask whether *any* image can be described as narrative by this definition? This is the view of Heinz, "unlike a text, a pictorial representation never narrates" (p. 104). But this raises another question: when applying a modern theory/method to ancient sources, should the method or the sources take primacy? If a method/theory has potential but is unsuitably adapted to the ancient sources, should it be adjusted to suit the sources, or should it be discarded? Is the lack of narration in the visual sources discussed in this volume because no image can be considered a narrative? Or is it due to the definition(s) of "narrative" which has been applied to these sources, or the sources which were chosen to be studied, or both?

While there can be no argument that texts are or can be narratives, the application of narratology appears to be more stringent when applied to the visual sources in this volume than to the textual sources. For example, in Brisch's discussion on the literacy of certain rulers, she cites *Šulgi A* lines 19-25 (p. 52). Although embedded within a narrative, these lines can rather be described as descriptive, and have no bearing on the narration of Šulgi's run to celebrate the Ešeš festivals in both Nippur and Ur. If single-scene images are dismissed as descriptive and non-narrative, should textual descriptions such as this, which are not presented as narratives and do not impact the narrative, also be dismissed as non-narrative? Or, if literary descriptions can be used to illustrate an overarching narrative, can the same not apply to images which are described as "descriptive"?

This raises yet another question: various sources are described as having "narrative elements" (e.g., Linke p. 78; Wagner-Durand and Linke p. 301) or having a "narrative quality" (Wagner-Durand and Linke p. 292), but is there a line between a source having narrative elements or qualities and that source *being* narrative? Wagner-Durand and Linke suggest that "[t]his dilemma might be at least partly solved by distinguishing different levels of narratives: the explicit level covered by the narrow definitions and the level of the 'meta-narrative' found in texts and images that do not quite fit into these narrow definitions but nevertheless contain narrative elements or an implied narrative" (p. 292). While this solution has merit, and is likely

the best compromise, it still feels unsatisfying when it is not applied equally to different sources or modes of communication, particularly in societies which were mostly illiterate.

There are of course no easy or clear answers to the questions raised above. Fortunately, the editors of this volume are well aware of many of the issues, "these are generic questions and considerations as they touch on fundamental questions of narration. Until these matters are fully explored, we will most likely have difficulties in finding not only a common language but also the answers to more detailed questions" (p. 309).

The editors should be commended for producing such a thought-provoking volume. It furthers the conversation on narrative and narratology in the ancient Near Eastern, and particularly Mesopotamian sources, while pointing the way for further research.

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