

additional text to have been flagged in the commentary to allow readers to make an informed decision for themselves (without having to purchase additional – and expensive – tomes).

This too raises a question of audience and accessibility. For a roughly 200-page book, containing no Greek or Latin text, intended to make abstruse works available to a wider readership, the £120 (US\$160) price tag is excessive. One wonders how Routledge expect ‘undergraduate students with an interest in Greco-Roman literature and ancient geography’ (in the words of the preface) to gravitate here. Moreover, given that a two-volume paperback reprint of *GGM* is currently available from Cambridge University Press for a fraction of the price, it is difficult to imagine why specialists would bother shelling out the extra money for this.

In sum, this is a book that, in one sense, achieves what it sets out to do. It solves a single element of the *GGM* problem by providing a series of accessible translations of three important but neglected texts, from which new readers (especially those unable to do business with Müller’s Latin) will benefit. Regrettably, however, the commentaries and introductions are too often grounded in speculative interpretations of scanty evidence (especially concerning the history of the text of the *Periplous of Hanno* and the content of Juba II of Mauretania’s lost *Wanderings of Hanno*), and the picture the book paints of the history of periplography reproduces a tired narrative about the gradual emergence of the genre from humble, practical beginnings. Given this, as well as the exorbitant price for which it currently retails, readers would be better placed to wait for a paperback (assuming one is projected) – or, indeed, for the eventual publication of Shipley’s *SSG*.

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EARLY GREECE AND THE NEAR EAST

KELLY (A.), METCALF (C.) (edd.) *Gods and Mortals in Early Greek and Near Eastern Mythology*. Pp. xii + 341. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-108-48024-6.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X22002499

This impressive volume, based on the 2017 conference ‘Divine Narratives in Greece and the Ancient Near East’, addresses the fundamental question of the relationship between ancient Near Eastern and Greek literature and thought. The title should be interpreted loosely: while most of the chapters discuss issues of theology, the focus is not so much on the nature and workings of the Near Eastern and Greek ‘divine narratives’ themselves as on the parameters and methodology of cross-cultural comparison – how (and whether) specific compositions, stories or discrete elements might have travelled and interacted with one another, how we might fruitfully read these side by side (both with and without the possibility of influence) and the various, seemingly intractable problems attached to these questions.

The book is a major step forward in the exploration of these difficult issues. Covering an impressive array of places, periods and materials (always presented with plenty of

contextual information, making the volume user-friendly for non-specialists), the contributions put forward a wealth of approaches that, taken collectively, significantly complicate the relatively positivistic, usually Hellenocentric models of cross-cultural interaction that have largely dominated the field. As the editors emphasise in the introduction, it is neither sufficient nor desirable (or, arguably, particularly beneficial) to scan ancient Near Eastern material for parallels in search of the elusive 'origins' of Greek culture and literature. While several contributors argue that it is better to abandon the search for direct influences altogether and to engage instead in comparisons 'by analogy', others take on the task of tracing influences, but in ways that considerably refine traditional models. Where Classicists have focused on linear East–West chains of transmission, the volume's contributions explore the myriad, often tortuous ways in which stories were transmitted and modified within the cuneiform world and beyond, emphasising the adaptability of divine narratives to diverse contexts. One of the strengths of the volume, in this sense, is its focus on Near Eastern myths and texts and their composers and audiences. Rather than being treated as links in a teleological narrative culminating in Greece (a point well noted by Kelly, p. 276), these texts are endowed with autonomy and agency, and positioned at the heart of an expanded ancient cultural network in which Greece may appear to be relatively marginal.

A combination of attention to a broader range of texts and contexts, sharpened methodological tools and general (sometimes excessive) caution and scepticism means that many of the volume's conclusions are negative. Parallels that once seemed obvious turn out to be superficial resemblances, and potential scenarios of cross-cultural transmission are complicated by detailed attention to performance or composition contexts. Yet there are also plenty of positives: fascinating reconstructions of the transmission of divine narratives across vast swathes of the ancient world, focusing on differences as well as similarities, co-exist with equally rich and convincing 'influence-free' comparative readings. Another important development, emphasised by the editors in the introduction, is a recognition of the multi-layered nature of transmission processes: a common feature can potentially be explained both by an older, shared Indo-European background and by more recent interaction between connected Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures in what the editors call 'literary-historical double motivation' (p. 13) – one does not necessarily exclude the other.

One of the great strengths of the volume is its attempt to cross disciplinary boundaries. Scholars of the ancient Near East and wider Mediterranean world, Classicists and comparatists get roughly equal space. The first of the three, in particular, bring nuance and important new perspectives (as well as many caveats) to the overall picture. Perhaps inevitably, however, a disciplinary gulf remains in terms of assumptions, methods and aims. This is reflected, for instance, in the book's tripartite organisation. Part 1, 'Contexts', largely consists of contributions by scholars of the ancient Near East and seems partly to reflect a (legitimate) concern that the materials they study be understood in their various and complex Near Eastern settings before (or, in some cases, rather than) being absorbed in chains of cross-cultural transmission, while Parts 2 and 3, 'Influence' and 'Difference', engage more explicitly with the arguments about comparative approaches set out in the introduction, which are arguably more germane to the aims of Classicists. As the editors note, however, there is much overlap between the three parts; and the diversity that characterises the volume is a definite benefit for comparatists seeking to pick and choose from an array of different methodologies.

In Chapter 1 A. Gilan considers the setting of the Hurro-Hittite 'Song of Emergence', a composition narrating the ascent to power of the Storm God. Gilan focuses on the question of the song's connection to ritual and notably its potential performance in a religious

festival at Mount Hazzi in North-East Syria. This is one of several contributions to open up the crucial issue of the relationship between the written and erudite character of many ancient Near Eastern divine narratives and their potential oral transmission and/or performance. Chapter 2, by C. López-Ruiz, offers a compelling account of the ways in which Storm God narratives were transmitted and adapted throughout the Mediterranean, from the Levant to Crete and as far as Iberia. She makes the case for the transmission of divine narratives as a ‘by-product’ of broader cultural contacts and co-existence (p. 39), and gives the Phoenicians a central role in this process (in contrast to existing Hellenocentric accounts of cultural transmission).

Chapters 3 and 4 shift the focus to Mesopotamia. F. Reynolds analyses the battle between Marduk and Ti’amat in *Enūma eliš*. She sheds light on the intersecting roles of cult, politics and scholarship both in the composition of this narrative and in the ways in which it was adapted and re-deployed in different geographical and chronological contexts. Reynolds’s exploration of the central role played by works such as *Enūma eliš* and their composers in creating and articulating theological and political discourse is illuminating. M. Weeden analyses the encounter between Gilgameš and Ištar in the Standard Babylonian *Gilgameš*. He seeks to ‘complicate’ attempts to connect this passage to the *Iliad* 5 encounter between Diomedes and Aphrodite and to critique the idea that such similarities can be explained by oral transmission through poets (p. 81). He analyses the ‘intertextual’ links between the relevant SB *Gilgameš* passages and Sumerian lexical lists to show that the text took shape primarily in the sphere of scribal learning and production.

The next three chapters explore influences between ancient Near Eastern, Greek and Persian texts, focusing on Hesiod’s Myth of Races (A. Lardinois), the Akkadian *Etana* epic and Archilochus (B. Currie) and plant disputations (Y. Cohen). Lardinois’s is the boldest (and most speculative) contribution, arguing that Hesiod deploys a recognisably Near Eastern narrative, but adapts it to make it palatable to a Greek audience. Currie’s analysis of (often striking) similarities between Akkadian and Greek ‘fabular narratives’ is more cautious, and it offers a valuable methodological discussion, developing a useful distinction between ‘floating motif’ and ‘fixed text’ models. Cohen makes perhaps the most convincing case for cross-cultural transmission and reception, arguing that despite a high level of flexibility at the level of detail, plant disputation poems from Mesopotamia, Persia and Greece all articulate a tension between the divine and the human spheres, asking whether ‘observation of cult’ or ‘the preservation of humans’ is more important (p. 153).

In Chapter 8 Metcalf traces an intriguing pattern of connections between royal succession narratives and the motif of the cup-bearer across Mesopotamian and Hurro-Hittite myth and history and Greek accounts of Persian history. Chapter 9, by R. Scodel, asks whether the account of the Nephilim (‘very tall warrior groups of the past’, p. 173) at *Genesis* 6:1–4 displays the influence of earlier Greek narratives of a heroic age. In a nuanced analysis emphasising differences as well as similarities, Scodel argues that *Gen.* 6:1–4 could represent an adaptation of Greek stories via Philistine culture, pointing out that ‘there is no reason for all borrowing to go in the same direction’ (p. 184). In Chapter 10 A.R. George examines Mesopotamian cosmogony narratives and their reception by Berossus, a third-century BCE Babylonian scholar who wrote in Greek.

I. Rutherford in Chapter 11 develops an approach to cross-cultural transmission that is alert to ‘differing degrees of receptiveness’ (p. 202) of different cultures to individual features of myths according to ideology and cultural norms. This model allows Rutherford to offer an insightful account of Greek interactions with the Hurro-Hittite *Kingship in Heaven* cycle, focusing on potential borrowing but also, crucially, on difference: he makes the attractive suggestion that the Greeks ‘blocked’ one central, well-travelled element

of the cycle, the conflict between the Storm God and the sea, because it did not fit comfortably with their established ideas about the sea. Chapter 12, by J. Haubold, puts questions of transmission aside. Instead, Haubold offers a compelling account of the ways in which the divine narratives of different cultures deploy shifting, often critical theological discourse to address shared concerns about the gods and their relationship with humanity.

In Chapter 13 S. Vanséveren uses a controversial Homeric passage as a case study to assess the value and potential pitfalls of treating apparently shared linguistic features as symptoms of, or evidence for, cross-cultural influence. Chapter 14, by A.M. Bowie, offers a useful survey of fate and its relationship to divine authority in Mesopotamian narratives and the *Iliad*, emphasising key differences. In Chapter 15 B. Ballesteros Petrella examines Hebrew, Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels for the Hesiodic Pandora narrative. A helpful distinction between the ‘aetiological dimension’ of myths and their ‘concrete narrative instantiations’ (p. 262) allows him to develop a textured reading of the parallels and their implications, emphasising the markedly Greek elements of the Hesiodic scenes. Kelly’s excellent concluding chapter makes a convincing case for comparison ‘by analogy’, focusing on ‘what each culture or text is doing with shared or common elements’ (p. 282). This approach is developed in an interpretation of Near Eastern and Greek succession myths, emphasising the strikingly different roles played by sex and gender in the different traditions.

The volume is a welcome contribution to our understanding of the relationship between the ancient Near East and Greece. It provides fascinating, often compelling perspectives that significantly refine approaches to these difficult questions. Perhaps most importantly, it will offer encouragement and a surer methodological footing to those wishing to explore an area of study that has remained relatively marginal, but is of defining importance for the field of classical studies as its exclusive focus on Greece and Rome (and its relationship with ‘Western’ culture) comes under ever closer scrutiny.

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ΕΣΣΟΜΕΝΟΙΣΙ ΠΥΘΕΣΘΑΙ . . . A NEW COMMENTARY ON *ILLIAD* 7

†WEST (M.L.), LATACZ (J.) (ed., trans.) *Homers Ilias: Gesamtkommentar (Basler Kommentar / BK). Band XII, Siebter Gesang (H). Faszikel 1: Text und Übersetzung*. Pp. xviii + 31. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020. Cased, £36.50, €39.95. ISBN: 978-3-11-040573-6.

WESSELMANN (K.) *Homers Ilias: Gesamtkommentar (Basler Kommentar / BK). Band XII, Siebter Gesang (H). Faszikel 2: Kommentar*. Pp. xiv + 240. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020. Cased, £91, €99.95. ISBN: 978-3-11-040574-3.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X22002591

Iliad 7 is too often overlooked. Its place in between the intimate and moving events of *Iliad* 6 and the powerful rhetoric of *Iliad* 9 has meant that this book is frequently ignored in accounts of the poem (and skipped over in undergraduate lectures). This attitude towards *Iliad* 7 is the