

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies

<http://journals.cambridge.org/BSO>

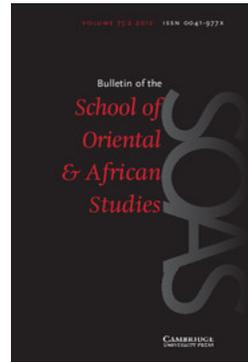
Additional services for *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



A.R. George (ed.) with M. Civil, G. Frame, P. Steinkeller, F. Vallat, K. Volk, M. Weeden and C. Wilke: *Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection. (Cornell University Studies in Assyriology Sumerology 17. Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection VI.) xxxi, 310 pp. Cl pl. Bethesda, MD: CDI Press, 2011. ISBN 978 193430933 9.*

Alasdair Livingstone

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies / Volume 75 / Issue 02 / June 2012, pp 367 - 368

DOI: 10.1017/S0041977X12000092, Published online: 11 July 2012

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0041977X12000092

How to cite this article:

Alasdair Livingstone (2012). Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 75, pp 367-368 doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000092

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

A.R. GEORGE (ed.) with M. CIVIL, G. FRAME, P. STEINKELLER, F. VALLAT, K. VOLK, M. WEEDEN and C. WILKE:

Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection.

(Cornell University Studies in Assyriology Sumerology 17. Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection VI.) xxxi, 310 pp. CI pl. Bethesda, MD: CDI Press, 2011. ISBN 978 193430933 9.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000092

With this volume the publication of the Schøyen Collection proceeds apace. In view of the range and diversity of the texts published here, A. R. George has wisely drawn upon the expertise of a constellation of luminaries specializing in historical texts from the third millennium BC to the Achaemenid period. The inscriptions published here exhibit not only chronological but also geographical breadth, with an Urartean, an Achaemenid Persian and five Elamite inscriptions in addition to the bulk of Sumerian, Old Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian texts. The contents of the volume are as follows, with particular attention to the highlights and what is new.

Section I, for the third millennium, contains a miscellany of mostly new texts, edited by Piotr Steinkeller. The actual historical texts are supplemented by a document for the purchase of a house during the reign of Enmetena which, as Steinkeller points out, has some interesting and unusual features of legal terminology. Another unusual artefact here is an inscribed votive human foot, made of clay and bearing a plea to the deity for healing.

In Section II Claus Wilcke takes over and publishes a Gudea text, though not a Gudea inscription as such, which is to be dated to the Old Babylonian period. Wilcke writes that he had first thought this to be a random collection of phrases, but then realized that it does have some form of structure. What the text does is offer a selection of the phrases that occur commonly in the statue inscriptions of Gudea, and in more or less the sort of order that one would expect to meet them in an actual inscription, each phrase supplied with a rendering into Babylonian. This ends with a list of comestibles which would be required for offerings “for my statue”. One could suppose that the tablet amounts to a *vade mecum* for Babylonians who wished to read Gudea.

Section III of the volume contains a miscellany of fifteen royal inscriptions from the third millennium BC. As George points out, they are all “unexciting duplicates”, but the excellent photographs make this section of the book useful for classroom use. Section IV, by Konrad Volk, is again dedicated to a single text, a long and almost perfectly preserved new barrel inscription of Sin-iddinam of Larsa. In Section V, George again takes the baton with a further thirty royal inscriptions that mainly coincide with previously known texts. With its Section VI, from the keyboard of Grant Frame, the book turns to Assyria with eight royal inscriptions from the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods. These include part of Tiglath-pileser I’s annals, as well as inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II, Sargon II and Ashurbanipal. Another remarkable text, a stele of Nebuchadnezzar II, is dealt with by George himself in Section VII. The stele is most notable for including, apart from the actual inscription, a depiction of a king standing in front of a ziggurat identified as Etemenanki. There are also ground plans, one on the stele’s face and one on its left shoulder. Extensive discussion of these features and their significance is provided. The rest of Schøyen’s Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions are published in Section VIII, again by George, and here there is further new material, two eye-stones

dedicated to Nebuchadnezzar II, and two fragments of eighth-century commemorative inscriptions on cylinders. While one of these is a previously known inscription of Sargon II, the other helps to fill a gap in the historical record as it is the first attested inscription of the early eighth-century king Eriba-Marduk. As George points out, this text has importance beyond what might be suggested by its thirty-four lines of lacuna-ridden text, since it is rich in religious and cultural content. The remaining Mesopotamian section of the volume is right at the end, Section XIII, and along with the Gudea bilingual and the Nebuchadnezzar stele, is one of the highlights of the book. This is a clay cylinder inscribed with the text of the Laws of Ur-Namma and the editor, Miguel Civil, takes the opportunity to provide a full critical edition of the Laws using all the known text witnesses and supplying a new translation with full philological commentary. Section IX is devoted to five Elamite inscriptions, ably expounded by François Vallat, including one in the linear Elamite script that still hides its mysteries, while in Section X Mark Weeden guides the reader through a short Urartean inscription in which Minua, some of Ishpuini, “founds” a granary by the might of Haldi.

Thus, the volume makes an extremely important contribution to Ancient Near Eastern historical studies over a series of wide fields, with the highest level of expertise lavished upon it by the team assembled by A.R. George. It may serve as a caution to those who would ignore unprovenanced material.

Alasdair Livingstone

JEREMIAH PETERSON:

Sumerian Literary Fragments in the University Museum, Philadelphia. (Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo, 9.) 372 pp., 68 plates. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2011. ISBN 978 84 00 09314 3.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000109

The principal task confronting those working on the literatures of Ancient Mesopotamia remains the publication of primary sources. A case in point are the thousands of tablets and fragments found at Nippur, in central southern Iraq, by the archaeological expedition of the University of Pennsylvania (1888–1900). The archaeological context of their discovery was not recorded in any detail and they were at first considered to be the remains of a temple library. It is almost certain that they derive instead from pedagogical activity conducted in private houses in the eighteenth century BC.

The tablets found at Nippur were split among collections in three different countries: the University Museum in Philadelphia, the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Istanbul, and the epigraphist’s personal collection, donated in 1925 to the University of Jena in Germany. Despite this unfortunate dispersal of the material, publication began before the First World War, although with little understanding of some genres of text.

Especially difficult were the literary compositions in Sumerian, a language then only poorly understood. Progress with these texts took place over the course of many decades. From the 1940s onwards, the Philadelphia scholar Samuel Noah Kramer and his students successfully used the tablets from Nippur to reconstruct the principal works of Sumerian literature, thus recovering the oldest corpus of