

Complete indexes of modern authors, names, places, subjects, and references, Lupieri's *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* provides a rich, compact, and easily accessible historical background for the Apocalypse. Any serious student of the Apocalypse should consult this volume, particularly in view of the important contextual data Lupieri provides for his historical reading of the Apocalypse. Prudent use of the backgrounds provided in this book, together with a proper interpretive method and approach to the Apocalypse, may help readers to convey the truth of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Even though Lupieri does not comment on roughly a quarter of the verses of the Apocalypse (124 out of 405), this book can be recommended to any serious reader of the Apocalypse.

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*Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung*, by Karen Radner. SANTAG Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005. Pp. x + 341. ISBN 3-447-05328-3. € 98.00.

The importance of the "name" has long been recognized in studies focusing on the Ancient Near East and the biblical world. Radner's study looks at the issue from an intriguing angle. Her work represents a slightly updated version of her *Habilitationsschrift*, submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany, in November 2004. Those not familiar with the European academic scene should understand that a *Habilitationsschrift* is a major post-doctoral research project which is required of those who wish to be considered for a professorship at a University. Radner's volume is divided into two main sections, i.e., the discussion of the conceptual basis of the work (pp. 11–66), followed by the main section of the study dealing with the power of names (pp. 67–278), in itself subdivided as will be discussed below. As customary, Radner includes an introduction (that she calls in good German fashion "prolegomena" [pp. 1–10]), in which she presents the specific purpose of the study, the chronological and geographical frames of reference as well as the utilized sources, a brief review of earlier work on the topic, and a helpful description of the writing and dating conventions used. Radner seeks to describe the use of names in terms of the human endeavor to "survive" or overcome the physical limitations of mortal human beings (p. 1). Thus, her work is not concerned with onomastics or name magic, just to mention two other relevant research areas involving names in the ANE.

The author postulates two important objectives: first, to understand the significance of names as the means to overcome the mortality of human

beings. Second, by means of a diachronic study of the sources, Radner seeks to understand the "handling" of the written name throughout several millennia of Mesopotamian cuneiform writing (p. 2). She focuses on Mesopotamia, particularly the use of Sumerian and Akkadian in this particular region. Radner presupposes a culturally and ideologically united region for Mesopotamia (p. 3), a notion which should—at least—be open to discussion, since it may tend to level any regional or local variations in conceptual outlook and point of view. The author recognizes that her take on the importance of the name in the Mesopotamian attempt to overcome human mortality will be filtered through the scribal perspective and traditions which informed this highly specialized elite (p. 4) and focuses in her review of the enormous quantity of cuneiform material primarily upon literary texts, i.e., texts written by a highly specialized elite which included monumental inscriptions and literary compositions but also letters which were not always written by professional scribes but often reflected the social and intellectual standing of the individual sending the letter.

Section A of Radner's study is designed to discuss relevant foundational concepts, including the concept of eternity (pp. 11–15), which in Mesopotamian thought is intimately associated with truth: "what is 'true' today, was also yesterday and will be also tomorrow, since it is 'eternal', and—inverted—only that which is 'true' can be 'eternal'" (pp. 14–15). Following this, the author introduces the crucial name concept, emphasizing the inseparability of name and name bearer. Radner illustrates this by the opening lines of the *Enuma Eliš* epos: "When up high the heavens did not (yet) have a name and below the earth was not (yet) called by a name" (p. 15). On page 23 an interesting diagram illustrates the concept of the individual in Mesopotamian thought: name and spirit are thought to be independent of the body, while the physical existence is clearly bound to the body. However, three elements of Mesopotamian thought are connected to an "alternative body", i.e., the written name, the image, and the seal. Radner focuses on these last elements, particularly, the written name which connects to eternity. She goes on to discuss the characteristics of distinct name sets, i.e. (most importantly), personal names, throne names (in an excursus, pp. 33–35), names of pets, place names (cities and canals), names of buildings, and names of offerings to the gods. In particular, this last category is discussed in detail by Radner and a useful table of 105 objects is provided, systematically detailing the donor, the date of the stele or statue, the bibliographical details and the names, including a translation (pp. 43–59). I noted that object 24 includes all the regular data, except a translation of the transliterated cuneiform text, which must be an oversight or technical glitch in the production process of this otherwise carefully-proofread volume.

Section B details the power of names throughout three millennia of cuneiform texts. After a brief review of pertinent literature, Radner discusses several examples of the Akkadian phrase *šumam šakānum*, lit. "to set/establish the name," which is understood as a conscious strategy to secure the name in the collective memory of a particular culture (p. 70). Other ways to achieve this objective involved the ritual care of the grave of deceased people, which involved the feeding of the dead as well as the "calling of the name" of the deceased. However, this required children, which underlines the importance of descendants for the preservation of one's name, a point that Radner also describes throughout the literary history of Mesopotamia (pp. 74–90). Other ways of preserving one's legacy, apart from the direct or more distant family, involved the intention to become famous and acquire fame (pp. 90–101). Some of the ways of preserving one's name in this way could involve bravery in war, the construction of public monumental architecture, or the exploration of far-removed regions and places. I missed in this section a discussion of notoriety as a means for the preservation of one's name which is well-known in literature. Who would not know Goliath in the context of biblical literature or some of the other antagonists mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (such as the Philistines as a group)?

The preservation of one's memory was also achieved by the written name, which often involved the combination of images and texts (pp. 114–29). Often the inscribing of names was connected with numeric notation systems where names equaled certain numbers (pp. 130–31). Radner dedicates a large amount of literary real estate to the discussion of this topic, since the mere fact of an "in-scription" underlines the importance of her basic thesis. Interestingly, Mesopotamian culture (as well as modernity), also knew fake inscriptions (pp. 155–61). It is surprising to note that the author only at this point includes (after a substantial discussion of different aspects of inscriptions) an introduction to the Sumerian and Akkadian terminology associated with inscriptions (pp. 161–65), which would seem to this reader to be more appropriate at the beginning of this section. While most of the inscriptions preserve the name of the patron, in a number of inscriptions (mostly associated with the Hurrian culture), scribes included their names and thus preserved their own name for eternity (pp. 166–73).

The next major subsection of section B deals with the reception, or—as Radner calls it—the "reading of the tracks" (p. 179), left by the names of earlier generations. Often, rulers or common people took a (famous) name from an earlier generation (pp. 179–82). Other ways of rediscovering ancient names and thus making these names "eternal" involved taking care of ancient monuments (pp. 182–90) as well as linking ancient monuments to new/current monuments (pp. 190–203). Mesopotamian texts also refer to the practice of searching for hidden inscriptions and taking care of them (pp.

203–34), an issue dealt with by the author extensively (it feels overly so, since other sections are more concise). In the process, Radner includes a useful table of texts that refer to previous monuments (pp. 209–24). Other means of connecting with antiquity and thus preserving the name(s) of earlier individuals and generations concerned the copying of building inscriptions for the purpose of referencing them (pp. 234–51).

In the final subsection, prior to a concise summary of the complete work (pp. 271–78), Radner discusses one more “thing” that can be done to a name, namely the “changing of tracks,” or—to put it more plainly—the deleting of names (pp. 252–70). Often the changing of names involved inserting a new name referring to a person which had nothing to do with a particular achievement. Of particular importance in this context was the fact that “truth” in Mesopotamian thinking was eternal and thus even innovations had been “true” in the past and originated in divine inspiration (p. 270).

The volume includes an extensive bibliography (pp. 303–38) which provides a good base for further research on the subject. Radner has carefully documented her assertions and findings, as can be seen from the substantial number of 1408 footnotes that the volume contains (i.e., an average of over five per page) and has provided important primary sources in transliteration and translation. This feature makes the monograph also useful for researchers whose main interest is not associated with the cuneiform writings of the ANE. For example, it would shed light on how biblical authors and the material culture of Syro-Palestine employ (or not employ) the strategies and trends that Radner has described from nearly 3000 years of cuneiform literature. The usefulness of the volume is even further enhanced by a generous set of indexes (personal names, geographical names, divine names, lexemes, textual references, and subjects [pp. 279–302]). Additionally, Radner has also included a useful timeline of the Mesopotamian rulers mentioned in her volume, together with the dates for their reigns (pp. 340–41). As is customary with volumes published by Harrassowitz, the production quality of the book is excellent. Both the author and the publishing house are to be congratulated for having produced an innovative and detailed treatment of a subject that transcends the boundaries of the Ancient Near East—surely they will have created a name for themselves that will have to be consulted in future research on the functions of names and their importance in theology and ideology.

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