ous, to begin with, that none of the "kings" from the "First Dynasty" is ever designated as LUGAL, as noticed by PRUZSINSZKY (2003) among others. Additionally, since at least two of the four generations of the "First Dynasty" overlap with the beginning of the five generations of the "Second Dynasty," the distribution of the two alleged dynasties seems more synchronic than diachronic, to some scholars such as ADAMTHWAITE (2001) and YAMADA (1996).

Chapter II follows the lives and careers of twenty-nine scribes who wrote ephemeral documents of the Syrian tradition, and Chapter III follows thirteen scribes who wrote ephemeral documents of the Syro-Hittite tradition. The former are arranged according to the relative chronological time frame of the two alleged royal dynasties, so as to put them into the socio-historical context of the city. The latter scribes, who appear not to have been in the service of either the city or the palace, were roughly classified into two categories—the local scribes and the foreign scribes and officials who served the Hittite administration at Carchemish. Between these two chapters is an excursus on the scribes attested in some ninety ephemeral cuneiform documents from Tell Munbāqa (ancient Ekalte) in the vicinity of Emar. These two chapters and the excursus did not exist in the dissertation and were newly written for the present volume.

The last two chapters, which deal with the scribes who copied Mesopotamian scholarly texts (scholarly scribes) and with their compositions, are a revised and expanded version of the bulk of the author's dissertation. In Chapter IV, on the Syrian scholarly scribes, the author recognizes five scholarly scribes whose writing exhibit Syrian paleography as well as some orthographic and linguistic traits found in the Syrian ephemeral documents, and conclusively proves that the distinction between the Syrian and Syro-Hittite scribal tradition holds also for scholarly texts from Emar. This is undoubtedly one of the most valuable findings of the present volume. Chapter V, the longest chapter in the book, deals with the Syro-Hittite scholarly scribes, i.e. the family of the diviner Zu-Baʿla, the foreign teacher Kidin-Gula and the *apkallu* priest Madi-Dagan. The Zu-Baʿla family are the best-documented scribes in Emar. Based on their ephemeral documents as well as their scholarly works stored in "Temple M_1," the author successfully reconstructs their personal lives and scholarly achievements throughout four generations. This covers much of the period during which Emar was under Hittite dominion.

The present volume is the third monograph on Emar in the Series Harvard Semitic Studies (*HSS*). The first was *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar: A Window on Ancient Syrian Religion* (*HSS* 42, published in 1992) by Daniel E. Fleming, and the second, *West Semitic Vocabulary in the Akkadian Texts from Emar* (*HSS* 49, published in 2001) by Eugen J. Pentiuc. Cohen's work is a welcome addition to the series, and together with the monographs by Fleming and Pentiuc, is an essential reference work for anyone dealing with the cuneiform texts from Emar and its vicinity.

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VAN LERBERGHE, K., VOET, G. — A Late Old Babylonian Archive from Dūr-Abiešuḫ. (Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 8). CDL Press, Bethesda, 2009. (xvii + 299 p.). ISBN : 978-1934309-079.

In recent decades, war, with its attendant social and political upheaval, has allowed the unauthorized excavation of many sites in Iraq and the entry of numerous groups of cuneiform tablets onto the antiquities market. However much I deplore the loss of archaeological context and the insult to the cultural heritage of Iraq, as an historian I nonetheless welcome the publication of material that has come to light in this unfortunate manner, for it is irresponsible for a scholar to ignore any available information relevant to a topic of inquiry. Although it is not stated in the volume under review, there can be little doubt that the archive published here was indeed looted.

The selection of 89 texts (dating from Aṣ 5 through Sd 4, around 20 years) presented here in hand-copy, transliteration, translation, and in a dozen cases in photograph, is revealed by internal evidence to come from Dūr-Abiešuḫ, a fortress settlement established by the Late Babylonian monarch whose name it bears. Previously known only from the year name Abi-ešuḫ "m," the town also features in an archive briefly described by ARNAUD (2007 : 41-44), most likely recovered from the same illicit excavations.

The location of Dūr-Abiešuḫ remains to be determined, but the authors (pp. 4-6) make a good case for its situation on the ancient Tigris at the junction with the Ḫammurapi-nuḫuš-nišī canal. The scribal practices (p. 6) and seal iconography similar to that of Sippar (p. 160) suggest a northern setting.

Five types of document dominate this collection : purchases of slaves (nos. 1-11) ; loans for commercial expeditions (nos. 12-22) ; receipt of sheep for temple offerings (nos. 23-40) ; silver loans (nos. 46-53) ; and various texts dealing with the delivery and distribution of barley (nos. 54, 60-79, 82, 84, 86-89), sesame (nos. 58-59), and bran (nos. 56-57). Note also three herding contracts (nos. 41-43). All texts included in the volume seem to be administrative records generated by the temple bureaucracy.

A real surprise arising from study of this material is the identity of this temple : Enlil's Ekur, which seems to have been relocated in Dūr-Abiešuḫ from Nippur, or rather to have set up a branch office there. Note no. 25 :5-7 : *ana* šuku ^{d}en.líl ^{d}nin.líl.lá ^{d}nin.urta ^{d}nusku *u* èš.èš.ḫi.a *ša* nibru^{ki}, "for the provisions of Enlil, Ninlil, Ninurta, and Nusku, and for the *eššešum*-rites of Nippur." This shift would be part of the general displacement of persons and institutions northward within Babylonia under the successors of Samsuiluna (p. 1), but a single text here (no. 80) mentioning boat traffic with the quay of Nippur (kar nibru^{ki}) shows that the traditional religious capital had not been completely abandoned. Indeed, a letter to be fully published in a later volume of the Cornell series but translated here (*CUNES* 51, p. 7) describes the defense of the Ekur in Nippur from mounted attackers in Ad 11.

The chief personality in this body of texts is Enlil-mansum, son of Ur-Sadarnuna (Ursatum), son of Ninurta-nīšu, who bears the infrequently attested title nu.èš = *nešakkum* (PIENTKA 1998 : 304) and appears to be in charge of the operation of the Ekur in Dūr-Abiešuḫ. Also present is the ubiquitous *abī ṣābim* Utul-Ištar (nos. 13, 14, 54 ; cf. pp. 34, 36), who lends out silver, presumably from the palace treasury. To his dossier add now also RICHARDSON 2010, nos. 28, 29, 82, 83, and 83b.

The authors have presented the material in an excellent fashion, with particular attention devoted to the seal impressions, which have been studied in detail and reproduced in both photo and copy. In addition, a chart helpfully indicates the position of each seal impression on the tablets (pp. 272-76). Unfortunately, some of the copies (e.g., pp. 165, 264) have been printed so darkly that they are all but useless. On a few occasions a seal deemed to be illegible can be at least partially read, for example, no. 47, seal B : […] / [nu].èš ^{d}[…] / … / [du]mu ^{d}x […] / arad *Am*[*-mi-ṣa-du-qá*].

The copies of the cuneiform text on the tablets do not always match the transliterations, particularly when indicating the extent of broken signs and lost text. See here no. 11 :13, no. 24 :11, and no. 51 :2.

Closer editing by a native English speaker would have avoided such infelicities as "consequently" for "consistently" (p. 58), "fainted" for "faded" (p. 210), and "singular" for "single" (p. 219). Do the authors have a new interpretation for the iconographic element they term "*wedge* and ring" (p. 224) ? What is meant by the "unmasked" use of a cutting wheel (pp. 202, 227) ? The spelling "wesir" (pp. 87, 216) is a Germanism (Dutchism ?).

The book includes the usual indices of personal, divine, and geographic names and of professions. Particularly interesting is the description of the "Leuven Camera Dome System"

(pp. 161-62, photo p. 299)[1], which has been employed to produce the magnificent "digital line drawings" of a number of the pieces. No indication is given as to the cost of such a set-up, but if it can be produced economically enough to be within reach of the major tablet collections, it promises to revolutionize our work.

I conclude with a number of minor comments on particular items:

No. 5: Translate lines 7-8 with "her," not "his."

No. 9: Restore line 16: *a-na ba*[*-aq-ri-ša*].

No. 19: The translation of lines 12-13, ki lú silim.ma.ta *u* lú gi.na.ta as "jointly responsible" is at best a paraphrase.

No. 33:4 and 38:4: Render "Šumum-libši, *the barber*."

No. 55: On the copy, line 8 reads igi (not ^{m}) Ḫuzalum. Is this a scribal error, or does the fault lie in the construct form *mu-ša-ad-di-in* in l. 7? CAD M/II, 252-53 does not list any "collectors" governing proper names. The patronymic dumu Eṭerum has also been omitted from the translation.

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Mesopotamia has a strong tradition in scientific research. The Mesopotamian schools, where students learned reading, writing and arithmetic, are well-known. Since the third millennium an interest in the collection of data is discernable: lists of kings, lists of plants, lexical lists of Sumerian and Akkadian words, lists of lunar eclipses, lists of omens, lists of historical facts (chronicles), lists of astronomical observations (the astronomical diaries). Astronomy grew up as by-product of astrology, mathematics as by-product of surface measuration. Technological inventions may also be mentioned such as the seeder plough, and a sophisticated integrated system of weights and measures much like our metrical system; cf. POWELL 1984; *RlA* "Masse und Gewichte"; ROCHBERG 2004.

Did the Mesopotamians also have interest in theoretical study of economy? At first sight this question seems absurd. Since Moses FINLEY, *The Ancient Economy* (1973), the orthodoxy has been that the ancients were not capable of sophisticated book keeping, had no economic attitude as *homo oeconomicus*, had no idea of profit maximization. Economy as a science did not exist despite a work like Ps.-Aristotle, *Oeconomica*. Now this view has increasingly been challenged, but the idea that the Mesopotamians had a scientific interest in economy as field of theoretical abstraction still seems odd.

However, new evidence from Babylonia seems to indicate that Babylonian scholars were interested in prices as such, or rather "exchange values" (KI.LAM / *mahīru*) of the shekel. One indication is the interest of the astronomical diaries, which are not only a database of celestial observations, but also a database of prices, which reveals a keen interest of price fluctuations. The omen literature also exhibits a remarkable interest in the purchasing power of the shekel.

The book under review publishes 18 texts that underscore this. These documents, dated from the end of the Achaemenid period into the Parthian period, contain exchange values only and are the product of specific research; they are not simply extractions of the diaries. While the diaries consistently contain prices as the equivalents in litres of barley, dates, cuscuta, cress, sesame and wool of one shekel of silver (8.33 gr.), six of these documents present the equivalents of 2 shekels, two of one mina (= 60 shekels) and four have the usual 1 shekel. In six cases it is unknown. In addition, the periods of observation are

SLOTSKY, A.L., WALLENFELS, R. — Tallies and Trends. The Late Babylonian Commodity Price Lists. CDL Press, Bethesda, 2009. (xii + 205 p.). ISBN: 978-1-934309-23-0.

[1] For the "Leuven Camera Dome System" cf. the article by H. Hameeuw and G. Willems in this volume of Akkadica.