

Jane A. Hill, Philip Jones, and Antonio J. Morales, eds., *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. PP. 448 pp. + xxx. Cloth 2013 | ISBN 978-1-934536-64-3 | \$69.95 Ebook 2013 | ISBN 978-1-934536-65-0 | \$69.95

Stemming from a workshop entitled, 'Experiencing Power—Generating Authority: Cosmos and Politics in the ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia', held at the University of Pennsylvania in November of 2007, fifteen scholars from the fields of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as anthropologists, came together to study ancient Near Eastern kingship. The editors freely acknowledge their debt to Henri Frankfort's classic work on the comparative kingship of Egypt and Mesopotamia; *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). What Frankfort accomplished singularly sixty years ago, must now be done by an army of specialized scholars. The basic issue that Frankfort wrestled with was the purpose of ancient monarchy; was it to maintain the harmony between the cosmos and humanity, or was it to harmonize human relations with each other? In other words, was monarchy based more on cosmic or political foundations? Frankfort concluded that monarchy in Egypt was more cosmic in orientation than in Mesopotamia. Of course, these issues are not exclusive in nature; some have argued that the cosmic and political aspects of kingship were separate but equal facets of the institution, neither of which held precedence over the other.

The editors commissioned the contributors to concentrate on particular topics concerning kingship, rather than attempt a total synthesis. They divided the contributions into three categories; kingship and the cosmos, kingship and politics, and the merging of the two in kingship and landscape (or the built environment).

The first section, "Kingship and Cosmos", contains five papers. Ellen Morris ('Propaganda and Performance at the Dawn of the State') studies the Narmer Palette in the context of ancient Egyptian kingship, showing that the monarch was already perceived in some sense as divine, and associated with the god Horus, although it is not yet clear that they were considered incarnate deities. Dominique Charpin ("I am the Sun of Babylon": Solar aspects of royal power in Old Babylonian Mesopotamia') investigates the relationship of the Old Babylonian period monarch and the sun god, Shamash, who was associated with justice and divination. Though not divine in the Egyptian sense, the king was in some way connected with the divine order through the sun god. Eckart Frahm ('Rising Suns and Falling Stars: Assyrian Kings and the Cosmos') continues with the same theme, by investigating first millennium B.C. rituals which copied solar movements. Ludwig D. Morenz ('Texts before Writing: Reading [Proto-] Egyptian Poetics of Power'), argues that cultic documents in Predynastic Egypt conveyed a sacred aspect of kingship. JoAnn Scurlock's work is a brilliant and thought provoking *tour de force* ('Images of Tammuz: The Intersection of Death, Divinity, and Royal Authority in Ancient Mesopotamia'). In it, she studies the mythological connections of

Mesopotamian kings with the Dumuzi cult. She argues that kingship in Mesopotamia was not ideologically about power but about responsibility; they were created by the gods to supervise the labor of humans.

The second section, “Kingship and Politics”, has five more; Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia (‘Building the Pharaonic State: Territory, Elite and Power in Ancient Egypt in the Third millennium BCE’) concentrates on the town of Hierakonopolis as a unifying agency for the nascent Egyptian monarchy. Walther Sallaberger (‘The Management of the Royal Treasure: Palace Archives and Palatial Economy in the Ancient Near East’) evaluates the economic relationship between the palace and temple in early Mesopotamia, seeing them as separate entities, perhaps even rivals. In ‘Egyptian Kingship During the Old Kingdom’, Miroslav Bárta chronicles the emergence of non-royal bureaucracies in the Fifth Dynasty. Beate Pongratz-Leisten (‘All the King’s Men: Authority, Kingship, and The Rise of the Elites in Assyria’) surveys the relationship of the king and elites (especially scribes) in the Neo-Assyrian state. D. Bruce Dickson (‘Kingship as Racketeering: The Royal Tombs and Death Pits at Ur, Mesopotamia, Reinterpreted from the Standpoint of Conflict Theory’) studies early state formation from the standpoint of the royal tombs of Ur, arguing that the subjects of the king went to their deaths unwillingly.

The last section, “Landscape”, has three papers. Michael Roaf (‘Mesopotamian Kings and the Built Environment’) and Alan B. Lloyd (‘Expeditions to the Wadi Hammamat: Context and Concept’) study the physicality of landscape, especially in regards to royal building activity. Mehmet-Ali Ataç (“Imaginal” Landscapes in Assyrian Imperial Monuments’) analyzes the ideological significance of landscape for royalty.

This volume is the sixth in a series of seven Penn Museum International Research Conferences. The editors are to be commended in bringing together these excellent contributors for such an important volume that updates and analyzes ideas concerning comparative kingship in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

There is a six page glossary of terms in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hebrew, and Egyptian. Eleven tables, fifty figures, two maps, and a sixteen page index.

MARK W. CHAVALAS
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE