

to the throne follows Michael Roaf's suggestion ("Could Rusa son of Erimena have been king of Urartu during Sargon's eighth campaign?", in S. Kroll et al. (eds), *Biainili-Urartu. Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12–14. October 2007* (Acta Iranica 51. Leuven, 2012), 187–216) to consider the Urartian king Rusa, son of Erimena, as a contemporary of the Assyrian king Sargon II (p. 132).

Chapter 4 (pp. 141–312) constitutes the core of the author's research, the presentation of the "Urartian king" and the "Urartian kingdom" in all its facets. It introduces well-known writing systems (hieroglyphs and cuneiform) and subsequently examines the forms of addresses of kings in inscriptions (pp. 147–56). Above all the supreme god Haldi, the Urartian state religion, and the relationship between the kings and the gods with all its rights and duties are highlighted here. Furthermore, extensive building projects in the form of fortresses and watering systems are dealt with. Finally, the chapter examines the administration of the Urartian state and raises the question whether it was a central or a segmentary state (pp. 274–8). The author concludes that it was a "feudal patrimonial state" (pp. 278–80), i.e. the political system suggested by Max Weber, which is based on structures subject to the directives of an autocrat.

In the reviewer's opinion, the first two chapters are highly interesting and of fundamental importance to the thesis, but in the end far too long. Above all in chapter 1 the reader gains the impression that this is a sociological work, the results of which are compared with a selected issue – the Urartian culture in this case. This also arises in the chosen order of the individual chapters. The discussion of Urartian culture does not begin until p. 121. More illustration would also have been helpful (there are only 36 figures).

The reviewer has not understood at all the author's system of citation. Despite an itemized bibliography at the end of the book (pp. 321–44), individual citations are listed again in the footnotes. This is simply unnecessary, inflates the length and leads the system of bibliography *ad absurdum*. Strangely enough, some citations did not find their way into the bibliography at all. Perhaps they have just been forgotten? Furthermore, a list of abbreviations is missing. Neither does the book contain any index, which should be standard with such monographs.

The author has delivered an extensive work in several ways. She proves soundness of handling the theoretical basics of social science in the first chapter, and extensive knowledge of ancient Near Eastern cultural history, especially of the Urartian cultural history, in subsequent chapters. Although there are some small aspects to criticize, the author has succeeded in writing an easily legible contribution to the research into Urartian culture. The second part of her publication will constitute an important contribution to subsequent research in this field.

Michael Herles

Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich

SEBASTIAN FINK:

Benjamin Whorf, die Sumerer und der Einfluss der Sprache auf das Denken.

(Philippika: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen / Contributions to the Study of Ancient World Cultures 70.) xii, 209 pp. €48. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015. ISBN 978 3 447 10138 7.

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This book is the revised version of a doctoral dissertation submitted in 2010 and reflects the author's education and interests in both philosophy and Assyriology.

As the title suggests, Sebastian Fink deals with the principle of linguistic relativity, according to which the structure of a language affects the world view of its speakers: the linguistic analysis concentrates mostly on grammar and lexicon. This idea is strongly linked to names such as Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), and these two thinkers are duly treated in the first part of the book (pp. 18–22 and 23–7, respectively). Other scholars discussed include the classicist and historian of religion Hermann Usener (1834–1905), who claimed that language influences a culture's world view in the names of "special deities" (*Sondergötter*), i.e. the personifications of specialized activities like harrowing as *Occator* ('harrower') (pp. 38–42). Austrian philosopher and psychologist Adolf Stöhr (1855–1921) discussed the formative principles of terms (*Begriffsbildner*) in language, and the limits of this process, and is comparable to Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), who developed "logical syntax" to overcome the limits of the linguistic expressions in philosophical discussions (pp. 43–54 and 55–7). The main philosopher presented in this book (pp. 58–101) is Austrian Friedrich Kainz (1897–1977) who coined the concept of the "seduction of language" (*Sprachverführung*), whereby any language can lead one to specific forms of thinking and thus can be seen as a linguistic prefiguration of thought. Fink understands this as a way to reformulate the principle of linguistic relativity, namely that the same physical facts lead to different world views, since languages lead their respective speakers in different ways (p. 59). Part I concludes with the classicist Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1900–1974), who in a posthumous essay of 1978 proposed that Greek philosophy could perhaps only have developed on the basis of Greek language (pp. 102–8).

The second part starts with a short introduction to Mesopotamia, the Sumerian language and the lexical lists (pp. 113–38), and then introduces two Assyriologists who have discussed the relationship between language and world-view most intensively, Benno Landsberger (1890–1968) and his faithful student Wolfram von Soden (1908–96); Aage Westenholz is also mentioned (pp. 139–66). The author offers his own understanding of how Sumerian transports a specific world view (pp. 167–86) and concludes with a short survey of some studies on the Sumerian and Akkadian lexicon, especially in the semantic field "knowledge, wisdom" (pp. 190–4). In the conclusion, the author argues that an awareness of the linguistic prefigurations offers insights into aspects of specific world views of different cultures (pp. 195–9).

Sebastian Fink explores a stimulating topic that is rarely discussed today, although every philologist deals with the difficulties of translating not only words, but also the ideas they express. He draws on little-known philosophers such as Stöhr and Kainz, and puts their work in a larger perspective. Two factors, however, limit the value of this book: first, factual shortcomings, especially in the description of Sumerian and in the positioning of B. Landsberger; and second, the concentration on semantics (both of the lexicon and grammatical expressions) with no appropriate consideration of pragmatics.

In a central chapter, philosophical theories are applied to Sumerian. The description of the language, however, does not reflect its standard grammar, so even within the system presented in this book the conclusions are simply wrong. In this system, interrogatives would represent basic categories (p. 167); here only three interrogatives are presented (a-ba "who?", a-na "what?", me "where?"), but a-gen₇ "how?" and en-na "when?", etc. are missing (but noted on p.122), as are a-na-aš "why? what for?" or a-na-ta "whence", etc. The verb is seen simply as representing action (*Tätigkeiten*, p. 168), a simplification that does not hold true for any language; concerning adjectives, only the few primary adjectives are considered, but not all the

nouns and infinite verbal forms that are used as adjectival attributes in a syntactic-semantic sense; for the concept of space in Sumerian, only an article by Maul on the religious perception of the cosmos in the first millennium is cited (p. 169); time is seen as cyclical, since this is the more original (*ursprünglich*) conception of time (p. 171), etc.

The book focuses on a description of various related philosophical concepts, and this explains why it includes a general introduction to Mesopotamian culture. But why was it then published in a series specializing in studies of the ancient world? The general perspective perhaps explains why the name of Whorf was chosen for the title, although he has played no role in the Assyriological discussion of Landsberger and, following him, von Soden. As this reviewer has shown, by identifying striking parallels in the lines of reasoning and even the choice of certain terms, Landsberger was heavily influenced by Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) from Leipzig, a founding father of psychology who in a global perspective on the human mind understood language as a collective creation of a culture or, as he called it, a people (W. Sallaberger, “Benno Landsbergers ‘Eigenbegrifflichkeit’ in wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Perspektive”, in C. Wilcke (ed.), *Das geistige Erfassen der Welt im Alten Orient* (Wiesbaden, 2007), 63–82; W. Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie. Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythos und Sitte*. 10 vols (Leipzig, 1900–1920); see G. Jüttemann (ed.), *Wilhelm Wundts anderes Erbe: ein Missverständnis löst sich auf* (Göttingen, 2006), and there on language especially the article by G. Kegel). Although the author cites the article, this line of reasoning is simply neglected, although regarding the role of Wundt at Leipzig and the revival of studies on Wundt in the last twenty years, this would have been a rewarding theme for the subject studied. As already indicated, the main methodological shortcoming of this book is the concentration on semantics without any discussion or even awareness of pragmatics, the study of the use of language, that after earlier formulations as in the famous organon model by Karl Bühler (*Sprachtheorie* 1934, its second edition of 1965 was edited by F. Kainz) has started with J. Searle’s speech act theory (1969). Therefore, most theories discussed and the main scholarly literature cited date to a period not later than the 1970s, when pragmatics became an established part of linguistics.

Walther Sallaberger

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

MARGARET JAQUES:

Mon dieu qu’ ai-je fait? Les diĝir-ša-dab₍₅₎-ba et la piété privée en Mésopotamie. Avec une contribution de Daniel Schwemer.

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The book under review contains an edition and study of the Sumerian, Sumero-Akkadian and Akkadian diĝir-ša-dab₍₅₎-ba compositions. These compositions are relatively short prayers addressed to the personal deity of an individual. They emphasize that the petitioner has suffered hardship but is unaware of any