

## 神學書評

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Jeffrey Kah-jin Kuan. *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*. Jian Dao Dissertation Series 1. Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1995. 281pp.

關嘉仁：《亞述石刻與巴勒斯坦——敘利亞歷史》。建道博士論文系列一。香港：建道神學院，1995。281頁。

This monograph explores the complexities of the Neo-Assyrian Empire's relations in the West from the time of Shalmaneser III to Shalmaneser V (858-722 BC). Originally a dissertation written under the supervision of John Hayes at Emory University, the work is much more readable than most dissertations, even though it covers material often deemed esoteric by even some biblical scholars. Kuan handles the diverse and difficult material in a competent manner and there are excellent insights to be gleaned from the work.

The work suffers, however, not because of any deficiencies in Kuan's method or scholarship, but because its sources are, in a number of instances, dated. At the same time that Kuan's work was appearing, two very significant editions were also appearing: Alan Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 810-612 BC*. State Archives of Assyria Studies 2. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1994; and Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria*. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994. And now a third work, an edition of all the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings from Shalmaneser III up to (though not including) Tiglath-pileser III has appeared: A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*. The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods 3. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1996. One other work which should be mentioned is Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Chroniques Mesopotamiennes*. La Roue à Livres 19; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993.

While many of Kuan's observations and analyses will not be effected by the appearance of these works, there are a few notable exceptions. For example,

on pp. 136-138 and 193-194, Kuan argues that Tiglath-Pileser III must have campaigned in his last year for a second time against Damascus since the eponym entry for 728-727BC reads: a-na <sup>uru</sup>Di [...], "the city Di"; which Kuan feels refers to the city of Damascus. However, the better reading of the eponym entry is <sup>uru</sup>Hi [...], " <sup>uru</sup>to Hi [...]" (see Millard, p. 45-46, 59). Therefore, while it is possible that Tiglath-pileser III campaigned a second time against a city that he had already annihilated in 732 BC, it cannot be proved from the Eponym Chronicle.

Another problem with the book is the fact that it ends with the reign of Shalmaneser V for whom we have virtually no documentation. I recognize the pragmatics that "you have to stop at some point," and certainly Shalmaneser V is a better choice than say Tiglath-pileser III. But since Sargon II played such a major role in the destruction of the northern Israelite state, being the final conqueror of Samaria and one of its principal reporters, it seems to me that this Assyrian monarch would have made a better stopping point for the book (at least including his 720 BC western campaign).

The example of the superior readings now available and the issue of the book's stopping point in no way negate the importance and usefulness of Kuan's book. Anyone working on the historic relations between the Assyrian empire and Syria-Palestine during this period should consult this important monograph. To not do so, will be to that scholar's detriment. It is hoped that the book will receive a wide distribution.

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