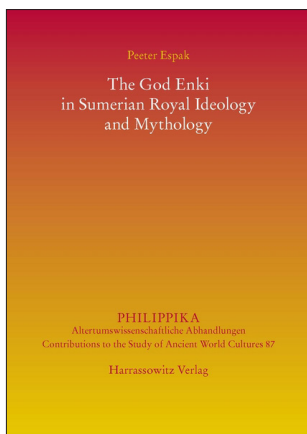


BOOK REVIEWS

ENKI AND THE SUMERIAN KINGSHIP



Peeter Espak. *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*. Philippika – Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen / Contributions to the Study of Ancient World Cultures 87. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015. 235 pp.

Dr. Peeter Espak's monograph *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology* belongs to the field of Ancient Near Eastern studies. This monograph is a very important and profound analysis of the role and importance of the ancient Sumerian and Akkadian god Enki (Ea) in the Sumero-Akkadian religion and its royal ideology. Peeter Espak's latest study concerning Enki (2015) is based on his doctoral thesis *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*, which was successfully defended at the Faculty of Theology, University of Tartu,

on the 14th of December 2010 (Espak 2010). This doctoral thesis continued the research that he had already started in his master's studies (Espak 2006).

The time frame of Peeter Espak's research covers several historical periods from the Early Dynastic III period (Sumer) until the end of the Old Babylonian era, and partially also some later periods (e.g. Middle Babylonian, Neo-Assyrian). The author scrupulously analyses all significant written sources (royal inscriptions, myths, epics, royal hymns) from the Ancient Near Eastern region in the Sumerian and Akkadian languages from the period ca. 2500 to 1500 BCE (Sumerian and Akkadian royal inscriptions from Ur-Nanše until Ammi-saduqa) and also other types of texts dating from the 3rd millennium BCE until later periods – the end of the 2nd millennium and also from the 1st millennium BCE (e.g. *Enuma Eliš* and *Genesis*). So, besides the royal inscriptions from Mesopotamia, Espak also analyses mythological and epic texts from the Ancient Near East. He has paid particular attention to Enki (Ea) in Sumero-Akkadian mythology such as Sumerian and Akkadian creation myths (e.g. *Enki and Ninmah*, *Atra-hasis*, *Enuma eliš*, etc.) and also considers parallels with *Genesis* from the Old Testament.

Espak's research deals with numerous hypotheses and some complicated questions concerning the cult of Enki (Ea), his role and position in Mesopotamian royal ideology, pantheon, rituals, and mythology, which are either dedicated to Enki (Ea) or in which Enki (Ea) is at least mentioned. Many of Espak's ideas, hypotheses and suggestions are, in my opinion, well-argued and interesting and I agree with almost all of them. For example, I agree with the following opinion proposed by Espak (2015: 205):

There is no basis for suggestions that Enki or Enlil had to be foreign deities imported to Mesopotamia. In the first preserved texts, they both are definitely Sumerian gods. There is no scope for proving or suggesting that they had to be

pre-Sumerian or Semitic gods. It seems possible to analyse both concepts in parallel with the development of the overall Sumerian society and culture.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned here that Espak's study concerning Enki (Ea) in Sumero-Akkadian Royal Ideology and Mythology is not the first among such in-depth works in Ancient Near Eastern studies, leaving aside articles concerning the question of the very important god Enki. It is at least the third monograph dedicated to this subject. The first profound study concerning Enki (Ea) was published by Margaret W. Green more than forty years ago (Green 1975). Eight years later this study was followed by Assyriologist Hannes D. Galter, who published his dissertation on Ea/Enki in the Akkadian tradition in 1983 (Galter 1983).

Obviously, the quantity of articles or other studies that in some way are dedicated to or connected with questions about the god Enki (Ea) are quite remarkable; it is essential, however, to bear in mind that these papers only deal with certain aspects connected to the cult of Enki (Ea), and his role in religion and mythology (Steible 1967; Farber-Flügge 1973; Galter 1999 [1995]; Emelianov 2004; Dietrich 2007). Prior to the publishing of Espak's research in 2015, representing a new, authentic, and solid approach concerning this Sumerian deity, discussion of Enki's role and position in Mesopotamian religion and royal ideology was conspicuous by its absence in specialised Assyriological literature.

So, the current book consists of the following nine chapters: Early Dynastic Period; The Dynasty of Akkad; The Second Dynasty of Lagaš; Ur III Period; The Dynasty of Isin; The Dynasty of Larsa; The First Dynasty of Babylon; Enki (Ea) in the Mythology of Creation; Enki and the Archaic Sumerian Religion: The Question of Rivalry between the Theologies of Enki and Enlil.

This study is concluded by a General Conclusion, Bibliography, and Index of Royal Inscriptions and Mythological Texts.

The first seven chapters form one large section (pp. 7–138) with a clear logical and chronological structure. These chapters (from the Early Dynastic period until the First Dynasty of Babylon) give a detailed view concerning the development of the history of the cult of Enki (Ea) during the Late Early Dynastic period (ED III), the Sargonic epoch, the period of Gutian domination, the Neo-Sumerian epoch, and the Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian periods.

The 8th chapter of Espak's monograph (pp. 139–188), "Enki (Ea) in the Mythology of Creation", deals with the role of the god Enki (Ea) in Sumerian and Akkadian mythology. First of all, of course, regarding the cosmogonies, the author scrupulously analyses all existing myths and texts within the mythological background in which Enki (Ea) was either mentioned or which were dedicated to this very significant Ancient Mesopotamian god.

The present work really shines in its final comparative chapter (chapter 9, pp. 189–207): "Enki and the Archaic Sumerian Religion: the Question of Rivalry between the Theologies of Enki and Enlil". It is notable that the question of the so-called contest between the two most important Sumerian theological systems – the system of Enlil with its main residence in Nippur and the system of Enki (whose main centre was Eridu) – was not so deeply considered or analysed in the earliest Ancient Near Eastern studies. So what is especially notable here is the fact that, in Peeter Espak's opinion, this rivalry between Enki and Enlil (Eridu and Nippur) might not even have existed at all.

But here I will also present some critical remarks on this great study. Although Espak's monograph is a very good and profound analysis, some small but still quite important things are missing; for example, the book contains no indices of rulers, deities, geographical places or other important names and terms. The other critical remark is related to the title of Peeter Espak's monograph: *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*. I think this title is not ideal and would look better if it also contained the word 'Akkadian', for example, *The God Enki in Sumerian and Akkadian Royal Ideology and Mythology* or, at least, perhaps *The God Enki in Sumero-Akkadian Royal Ideology and Mythology*. Peeter Espak's study concentrates not only on Sumerian periods using Sumerian material; he analyses material from Akkadian, Isin-Larsa, and Old Babylonian periods as well, also dealing with evidence from the Akkadian language (e.g. *Atrahasis*, *Enuma Eliš*, etc.).

In summary, I think it was necessary and very useful to carry out such a new study dedicated to the cult of Enki (Ea) in Ancient Mesopotamia. As a final comment I would add that I believe Peeter Espak has been very successful in analysing Enki's cult in Ancient Mesopotamia, a cult which strongly influenced the formation of the religious and ideological worldview of the people of the Ancient Near Eastern cultural space.

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INDIGENOUS GROUPS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC



Valery Tishkov (ed.). *Rossiiskaia Arktika: korennyye narody i promyshlennoe osvoenie*. Moscow & Saint Petersburg: Nestor-Istoria, 2016. 272 pp. In Russian.

Over the last years, the interaction between indigenous groups of population and mining companies has increasingly become the focus of attention on the part of anthropologists. The processes currently taking place in the Russian Arctic and the adjacent territories, which have been considered in a number of important works in the past decade and a half (see, e.g., some recent works: Stammer & Wilson 2006; Sirina & Iarlykapov & Funk 2008; Behrends et al. 2011; Novikova & Funk 2012; Wiget & Balalaeva 2014; Novikova 2014; Golovnev et al. 2014; Funk 2015; and others), are no exception either.

The book titled *Rossiiskaia Arktika: korennyye narody i promyshlennoe osvoenie* (Russian Arctic: Indigenous Peoples and Industrial Development)¹ is written by a group of ethnologists from the RAS Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Natalia Novikova, Elena Pivneva, and Valery Tishkov), Tula State Pedagogical University (Elena Martynova), N.A. Shilo North-Eastern Scientific Research Institute of the RAS Far East Branch (Oksana Kolomiets), and one independent researcher (Aleksandra Terekhina). The authors set themselves a threefold task: to study the interaction between indigenous ('korennyye') peoples of the Russian North and industrial companies in the context of law, and to "look into current economic and socio-cultural aboriginal practices" as well as to identify risks which industrial development entails, and "suggest ways of mitigating those" (p. 4). And here a rather specific

approach has been chosen to deal with the task. Of the five book chapters two are dedicated to regions, namely the Yamal-Nenets autonomous region (ch. 3, pp. 50–150) and the Chukotka autonomous region (ch. 4, pp. 151–209); two more chapters discuss problems, e.g. “The Arctic as an Area of Responsibility” (ch. 2, pp. 21–49), and “Modern Education in Arctic Regions” (ch. 5, pp. 210–237); and one more is a general introductory text about the history, status, and prospects of indigenous peoples of the entire region (ch. 1, pp. 21–49).

Despite the reservations made by the authors concerning the logic behind their choice of Yamal and Chukotka for research (p. 5), it is this choice, or rather this limitation, that seems quite contestable. Firstly, this is essential in terms of contemporary administrative borders of the Russian Arctic: the book does not consider either the Murmansk region or the Nenets autonomous region or a number of districts in the regions of Arkhangelsk, Krasnoyarsk, and Yakutia. Secondly, the general chapters of the book either go beyond the geographical limits of Yamal and Chukotka or do not cover one of these territories at all; for example, chapter 2 discusses the Russian Arctic issues in general, in some cases making comparisons with Canada², whereas chapter 5 draws on field material from Yamal, Taymyr, Evenkia, and the Republic of Sakha (p. 6).

Yet, the book as a whole and each of the chapters are an important contribution as they provide a thorough picture of the federal and regional legislation, new field material, interesting observations and estimates. The dry statement of individual facts, tables with statistical data and somewhat lengthy quotes here and there are enlivened with vivid excerpts from conversations with informants. Speaking of pluses, the unified structure of presenting the regional material is worth being noted. Apart from general information, both chapter 3 and chapter 4 contain essays: “Indigenous Peoples and Industrial Development”, “Economic Activities and Social Affairs”, and “Ethno-Cultural Sphere”. Each of the essays, in turn, includes thematically rather similar paragraphs, although their structure sometimes differs. Thus, if a paragraph from “Social Affairs” concerning Yamal tells about unemployment, housing provision, and social policies (pp. 109–124), an analogous paragraph on Chukotka offers a look at the issues of excessive drinking and alcoholism only (pp. 192–194), whereas employment is briefly discussed in a separate paragraph (in the text on pp. 185–186 and a few tables). Social problems considered in the book do not represent all the issues out there in Yamal and Chukotka (some of those being crime, youth maladjustment, and health care issues – drug addiction and suicide among the population, to name a few). We believe that continued research will allow collecting material on a wider range of social problems and will enrich our knowledge of the current state of affairs as it is.

Undoubtedly, the book’s advantage is the description of activity of socially-oriented companies, often a detailed one revealing all the complexity of the situation. In our view, some of the foundations and companies the authors draw attention to could constitute the subject of stand-alone anthropological research.

It is difficult to conclude why education is discussed in a separate chapter, and why this matter is at all included in a book about the interaction of indigenous peoples and industrial companies, but it should be said it was this very chapter that left probably the most positive impression of all from reading the book. It provides a detailed review of problems facing boarding schools, of the phenomenon of ‘ethno-cultural’ education and

nomadic and vocational education in several regions of the Russian Arctic. Not only have the authors managed to determine certain problems within the education system, which were repeatedly discussed elsewhere; they have indeed identified a systemic mistake that is the widespread perception about ethnic culture supposedly being translated through traditional crafts that results in the decisiveness of those implementing education policy to make children 'return' to tundra and taiga (p. 237).

The book under review, as has already been said, is by far not the first one of a series of similar research works published, but it will surely be of interest to all those involved in studying the Circumpolar North cultures and in applied anthropology research, despite some controversial approaches we have touched upon in the above.

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Notes

¹ E-version is available at http://static.iea.ras.ru/books/Ros_arctica.pdf.

² The choice of Canada rather than of the US or Scandinavia is not explained. The authors of the chapter simply point out that Canada is a country that belongs to the Arctic region and is "similar to Russia based on many parameters" (p. 34).

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