

FOREWORD

This “Introduction to Mesopotamian Chronology of the 2nd Millennium BC” covers the most important topics, forming the basis for chronological discussions on that period. These include dating methods and the calendar of Mesopotamia, relevant sources for Mesopotamian chronology (king lists, chronicles, year-names, eponyms and other sources containing chronological information) and the natural science data from ¹⁴C and dendrochronology. This book presents digests of the most important matters relating to each of these issues including summaries of scholarship and of relevant ancient texts. It is not the aim of this book to come to any conclusions chronologically, simply to take a closer look at bases for the different chronologies proposed for 2nd millennium BC Mesopotamia and to determine the limitations and relative reliability of the methods and materials used in the chronological debate. Each chapter centers on one particular topic or type of chronological source. The chapters are arranged in alphabetical order according to the topic or source. Since each chapter is designed to be read separately, a certain amount of repetition is inevitable.

This book does not contain many chronological charts of rulers and dates and synchronisms because such charts can be easily consulted in the various introductions to Ancient Near Eastern history and studies (such as by BRINKMAN in OPPENHEIM’s *Ancient Mesopotamia*, HALLO – SIMPSON, VEENHOF, VAN DE MIEROOP, KUERT), in catalogues (e.g. STARKE in *Hethiter und ihr Reich*, Bonn 2002) or in the recently published supplement volume *Herrscherchronologien* of “Der Neue Pauly” edited by EDER and RENGER (2004). An important chronological chart containing dates according to the “New Chronology” appears in GASCHE *et al.*, *Dating the Fall of Babylon*

(1998), which should be compared with charts showing the classical Mesopotamian Middle Chronology.

The chronologies of “peripheral areas” of Mesopotamia (Elam, Syria, the Hittites, etc.) are not discussed in detail because that would have gone beyond the scope of this book. Important contributions are referred to in the introduction and in the “Bibliographischer Wegweiser” published by the present author in *Ägypten und Levante* 15 (2006). A conference on the “Dark Age of Mesopotamia” taking place in Vienna was organized by H. Hunger and me in 2002. The papers presented at the conference in Vienna 2002, which included studies on the chronologies of Babylonia and of the peripheral areas of Mesopotamia, were published under the title “*Mesopotamian Dark Age Revisited*” at the beginning of 2004 in CChEM 6. This publication may be regarded as one of the replies to the 1998 and 2000 publication by the Ghent-Chicago study group directed by H. GASCHE, who proposed the so-called “New Chronology”, a reduction of ca. 100 years of the Middle Chronology.

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