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*Children in the Ancient Near Eastern Household*. By KRISTINE GARROWAY. Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, vol. 3. Winona Lake, Ind.: EISENBRAUNS, 2014. Pp. xvii + 374. \$57.50.

Kristine Garroway's useful book joins the growing number of works devoted to children and families in the ancient Near East or the Hebrew Bible. In this volume—based largely on material from her 2009 dissertation—Garroway explores children's social status in the household, through the analysis of Mesopotamian laws and contracts, biblical texts, and burial data from Canaan and surrounding areas. Garroway's subject matter and methodology are intentionally eclectic. Her plan is not to present a narrowly focused study, but to build a composite picture of children's social status through an array of sources and methods.

Garroway devotes her introduction and initial chapter to theory, including definitions of the age categories she uses and discussion of the methodologies she employs: processual-plus archaeology, anthropology, and gender theory. She spends the next seven chapters analyzing selected textual evidence pertaining to particular categories of children. Chapter 2 looks at adopted children, chapter 3 studies those lacking one or both parents, chapter 4 looks at child debt-slaves, and chapter 5 examines children who are chattel slaves or hired out. In these chapters, Garroway's sources are cuneiform texts, principally the Code of Hammurapi, Old Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian contracts, and Nuzi contracts and seals, with some references to Middle Assyrian laws.

In chapter 6, "Children in Biblical Israel," Garroway's attention shifts to inheritance among half-siblings as evidenced in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis. Chapter 7, entitled "Child Sacrifice," also focuses on biblical texts after a survey of the state of scholarship on child sacrifice in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. The next two chapters shift focus again as Garroway moves from analyzing texts to studying burials in selected sites dating from the Early Bronze Age through Iron II, first in regions surrounding Canaan/ancient Israel, and then in Canaan/Israel proper. Garroway synthesizes her conclusions at the end of each chapter, then draws them together in chapter 10. The book ends with three appendices (cuneiform texts and translations, burial data, and a catalog of burial sites), a brief glossary, a bibliography, and separate indexes for authors, Scripture, and ancient sources.

In her introduction, Garroway sets out several goals, including building a database of relevant texts and mortuary data for future studies of ancient Near Eastern children and analyzing the relationship between children's social status and household membership (p. 2). In particular, she aims to study how children entered households, how they were treated while there, and how they left (e.g., through adoption, sale, or death), with attention to social status and gender. She achieves these goals through her detailed study of specific laws and contracts and in her final chapter, in which she depicts the various ways children entered and exited households in a series of figures.

For example, in chapter 5 Garroway describes a six-year-old slave girl sold to new owners, as detailed in Neo-Babylonian contract Nbn. 693. Garroway notes that the brand on the girl's wrist, mentioned in the sale contract, meant that the girl would always carry with her "a set of expectations and limitations for social interactions" (p. 145). Such a comment illustrates Garroway's efforts to treat the material from the children's perspective to the extent possible, in contrast to most previous studies which—she notes—tend to focus more on adults (e.g., the buyers and sellers of child slaves). The household status of the children is depicted, in Garroway's final chapter, in the tables portraying household membership. Figure 10 (p. 252) shows that, for child slaves, the natal family household was part of a master's household, and the children would leave that household either for another master's household or through emancipation (or, presumably, through death).

Garroway's study is particularly enlightening regarding the intersection of gender with other aspects of status. To give one example: for girls, marriage was a consideration in adoption contracts, whereas for boys the main issue was inheritance. JEN 432 from Nuzi records a "daughter and daughter-in-lawship adoption" in which the adoptive father reserved the right to wed the girl—apparently a free

child—or to marry her to his son or a slave (p. 77). The third option would make her a slave too. One of Garroway's conclusions in this work is that children's social status was often fluid.

Despite the book's many strengths, Garroway's presentation is at times unnecessarily opaque. For example, definitions could have been sharpened, placed more prominently, and used more consistently. The definition of "child"—clearly of central importance—is buried in the middle of a long paragraph that begins with a discussion of bone structure. The definition itself is confusing. On p. 18 Garroway writes, "[T]he present study very specifically understands childhood to encompass the life of a person from the moment of his/her birth to the time of his/her marriage. 'Children' will be used to talk about individuals from birth to 12 years old (based on the onset of puberty)." Several pages earlier, Garroway had distinguished "social age" from "chronological age" and asserted that the former was more suited to the goals of her book (p. 10). Here, however, she leaves the reader wondering whether childhood is meant to end at age twelve, at puberty, or with marriage—all of which could conceivably occur years apart, particularly among males.

Similarly confusing is Garroway's use of the term "achieved status." Again, this is a core concept: She argues that her particular combination of data sets "support the conclusion that a child's membership in the household depends on both the achieved and ascribed social status of the child" (p. 15). Although used from the beginning, both terms are first defined, apparently, on p. 198, as well as in the brief glossary. "Ascribed status" is defined clearly enough; "achieved status," however, is defined in a passive way that makes it hard to distinguish from "ascribed status" for the uninitiated: pertaining "to a person's position in life" and "generally dictated by that individual's society" (pp. 198 and 318). Only at the end of chapter 9 does Garroway elaborate her definition to "status obtained through talents, choices, actions, efforts, activities, and accomplishments" (p. 239). In contrast to her earlier claim, she notes at this point that perhaps the family's social status, and not the child's own achieved status, is what counts, since children rarely have opportunities for personal advancement. If the child's achieved status is irrelevant to her study, this could have been clarified early on.

Another area warranting discussion is the author's use of the term "biblical Israel," which confuses the literary portrayal of ancient Israel and Judah in the Bible with scholarly attempts to reconstruct these historic societies. Garroway is clearly aware that the Bible is not a straightforward witness to life in ancient Israel (p. 23). Yet her discussion of "Israelite history" in a chapter entitled "Children in Biblical Israel" (p. 159) and her reference to the story of Dinah as a "valuable case study" (p. 170) indicate the need for clearer distinctions. In chapter 7 Garroway helpfully distinguishes literary from historical research on child sacrifice. Nonetheless, in this chapter too she could have presented the historicity of the biblical accounts with a greater degree of suspicion. For example, Garroway hedges on whether Israelite women truly ate their children, as depicted in 2 Kings 6:24–30 and Lam. 2:20 (p. 188; cf. p. 192). Although she includes both Pongratz-Leisten's 2007 and 2012 works in her bibliography, she appears unaware of Pongratz-Leisten's claim that cannibalism existed only in literary "phantasies" in the ancient Near East (Pongratz-Leisten 2007:11). Why Garroway even incorporated this example in her chapter on child sacrifice is unclear, since she ultimately concludes it constitutes "unintentional eliminatory killing" (p. 192)—that is, something other than sacrifice (cf. Pongratz-Leisten 2007, 2012).

In addition, the two chapters on child burials could have been better integrated into the whole. The author devotes detailed attention to site selection, number of children per site, and related matters, yet the pay-off in her findings is relatively small: mainly that most infants were buried in jars underneath the family home, unlike older people. From this she concludes that infants were not considered full-fledged members of society. The geographical focus in these chapters—Canaan and surrounding areas—sets them apart from Garroway's other chapters, most of which concentrate on evidence from Mesopotamia. The geographical focus in the burials may have made more sense for her dissertation, entitled "The 'Not-Yet-Adult': The Construction of 'Child' in the Ancient Near East: Towards an Understanding of the Legal and Social Status of Children in Biblical Israel and Surrounding Cultures." This monograph, in contrast, omits "biblical Israel" from its title.

Finally, the book as a whole would have benefited from another round of copy-editing.

In sum, Garroway has written a helpful and illuminating volume for those interested in exploring children's membership in ancient Near Eastern households. Notwithstanding some issues with her

writing and analysis, Garroway's book—particularly her work on Mesopotamian cuneiform texts and her concluding chapter—is a welcome addition to the growing library of research on children in the ancient Near East and the Bible.

## REFERENCES

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*Theory and Practice of Knowledge Transfer: Studies in School Education in the Ancient Near East and Beyond*. Edited by W. S. VAN EGMOND and W. H. VAN SOLDT. Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul, vol. 121. Leiden: NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR HET NABIJE OOSTEN, 2012. Pp. 111 + 152. €36.04 (paper).

This slim volume is full of informative essays that are a pleasure to read. Its contents are eleven of the papers presented at a 2008 symposium in Leiden, plus an introduction by the editors. It must be noted at the outset that the entire endeavor operates with an extremely narrow concept of “knowledge,” to wit, knowledge of writing and knowledge that is preserved and transmitted in writing; so also education. The editors address this delimitation without however acknowledging what lies beyond its confines: knowledge of how to cook, how to make pottery, who makes the best beer in Babylon, why she married him, the way to Kanesh, how to run an assembly, how to shoot . . . In short, most of the kinds of knowledge that actually matter in people's lives, and that make up a society and its culture, are outside the restricted scope of this work. That said, the essays illuminate the ways writing is used to structure domains of knowledge in particular places, periods, and contexts, and thus offer comparative perspectives on each other's themes.

In their introduction, Wolfert van Egmond and Wilfred van Soldt call attention both to the modern habit of equating knowledge with what is written, and to the abnormality of this idea, inasmuch as writing has not existed or not been essential in most cultures, most of the time. They discuss theories claiming that writing and literacy transform cognition and thus society from primitive to civilized, and that alphabetic writing precipitates a further transformation to (Western) rationality and modernity; they then turn to critiques of such theories, describing the types of evidence and inquiry brought to bear on testing the proposition that there is a causal relation between writing and reasoning, or between alphabetic writing and modern civilization. They make no comment on the prejudices that motivate positing an inverse relationship between alphabetic literacy and savagery. But, they ask, if writing and literacy cannot be accorded the transformative role they play in such teleological grand narratives, why study these phenomena? The question practically answers itself, given the authors' starting point: writing is so fundamental to modern life that we take its value and functions for granted—to the point that most people, literate and educated as they may be, never consider what writing is and does, nor can they even distinguish it from language, though they use both all the time. This more than justifies inquiring how this tool we depend on works, in our minds and in the world. Hence the symposium, and the essays, which the editors proceed to summarize.

Eight contributions from cuneiformists are complemented by three from specialists in other fields, Marco Mostert and Wolfert van Egmond on medieval Europe and Jan Jansen on present-day Mali. Van Egmond's essay, “Informal Schooling and Textual Communities: A Medievalist's Ruminations on Schooling in the Ancient Near East,” is explicitly comparative. He describes evidence for informal