The debate centers on a doctrinal point, the meaning of belief in the gods and its benefits. The sceptic sees himself as a victim of social injustice. The friend speaks of the enduring principles of wisdom by repeating three major points: 1) the incomprehensible character of the divine will, 2) the impermanent wealth of the faithless versus the enduring wealth of the pious, 3) the importance of rituals as the means of attaining the divine realm of blessing.

The friend teaches orthodox doctrine established by the early second millennium B.C.E. and maintained in the first millennium. The sceptic finally realizes that he has suffered maltreatment from others, not because of any lack of divine justice, but because of his own lack of respect for the divine order and his own lack of piety towards the gods.

The *Babylonian Theodicy* ends with an appeal to the human king to reestablish piety to the gods. "Just like the acrostic of this poem, this lengthy ancient literary text concludes with a declaration of faith in the gods and the king" (p. 142).

Given the very low literacy rate in the ancient Mesopotamian world, Oshima assumes that the "audience" of this poem was limited to the administrators and bureaucrats, the intellectual and spiritual elites and their apprentices. The small number of exemplars suggests the poem was not widely known even among the literate communities. Therefore Oshima believes "that the model for the protagonist consisted of trainees in the fields of exorcism, lamentation-priesthood, divination, omen texts, and pharmaceuticals, and that these were 'the targeted readers' of the *Babylonian Theodicy*" (p. 143).

This is an excellent volume, sure to repay anyone who studies it.

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Klagetraditionen: Form und Funktion der Klage in den Kulturen der Antike. Edited by MARGARET JAQUES. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, vol. 251. Fribourg, Switzerland: ACADEMIC PRESS, 2011. Pp. vii + 110, illus. SF35.

This is a collection of papers read at a conference of the Swiss Society for Ancient Near Eastern Studies (SGOA = *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Orientalische Altertumswissenschaft*) held on September 26, 2009 at the Religionswissenschaftlichen Seminar of the University of Zurich. It contains five articles in German on lamentations in various ancient Near Eastern cultures (i.e., Sumero-Babylonian, Egyptian, that of Asia Minor, and biblical). Each contribution is about twenty pages long including a bibliography relevant to its specific subject.

In the introduction, M. Jaques explains the general purpose of the book and offers a brief presentation of each contribution (pp. 1–2). The German word "Klage" has two different basic meanings: 1) "lament, i.e., action and expression of one's sorrow or grief" and 2) "complaint as an expression of one's dissatisfaction by way of a legal action, i.e., lawsuit." Like the English word "lament, lamentation," "Klage" also refers to a literary genre as seen in the Old Testament, i.e., the Book of Lamentations.

Merely citing a dictionary entry, Jaques attempts to explain that both the action of wailing and lamentation as a literary genre are the main subject matter of the articles in this volume. I have no objection to Jaques' pragmatic approach, which sets an orientation in a succinct manner. However, because the action of wailing and the literary genre of lamentation are very generic notions, a short anthropological study offering an overview of "Klage" would have been very helpful not only for the wider public but also for the students of ancient Near Eastern studies to whom this book is addressed. A simple citation of a dictionary entry is rather too naïve.

In the first contribution, Jaques discusses Akkadian personal laments and motifs employed in them in order to complain about one's dismay. In this section, she discusses "Dingir.ša$_3$.dab$_5$.ba-Bußgebete," i.e., prayers with the characteristic rubric "KA-inim-ma dingir-šà-dab$_5$-ba gur-ru-da-kam (lit., *um das* '*verknotete Herz' des Gottes zu lösen*)" (p. 6). The texts she discusses in this paper were edited by

W. G. Lambert in *JNES* 33 (1974): 267–322. (See now M. Jaques, *Mon dieu qu'ai-je fait? Les* diĝir-šà-dab$_{(5)}$-ba *et la piété privée en Mésopotamie* [Fribourg: Academic Press, 2015].) Because new exemplars and joins to the published cuneiform manuscripts have been identified over the last forty years, a new study of these prayers is a welcome addition to Assyriology. Several reservations are, however, in order. In the introductory section of her contribution, Jaques explains that the Dingir.šà.dab$_5$.ba-prayers are addressed to the personal gods (p. 3). This idea has been put forward by various modern scholars (e.g., Frechette, AOAT 379). It is correct as far as the prayers edited by Lambert in *JNES* 33 are concerned. However, as Lambert himself pointed out (pp. 268 and 295), the same rubric also appears in prayers addressed major deities like Sîn and Marduk.

Jaques proposes that a posited bilingual form of a Sumerian Eršahunga prayer attested in the first millennium (= Lambert, *JNES* 33: 291–93; Maul, *Herzberuhigungsklagen*, 213ff.) was an Old Babylonian forerunner of a Dingir.šà.dab$_5$.ba-prayer (= Lambert, *JNES* 33: 278–81, ll. 71–108). Given similar phraseology, no one would doubt that this prayer, known by its incipit ÉN *anāku ilī minâ ēpuš*, "Incantation: my god, what I have done?" is based on the Eršahunga with the incipit me.e dìm.me.er mu.ra ta an.ak / *anāku ana ilija minâ ēpuš*. But judging from the phraseology, the Sumerian Eršahunga is more closely related to the first-millennium Eršahunga than to the Dingir.šà.dab$_5$.ba. This fact suggests that the prayer known by its incipit ÉN *anāku ilī minâ ēpuš* does not have an Old Babylonian forerunner as such but rather that its author used as its base an Eršahunga that had initially been composed in the Old Babylonian period.

Borrowing an almost complete text from a prayer in order to compose another prayer is also to be observed in another Dingir.šà.dab$_5$.ba-prayer known by its incipit *ilī ellu bān kullat nišī attu*, "my holy god, the creator of the entire people you are" (Lambert, *JNES* 33: 276–67, ll. 55–63). As Lambert pointed out (pp. 294–96), it is based on a prayer to Sîn, ÉN *bēlu nannar kullati binīti*, "Incantation: Lord, luminosity of all creation."

Jaques offers very insightful analyses of similes and puns in Dingir.šà.dab$_5$.ba-prayers to the personal gods which had otherwise escaped the attention of many modern scholars, e.g., the use of pàd—which could mean *watû*, "to seek," as well as *tamû*, "to swear"—in the Eršahunga known by its incipit me.e dìm.me.er mu.ra ta an.ak / *anāku ana ilija minâ ēpuš* discussed above.

Incidentally, Jaques discusses the notions of "dead water" and "deep water" (p. 13). She compares them with "the water of death" in the Gilgameš Epic or the deep sea in the Adapa-Epic, where their heroes lost the ability to continue their journeys when they lost a punt pole or an oar, respectively. In these epics, the heroes continued their journey by catching the winds. However, the corresponding phrases in the Dingir.šà.dab$_5$.ba-prayer do not speak of any wind. Thus, it is more likely that the Akkadian expression *mê nēhūti/nuhhūti*, "quiet water," refers to the slow-moving stream of a deep river carrying a boat peacefully.

The second contributor is Andrea Kucharek, who presents ancient Egyptian lamentations over the dead and the texts known as the Osiris Lamentations. She offers a very concise and informative overview on the subject. Kucharek observes that Isis, often accompanied by Nephthys, basically plays the role of a widow wailing over the death of her husband. The main purpose of the Osiris Lamentations is not to express one's grief over the god's death but to protect the defenceless body of Osiris until his resurrection. She further suggests that the lamentations recited during the mummification rituals were most probably performed by women who played the roles of Isis and Nephthys and that their main purpose was again not to wail over the death of their loved one but to magically protect the body of the deceased.

Anne Löhnert discusses Sumerian lamentations. This genre may go back as far as the Early Dynastic period (twenty-fourth century B.C.E.), but most of the texts are known from the Old Babylonian period and onwards. As Löhnert explains, Sumerian and Sumero-Akkadian bilingual lamentations can be divided into two groups: 1) lamentations over the destruction of cities, and 2) lamentations over destruction of a cult or cult center. These represent different *Sitze im Leben*. In the lamentations belonging to the first group, various goddesses wail over the destruction of their cities and their cult centers.

Like many modern scholars, Löhnert suggests that these lamentations refer to the downfall of the Ur III dynasty around 2000 B.C.E. (p. 44), although the account of the event might be retrospective

in nature (p. 43 n. 14). In a recently published monograph, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 5ff., Nili Samet suggests that city lamentations were composed during the reign of Išme-Dagan, about fifty years after the destructions of these cities, probably in order to secure permission from An and Enlil to rebuild the ruined major cities of Sumer.

The Sumerian and Sumero-Akkadian bilingual lamentations belonging to the second category also speak of destruction of cult centers. Yet, as Löhnert rightly observes, unlike the lamentations belonging to the former group, they represent a "was-wäre-wenn-Situation" (p. 46), i.e., they do not reflect any real historical events. The main purpose of their performance was to remind the gods of potential hazards, e.g., destruction of their cult centers, which might occur if they failed to fulfil their divine responsibilities. Löhnert observes that the narrators of these lamentations are normally goddesses. She suggests that the goddesses were more suitable as intermediaries between humankind and the gods than male deities, probably in view of their positions as daughters or wives of male deities (pp. 47ff.).

G. Petzl presents various Greek monumental inscriptions found in Asia Minor, to which he gives the term "Beichtinschrift" (p. 63). These texts are dated to the first and second century C.E., much later than the other texts dealt with in this volume. Although these inscriptions indeed refer to sins that had elicited divine anger, i.e., the causes of adversities, they also praise the power of the divine to save the sufferers. This indicates that the main purpose of these inscriptions was not to confess specific sins committed but rather to acknowledge one's general guilt and to thank the gods for their interventions in the sinner's predicament. Thus, "Beichtinschrift" is a misnomer.

As the title of S. Schroer's concluding contribution, "Biblische Klagetraditionen zwischen Ritual und Literatur: Eine genderbezogene Skizze," suggests, the main focus of her paper is on the biblical lamentation traditions and wailing gestures that might give a hint as to the lamentation rituals. She bases her discussion not only on written sources but also on iconographic evidence. She also offers a "Skizze" of lamentations from other areas of the ancient Near Eastern world dealt with in this volume.

In this volume, M. Jaques successfully offers brief but very informative papers covering a variety of aspects of ancient lamentation traditions from various eras and regions of the ancient Near Eastern world. This book is an excellent tool offering a concise overview of the otherwise complicated issues of ancient lamentations. Therefore we heartily welcome this new OBO volume.

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Old Assyrian Legal Practices: Law and Dispute in the Ancient Near East. By Thomas Klitgaard Hertel. PIHANS, vol. 123. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2013. Pp. xlii + 479. €84.80 (paper).

The Old Assyrian text corpus is characterized by two genres that each comprise roughly 40% of the material—letters and legal documents. Earlier studies have focused mostly on letters, because these often vividly inform us about social and economic relations prevailing in the Assyrian trade networks stretching from the city of Aššur to Anatolia. This does not mean that the legal texts have previously been totally neglected. Until now, the most important study has remained that of Eisser and Lewy, "Die altassyrischen Rechtsurkunden vom Kültepe," *MVAeG* 33/35 (1930/5) (abbreviated EL). This has changed with the publication of the book under review, a revised version of the author's dissertation, which discusses law and legal processes during the Old Assyrian period. In relation to this primary theme, the author also discusses the government of Assyrian society, which had previously been covered in M. T. Larsen's *The Old Assyrian Trade and Its Colonies* (Copenhagen, 1976).

The Old Assyrian legal framework was established by the government and its ruler, a fact conceived by Erišum I as divine order imposed as a duty on the monarch (see RIMA 1 A.0.33.1). Within this legal framework, law and order appear to have been somewhat open to interpretation by those involved. A recurring theme in Hertel's study is the use of negotiation in order to solve disputes, rather than going