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.

T. M. Oshima
Theologische Fakultät, Universität Leipzig

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

to court. This opinion had already been expressed in Hertel's review of *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, ed. R. Westbrook (Leiden: Brill, 2003), *BiOr* 62 (2005): 523–24. Hertel concludes this study by comparing his results with Westbrook's views on law in the ancient Near East. Hertel argues in favor of a system in which people were expected to solve differences among themselves. He extends this idea to the Assyrian colonies of Anatolia, where the Assyrians were allowed to settle differences among themselves rather than be subject to the local legal system. Therefore, this study does not discuss the local Anatolian legal system. The little information that we have about this subject is often transmitted through discussion of conflicts between Anatolian and Assyrian parties; cf. M. T. Larsen's, "Going to the River," in *FS Biggs*, ed. M. T. Roth et al. (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2007), 173–88.

This book focuses mostly on civil, rather than criminal law. In fact, criminal cases are rarely treated in preserved Mesopotamian sources, save for the law codes (Westbrook 2003: 70). From this point of view, the Middle Assyrian laws may chronologically be the closest material to the Old Assyrian period, especially as some copies, as well as their composition, may date back at least to the fourteenth century. The age of the Middle Assyrian laws is betrayed by their unconventional language and orthography, which represent a stage of written Assyrian not found in other documents.

The book is divided into ten chapters, but the study essentially consists of three basic parts. Part one, consisting of the first three chapters, is a general introduction to the Old Assyrian period and discusses its sources, the international trade network, and the structure of the government and other legal institutions. The second part, consisting of chapters four and five, treats the legal institutions of the Assyrian government, such as the attorney (*rabīṣum*), the law stele, and colonial messenger (*šiprum ša kārim*). This part essentially describes law at the official level. The third part, consisting of chapters six to ten, mostly deals with law at a private level and describes how traders attempted to solve conflicts among themselves rather than going to court. Hertel analyzes in detail the available evidence and describes the actually attested practice of legal conflict-solving, as opposed to the more theoretical descriptions provided in earlier chapters. He presents several case studies to illustrate how the legal procedures were applied in practice.

Rather than summarizing all chapters, I will focus on chapter 10 ("Adjudication"), which mostly covers the conflicts that arose following the death of a trader. Two dossiers are treated in this chapter. The first documents the conflict between the heirs of Pūšu-kēn and Ennam-Aššur (cf. EL 339a-341), while the second addresses the estate of Iddin-Abum (cf. AKT 6a 40–88). Hertel discusses a third dossier dealing with the estate of Šalum-Aššur (cf. AKT 6a 208–295) in a joint publication with M. T. Larsen in the Donbaz Anniversary Volume (2010), 167–81, and summarizes his conclusions on this dossier in chapter 9 ("Mediation") (pp. 287–98) here.

The death of a trader was usually a source of conflict pertaining to his inheritance, since Assyrian traders invested in multiple enterprises at once and borrowed or lent out money in order to do so. The settlement of estates is an important topic in Old Assyrian studies, because as Hertel and others have argued elsewhere, the key figures in the Assyrian trade all died within a short period (REL 100–110), and the settlement of estates took two to three years. This placed a heavy burden on their heirs and ultimately led to a decline in commercial activities (see Hertel in Barjamovic et al., *Ups and Downs at Kanesh* [Leiden: NINO, 2013], 70–73).

The existence of testaments did not prevent these long processes of settlement, because the testaments mostly functioned to assign property to the surviving widow and any unmarried daughters, a tradition that continued into the Middle Assyrian period (e.g., MARV 8 47; Tell Rimah 2037). The shares and duties of the male heirs are also discussed, but because of the continuous flow of capital into Assyrian enterprises, testaments could state no more than the fact that the heirs were responsible for any debts the deceased left behind. Hertel does not touch upon the selection process for either the executor of the estate of the trader or the successor to his commercial enterprises. This is problematic, and it seems that the oldest son was quite often not the person to continue his father's enterprises.

For example, in the two letters that discuss the estate of the deceased Šū-Aššur, his brother Aššur-malik takes over his enterprises (RA 59 no. 23; TC 3 44). The case is quite unusual, since neither letter mentions the death of Šū-Aššur, suggesting that the fact of his demise had been known for some time. Representatives of creditors were sent into the house to entrust everything to Aššur-malik before

witnesses, apparently in agreement with the *pater familias* Alāḫum. Although the texts suggest that the father was still alive, the similar case involving the estate of Iddin-abum (AKT 6a 40–88) demonstrates that the wishes of the *pater familias* were still valid after his death (p. 370). The case of Šū-Aššur conflicted with the natural rights of the children of the deceased, who prevented the representatives from entering the house.

In the case of the archive discussed in AKT 6a, following the death of Iddin-abum, his brother Šalim-Aššur took over. Iddin-abum had taken over the enterprises of his father Issu-Arik, over his older brother Aššur-bēl-awātim, who had served as a high-ranking *laputtāum*-officer. Even the commercial enterprises of Pūšu-kēn do not seem to have been continued by his oldest son Sueyya, but rather by Buzāzu. Interestingly, Sueyya is the acting representative of the family in the conflict with Ennam-Aššur discussed by Hertel (pp. 351–62); at the same time, it was Buzāzu who seems to have (re-)opened the conflict in EL 335.

In my opinion, the aforementioned cases signal that we should make a distinction between the executor of the estate/the new *pater familias* and, on the other hand, the person who continued the commercial enterprises of the deceased. This would explain Sueyya's primary role in the conflict with Ennam-Aššur (as it relates to money), but his absence in most commercial enterprises. Similarly, it is suspected that Aššur-bēl-awātim inherited a house in Kaniš as the oldest son of Issu-Arik. Yet he did not live there and was not actively involved in trade; rather, it was his younger brother Iddin-abum who took over the family firm (cf. AKT 6a, 8).

In conclusion, the task carried out by Hertel, that of discussing and explaining the Old Assyrian judicial procedures, was a big job. There are a large number of texts that needed to be taken into consideration, and these were not exhausted with the obvious categories such as verdicts and testimonies but encompassed the entire Old Assyrian corpus. Further research will be helped by the inclusion here of a number of helpful indexes and appendixes that gather legal dossiers and judicial texts. Additionally, this study will serve as an accessible reference for those with historical juridical interests. The author is therefore to be congratulated on this important and well-documented publication, which will not only assist specialists in the ancient Near East in better understanding the complex world of Old Assyrian legal practice, but will also provide an accessible and reliable tool for all those interested in legal history.

J. J. de Ridder
University of Leipzig

Loi et justice dans la littérature du Proche-Orient ancien. Edited by Olivier Artus. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte, vol. 20. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013. Pp. 274. €68.

This volume, edited by Olivier Artus, includes fourteen essays presented at two colloquia organized in the Spring of 2010 and 2011 by the Institut catholique de Paris and entitled "Loi et justice dans la littérature du Proche-Orient ancien et dans l'Ancien Testament." In his introduction, Artus remarks that the concepts of "law and justice" and their relationship in the ancient Near East are complex and require a variety of methodological approaches, which the volume sets out to provide. Artus offers a rationale for a tripartite organization of the book and an overview of the methodological and epistemological questions underlying the essays.

The first section addresses questions related to the concepts of "law and justice." Is the practice of justice always expressed in the laws? What is the role of law collections vis-à-vis legal practice and the concept of justice? And of course, there is the well-known question of the nature of the "code" of Hammurabi. Was it royal propaganda, a collection of legal sentences, or a collection of legal precepts? These and other questions should be addressed, notes Artus, with the awareness that the seemingly vast number of ancient Near Eastern legal documents are but a fraction of the total legal documents that must have been produced.