

Die mittelasyrischen Personen- und Rationlisten aus Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu. By SAQER SALAH. *Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu (BATSH)*, vol. 18. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2014. Pp. lxxiv + 454, plates. €118.

This volume is a welcome addition to the rapidly growing corpus of Middle Assyrian administrative documents. While the current corpus is hardly lacking in personnel texts, the concentration of so many personnel texts from a single place and time is without parallel. There is much to be gained from studying them, and Salah's editions offer an excellent starting point.

The work includes full editions of all the texts along with copies and photographs. In addition, the introduction includes an impressive study of the various family histories which can be traced in the texts. The texts can be divided roughly into three groups. The largest are texts involving the disbursement of rations to various named individuals. There is also a sizable group of texts which simply list personnel. Finally, there are a little under a dozen texts dealing with garment manufacturing and distribution.

There is a wealth of information in the texts. Here I will mention but two particularly interesting aspects. A number of texts divide the population of Dūr-Katlimmu and its dependent town of Duāra into four groups of about 25–50 people, each associated with a *rab hanšē* "captain of fifty." That these groups and their captains existed is not new. However, in the texts from BATSH 18 one can trace their composition through time. As it turns out, membership in a particular "fifty" was generally passed down from father to son. That is to say, the Assyrian population at Dūr-Katlimmu was apparently divided into stable, hereditary groups.

The second point relates to the *šiluhlu* unfree labor force. As we learn from the texts already published in BATSH 9, the Assyrian state employed a number of *šiluhlu* in agricultural work at Dūr-Katlimmu. Based on those texts one might get the impression that most of the population at Dūr-Katlimmu was unfree. But, thanks to the texts in BATSH 18, we can say that they were only a small portion of the population. Whereas the records show a population of 30–40 *šiluhlu* active in the area at any one time, the personnel lists routinely mention 120 or more "free" individuals. Suggestively, one might also note that the *šiluhlu* were divided into three groups at Dūr-Katlimmu and a fourth at Duāra. These map uncannily well to three "fifties" of free men at Dūr-Katlimmu and the fourth fifty at Duāra. This is only the tip of the iceberg. What all this means for our understanding of the Middle Assyrian kingdom remains to be seen.

The work is a hefty tome and there are few formatting quirks which take some getting used to. The book follows the practice of other recent BATSH volumes of having the copies interspersed with the editions rather

than confined to a separate plates section. This is, in general, quite convenient since all the information on a given text is only a few pages away. Even so, it can prove cumbersome in some of the larger texts where the copy, transliteration, and translation have to be broken up into somewhat confusingly interleaved chunks.

The work is largely free of serious errors, and only two minor slips warrant mention here. First, although the book consistently normalizes the divine name ^dSILIM-*ma-nu* as Salmānu, in the personal names index entries are alphabetized as though the name were spelled Šulmānu. Second, the index follows a dubious interpretation of BATSH 18 76. That text makes rather liberal use of the ditto sign MIN to indicate the professions of many individuals. In a number of places the last preserved title before the MIN sign is *rab hanšē* "captain of fifty" and the personal name index dutifully restores the title. However, as we know from other texts in the volume, Dūr-Katlimmu and its satellite Duāra only had four *hanšē* units between them, and these otherwise had only one captain each. There should not be dozens of them in one text, and so Salah's interpretation of the MIN sign seems untenable. Indeed, that the MIN sign was not used to simply repeat the previous title is made clear, for instance, in lines 40–43, where one finds the sequence of professions *kukultu*, MIN, MIN, *kukultu*. If the MIN in these lines meant *kukultu*, the scribe would have written MIN in line 43 as well. It seems better to assume that the scribe used MIN to indicate workers who were in a default group, likely *ša šipre* "of working age." People in other groups, be they captains of fifty or *kukultus*, had their designations written out explicitly. But these are relatively minor matters in a very useful—and indeed quite weighty—volume.

PAUL GAUTHIER
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Die Zeit selbst lag nun tot darnieder: Die Stadt Assiut und ihre Nekropolen nach westlichen Reiseberichten des 17. bis 19. Jahrhunderts. Konstruktion, Destruktion und Rekonstruktion. By JOCHEM KAHL. *The Asyut Project*, vol. 5. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2013. Pp. x + 438 + *162, illus. €68.

The aim of this book by Jochem Kahl is to present a collection of travel reports from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century AD that are stored in various museums and collections throughout the world. Its main achievement is collecting the information presented in these Asyūt travel reports and making the material available to researchers. It is Kahl's merit to have presented a voluminous study of the view of European and American travelers on this city in Middle Egypt during the aforementioned period. The picture of the city,

as it is mentioned in the various sources, becomes very clear to the reader and one can get a good insight into the condition of the remains to which the authors refer, at least those that seemed important enough to them to mention. The necropolis of the city seems to be a part of the collective memory, as Kahl points out (p. 1). One of the most important aspects of the book is the fact that in some of the travel reports, buildings, architectural features, etc., that are now destroyed are described, so that these statements are sometimes the only sources that can be used for restoring Egyptian monuments as they looked in antiquity.

After a short introduction concerning the aims of the study and the sources it is based on (pp. 1–5), Kahl gives a summary of the motivations of the travelers (pp. 7–10) and Orientalism in general (pp. 11–18). In these chapters, the available sources of the travelers are quoted, presenting the individuals' very own statements, which is one of the advantages of the book.

The two main chapters with elaborations follow. The third chapter deals with the city of Asyūt itself (pp. 19–58). Kahl collects the travelers' sources with a focus on their own views. This chapter is divided into their own reports about their arrival in Asyūt (pp. 19–29) and especially the effect of this on the European and American wayfarers (pp. 29–33). An important aspect is the focus on the population of Asyūt (pp. 34–39), which reveals an (often) negative view of the lives and the conditions during the last centuries. Other subchapters deal with antiquities in general (pp. 39–42), chapels and baths (pp. 42–44), economic features (pp. 44–55), and the route from the city of Asyūt to the necropolis (pp. 56–58).

The fourth chapter can be described as the focus of the book (pp. 59–148). Kahl examines *en detail* the different sources on the various parts of the necropolis of Ġabal Asyūt al-Ġarbi. It begins with references to the modern cemetery (pp. 59–64) and the position and function of Ġabal Asyūt al-Ġarbi (pp. 64–77). The various positions of the descriptions are clearly arranged in tables for a quick overview. From an archaeological perspective, the subchapters about the acquiring and the destruction of the necropolis (pp. 77–95) and the descriptions of various tombs (pp. 95–147) are the most important. After a short introduction to the history of the region of Ġabal Asyūt al-Ġarbi, the travelers' descriptions of the site and of conditions at different points between 1516 and 1888 are listed. Through the impressive depictions, such facts as the use of the site as a quarry, the looting of the tombs, and even vandalism become vivid for the reader.

The book points out interesting facts for anyone who is concerned with the history of archaeological sites and their despoilment. One can assume that a survey of travel accounts of other Egyptian sites would shed an equivalent amount of light on the (wrong)doings during preceding centuries. The tombs of the region of Ġabal

Asyūt al-Ġarbi (pp. 95–147) are mentioned *in extenso*, with a complete bibliography of archaeological reports and excavation reports, as well as their description in the travelers' accounts.

The last chapters provide the reader with a bibliography for the site of Asyūt (pp. 149–70) and a selection of the primary sources (pp. 171–348) upon which the book is based. It is important to note that if one wants to read and understand all of the travelers' accounts, the reader must have some knowledge of many different languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, and Polish. In the reviewer's opinion, sources in Polish or in Italian could have been given as an original source, but a translation of some of these texts would make it easier to work with the sources. A considerable number of figures and photographs (pp. 350–438) from the preceding centuries and from today complete the book and also the journey of the reader into this past era.

With his book, Kahl provides the reader with a deep insight into the situation of the city of Asyūt and especially the site of Ġabal Asyūt al-Ġarbi. The book can be recommended wholeheartedly to anyone interested in the topic. Hopefully, travellers' accounts for other Egyptian sites will be published in the future to shed new light on the history of destruction of monuments during the past centuries. The various topics which Kahl has chosen from the accounts deserve special mention—not only archaeological facts, but even the wildlife (pp. 91–92) and the travellers' feeling of superiority (pp. 142–47). It is significant to note that the scientific work of Kahl is translated into Arabic by Youssef Mohamed at the end of the book.

CHRISTOFFER THEIS
ÄGYPTOLOGISCHES INSTITUT, HEIDELBERG

The Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt. By GENE KRITSKY. New York: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2015. Pp. xiii + 133, illus. \$29.95.

One of the major achievements of *The Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt* is the way in which the author succeeds in animating the ancient texts and images using his vast entomological knowledge. Seals and scarabs, papyri, and wall reliefs are discussed alongside traditional beekeeping methods in modern times and in archeological evidence to paint a rich history of bees and beekeeping in ancient Egypt in a concise and accessible manner. The multitude of sources are examined through a variety of approaches, which the author enumerates in the introduction to his book; we must become, he states, archeologists and historians while using entomology, chemistry, microbiology, paleography, and mythology. The last sticks out in this list, and its inclusion reveals one of the book's main weaknesses