

of the last representative of the family; thus they are of limited value for learning of the activities of earlier family members.

It is hard to imagine anyone who has a greater command of the archival source material of Old Babylonian (or Amorite) Mesopotamia. Charpin's contributions in this volume exhibit the vast range of his knowledge. I cannot recall the last time I read something by Charpin that did not cause me to think differently (or more clearly, rather) about a particular subject.

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*The World around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East.* Edited by BILL T. ARNOLD and BRENT A. STRAWN. Grand Rapids: BAKER ACADEMIC, 2016. Pp. xxvii + 531, illus. \$49.99.

Much has happened in biblical and Near Eastern studies since the publication of *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (ed. D. J. Wiseman [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973]) and *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (ed. Alfred Hoerth et al. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998]). Therefore, the thirteen essays in this present volume edited by Bill T. Arnold and Brent Strawn are excellent up-to-date renderings of many of the main people groups that surrounded the Israelites in antiquity. In addition to those treated in the two previous volumes, essays on the Arabians and Greeks are included in this volume. A notable omission is the Canaanites; the editors argue, rather unconvincingly, that Israel was from this region, and thus it would be somewhat redundant. However, it is perhaps a stronger argument for their inclusion, since an article on the Canaanites would have provided a solid context for comprehending the Israelites.

Each contributor provides some basic topics for their people group: emphasizing the period 1500–332 BCE, they present an overview of their history, culture, religion, art, and literature, as well as establishing their connections (or lack thereof) to the Israelites. These people groups are Amorites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Ugaritians, Egyptians, Hittites and Hurrians (in one essay), Arameans, Phoenicians, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites (the last three in one essay), Philistines, Persians, Arabians, and Greeks. The contributors are world-class scholars, who have written very original and scholarly creations which are among the best summaries of the current state of understanding of each people group (biblical connections or otherwise).

Daniel E. Fleming, "The Amorites," gives an original and thoughtful essay. Following the lead of Anne Porter (2012), he argues that third-millennium sources from southern Mesopotamia show that they were not a separate people group in that region, "but one dimension of its mixed makeup" (p. 7), even if that "dimension" cannot be fully determined. Moreover, the term "Amorite" stays somewhat murky in the Old Babylonian period, although it appears to have indicated a people with a mobile pastoralist background. Fleming continues by showing the similarities of usage of the terms "Amorite" with the later terms "Apiru," and even "Arameans," whom he calls the "social descendants of the Amorites" (p. 29).

Christopher B. Hays and Peter Machinist, "Assyria and the Assyrians," attempt to summarize the history and culture of the Assyrians in seventy-five pages. However, they show the "interconnectedness" of the two cultures (Assyria and Israel) in a multiplicity of genres and traditions. Just as enormous a textual corpus as that of Assyria is discussed in S. Vanderhooft, "Babylonia and the Babylonians," in a study less than half the size of Hays and Machinist's. Understandably, Vanderhooft spends a decent amount of time discussing the Jewish deportees in Babylon after 586 BCE.

Mark S. Smith, "Ugarit and the Ugaritians," is quite sensible in his comparisons between the textual corpus from Ugarit and the Bible, emphasizing some of the fundamental differences between Ugaritic and biblical ritual texts, for example. Joel M. LeMon's, "Egypt and the Egyptians," is an attempt at summarizing Egyptian civilization in the New Kingdom and connections with Israel in less than thirty pages, showing the subtle influence Egypt had on Judahite royal iconography.

Billie Jean Collins, “The Hittites and the Hurrians,” speaks authoritatively about the supposed Hittite relationship with the so-called Hittites of the Old Testament, showing that the biblical term was inherited in later periods to denote a synonym for “Canaanite” and “Amorite.” K. Lawson Younger Jr., who has now (2016) published a full-length book on the Arameans, is very cautious in his excellent essay “Aram and the Arameans” to avoid making a connection between the newly found inscription of Taita at Aleppo and Toi, ally of David in the Bible.

Christopher A. Rollston, “Phoenicia and the Phoenicians,” makes sense of the greatly varied sources concerning the Phoenicians, whether Classical, biblical, Egyptian, cuneiform, or indigenous written materials. Joel S. Burnett, “Transjordan: The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites,” weaves a coherent picture of these three Transjordanian people groups, focusing on the myriad of inscriptions found in each of these West Semitic states. Carl S. Ehrlich, “Philistia and the Philistines,” details Philistine Aegean origins and their varied attestations in biblical, cuneiform, Egyptian, and newly published native sources. Pierre Briant, “Persia and the Persians,” gives a coherent and detailed essay concerning Achaemenid Persia. However, he spends a minuscule amount of ink concerning the Jewish deportees.

David F. Graf, “Arabia and the Arabians,” brings forth a study of a people group not as well known to biblical scholars. He does, however, make a concerted effort to show their importance to biblical studies, especially in terms of genealogies. The late Walter Burkert, “Greece and the Greeks,” makes a great effort in showing Aegean and Near Eastern connections, which has been the focus of his research for decades. He devotes some space to the effects of Hellenization upon the Jews.

There is one basic map of the ancient Near East (p. xxvii), over eighty illustrations, a ten-page index of authors, an eight-page index of Scripture and other ancient sources, and a thirteen-page index of subjects. Each contribution contains a further reading section, as well as detailed bibliographic citations throughout the essay.

Though perhaps the essays cover much ground that has previously been traversed, they are well worth reading because they are excellent state-of-the-art syntheses of the people groups surrounding ancient Israel.

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*Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed: A Philosophical Guide*. By ALFRED L. IVRY. Chicago: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 2016. Pp. xiii + 307. \$50, £35.

*The Guide of the Perplexed* (in the original Judeo-Arabic: *Dalālat al-ḥāʾirīn*) by the great medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides is famously and—judging by its title—paradoxically not an accessible work. In fact, Maimonides did not attempt to make his philosophical masterpiece accessible and to reach a wide audience of readers; rather, he purposefully avoided clarity and detail to guard against a traditional, philosophically unprepared Jewish readership that would strongly oppose some of his main ideas and arguments. This restrictive intent is openly declared by Maimonides in his introduction to the first part as a desire to limit the work to those who, like the dedicatee, Maimonides's select student Joseph, have already acquired sufficient knowledge of philosophy, but might be perplexed by its apparent disagreement with the Jewish law they adhere to (Munk 1929: 2–3; Pines 1963: 5–7). Nonetheless, as emphasized by Alfred Ivry in the preface and introduction of his fine guide to