

Mordechai Cogan, *Bound for Exile. Israelites and Judeans under Imperial Yoke: Documents from Assyria and Babylonia*. A Carta Handbook Carta, Jerusalem. 2013. Pp. xiii + 177 incl. 5 maps and 37 Figs. \$64.00. ISBN: 978-965-220-843-9.

Assyrian and Babylonian kings followed a long-established and widespread policy of deporting inhabitants of rebellious kingdoms, often replacing them with people from other regions a practice illustrated most extensively by documents and inscriptions from the Assyrian empire. Mordechai Cogan, who has previously translated Assyrian and Babylonian texts concerning Israel and Judah (*The Raging Torrent*, 2008) gathers cuneiform records that disclose the circumstances of exiles from the two kingdoms. After an Introduction (pp. 1–9) and a few documents about the provinces of Megiddo and Samaria (pp. 10–33), Ch. 2 identifies ‘Israelites in Assyrian Exile’ (pp. 34–53) through individuals’ origins (‘Samaritan’) or names. Cuneiform tablets supply a number of personal names commencing or ending with forms of YHWH, so clearly Hebrew (e.g. Hilqiyau = Hilqiah). Some men were incorporated into the army, one was a chariot driver, others were workmen or slaves. One sculpture showing Judeans working on Sennacherib’s palace supplements the written sources (Fig. 28). The reason for exile is set out in Ch. 3, the longest (pp. 54–103), breach of ‘Treaties and Oaths in the Assyrian Empire’. Cogan translates ‘Esarhaddon’s Treaty for the Succession of Ashurbanipal’ (first translated by D. J. Wiseman in 1958 as ‘The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon’), ‘Esarhaddon’s Treaty with Baal of Tyre’ and ‘Ashurbanipal’s Treaty with the Tribe of Kedar’. For the first he has been able to include a few improved readings from the copy found at Tell Tayinat in 2009. If Israelite and Judean kings were forced to accept treaties like these, Cogan and others suggest, some of the curses they list, such as ‘May the gods make your ground like iron, so that nothing can sprout from it’ (p. 83, §63), may have given rise to similar curses in Deuteronomy (Deut.

28: 23). However, the Assyrian scribes drew on a long tradition of curses and there seem to be western influences in the Assyrian treaties, so their authors may have adopted those curses from the west; the argument for Assyrian models for Deuteronomy is far from certain (see K. A. Kitchen and P. J. N. Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* [2012], part 3, pp. 222–33). Cogan also points to many of the curses which occur in other biblical books and ancient near eastern texts.

While some exiles experienced forced labour or slavery, others enjoyed freedom. ‘Judeans in Assyrian Exile’ and ‘Judeans in Babylonian Exile’ (Chs 5, 6, pp. 119–57) list about fifty people with names clearly or likely to be Hebrew - another forty can be counted. Most are names known from the Bible, with the Divine Name appearing as *yau* for *yahu* in Assyrian and *yama* for *yaw* in Babylonian, which also has, rarely, *yahu* (Abda-yahu, p. 147, Shahid-yahu, p. 153). Legal deeds include one regulating the shares of an estate between a man’s five sons, all with Hebrew names (6.05) and one reducing a man named Isaiah’s daughter to slavery if she consorts with a Babylonian man or he abducts her without her resisting (6.06). A few years ago, Iraqi treasure hunters uncovered a new source for the Babylonian period, releasing on to the antiquities market scores of tablets from a place called ‘Judah-ville’ in the region of Nippur. Two are included here (nos. 6.04, 6.05) but the publication of many more will add numerous Hebrew names and expand knowledge of the exiles’ activities to be set beside the long known Murashu archive from Nippur.

A few texts from other eras and kingdoms - Egypt, the Hittites - record deportations or list exiles, but the cuneiform documentation is the most informative outside the Bible. While the Hebrew reports are the only extensive sources from subjugated populations, Mordechai Cogan’s book supplies a valuable complement to them.

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