

RECENT WORK ON DAILY LIFE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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Abstract: The everyday or daily life of peoples who lived in the ancient Near East (c. 3500 BCE to 100 CE) has been the subject of several books and articles. A brief survey of these is provided here, with an indication of content for selected entries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, scholars tend to focus on the history of ancient civilisations and on the fortunes of their rulers, paying less attention to the daily life of ancient peoples. In recent years this trend has been reversed and now there are many books, monographs and articles on the humdrum lives of the ordinary person.¹ One reason for this may be the wish for visitors to ancient sites, most of which have been stripped of their finds, to visualise life as it was then.² Here the focus is on relatively recent titles, but inevitably there is some reference to earlier works, some of which have become classics.³

¹ For a survey of such publications see B. A. Nakhai, “Daily Life in the Ancient Near East: New Thoughts on an Old Topic”, *Religious Studies Review* 31 (2005): 147-153.

² For reconstructions of many Near Eastern cities see J.-C. Golvin, *L'antiquité retrouvée* (Paris 2003), translated as *Ancient Cities Brought to Life* (Ludlow 2007).

³ Professor Nicolas Wyatt was kind enough to comment on an earlier draft and supply several additional references, for which I express my thanks.

2. THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST IN GENERAL

Several works deal more generally with aspects of day-to-day life in the whole of the ancient Near East, notably, R. E. Averbeck / M. W. Chavalas / D. B. Weisberg (eds.), *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda 2001).⁴ It includes the following general contributions: G. A. Klingbeil, “Methods and Daily Life. Understanding the Use of Animals in Daily Life in a Multi-disciplinary Framework” (401-433) on the mule; W. M. Yaumachi, “Athleticism the Ancient Near East” (491-500) and A. J. Hoerth, “Games People Played: Board Games in the Ancient Near East” (471-490). The games discussed are: *Mehen* (“Serpent”) on a circular board, *Senet* (“Passing”), *T(j)au* (“Robbers”) and “Hounds and Jackals”. All but the first were quite widespread, often available in pocket format.⁵

Similarly J. M. Sasson, *et al.* (eds.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (4 vols., New York 1995; repr.: 2 vols., Peabody 2000) has a number of entries concerned with aspects of the topic in general. Examples are C. J. Eyre, “The Agricultural Cycle, Farming, and Water Management in the Ancient Near East” (*CANE* I, 175-189); J. M. Renfrew, “Vegetables in the Ancient Near Eastern Diet” (*CANE* I, 191-202) and B. Hesse, “Animal Husbandry and Human Diet in the Ancient Near East” (*CANE* I, 203-224).⁶ Other general works are D. C. Snell, *Life in the Ancient Near East, 3100-332 B.C.E.* (New Haven 1997) and L. Milano (ed.), *Drinking in Ancient Societies. History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East. Papers of the Symposium Held in Rome, May 17-19, 1990* (Padua 1994).

A more specific work is K. Van Der Toorn, *From her Cradle to her Grave. The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and the Babylonian Woman* (translated by S. J. Denning-Bolle; Sheffield 1994). It covers birth, youth, adolescence, marriage and childbirth in Babylonia and ancient Israel. It also deals with women as sorceresses, interpreters

⁴ Here abbreviated to Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001.

⁵ See also I. Finkel, *Ancient Board Games* (New York 1997).

⁶ The relevant entries in E. M. Meyers (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Archaeology in the Near East* (New York / Oxford 1997) and in D. C. Snell (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East* (Oxford 2007) can also be consulted.

of dreams, etc. as well as with widowhood. His other book on this topic is *Family religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel* (SHCANE 7; Leiden 1996). See also K. Balkan, "Betrothal of girls during childhood in Ancient Assyria and Anatolia" (in H. A. Hoffner / G. Beckman, eds., *Kaniššuwār: A Tribute to Hans G. Güterbock on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday, May 27, 1983*, Assyriological Studies 23; Chicago 1986, 1-11) and J.-M. Durand (ed.), *La femme dans le Proche-Orient Antique* (Paris 1987). In addition, there is *La dona en l'antiguitat* (Orientalia Barcinonensia 1; Sabadell 1987).

On food see W. J. Darby / P. Ghaloungui / L. Grivetti, *Food: The Gift of Osiris*, 2 vols. (London 1977) which discusses a series of foodstuffs and related items. Also: B. Hesse, "Animal Husbandry and Human Diet in the Ancient Near East" (*CANE I*, 203-222); J. M. Renfrew, "Vegetables in the Ancient Near Eastern Diet" (*CANE I*, 191-202).

Other aspects: W. G. Dever / S. Gitin (eds.), *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past* (Winona Lake 2003); G. Herrmann (ed.), *The Furniture of Western Asia Ancient and Traditional. Papers of the Conference held at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London June 28-30, 1993* (Mainz 1996); R. J. Dumbrell, *The Archaeomusicology of the Ancient Near East* (Victoria BC 2005). K. Glavanis / P. Glavanis (eds.), *The Rural Middle East* (Birzeit / London 1989) and L. Battini / P. Villard (eds.), *Médecine et médecins au Proche-Orient ancien. Actes du Colloque International organisé à Lyon les 8 et 9 novembre 2002, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée* (BAR International Series 1528; Oxford 2006).⁷

For warfare see P. Abrahami / L. Battini (eds.), *Les armées du proche-orient ancien : II^e-I^{er} mill. av. J.-C. Actes du Colloque International Organisé à Lyon les 1^{er} et 2 décembre 2006, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée* (BAR International Series 1855; Oxford 2008); N. Stillman / N. Tallis, *Armies of the Ancient Near East, 3000 BC – 539 BC* (Devizes 1984); J. Vidal, "Sobre la guerra en el Próximo Oriente Antiguo (I)" (*Historiae* 4, 2007, 145-154) and more specifically, V. Haas, "Kompositbogen und Bogenschießen als Wettkampf im Alten Orient" (*Nikephorus* 2, 1989, 27-41).

⁷ See the survey by É. Couto, "La salud de la materia. Últimas publicaciones en historia de la medicina del Próximo Oriente Antiguo", *Historiae* 4 (2007) 133-143.

On death see S. Campbell / A. Green (eds.), *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (Oxbow Monograph 52; Oxford 1995).

3. MESOPOTAMIA

Although to a lesser extent than for Egypt, Mesopotamian wall paintings and bas reliefs can provide a considerable amount of pictorial information on daily life. This information is supplemented by data from archaeological excavations and from the enormous number of texts.

3.1 Sumer

Sections of S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago 1963) are relevant to the topic in hand. Very much more recent is H. Crawford, *Sumer and the Sumerians* (Cambridge 2004²), although once again daily life is considered only as part of the whole book. There are sections on town planning, private housing, life and death, manufacturing industries, trade, writing and the arts. She notes that there is better evidence for daily life in the burials than there is from the remains of houses.⁸ “The burials can provide evidence for the physical appearance of the people, their clothes, food, jobs and amusements. The graves can also give us some insights into the structure of society, its external contacts, its level of technological achievement and even into its customs and beliefs” (p. 157).

3.2 Assyria and Babylonia

The classic studies G. Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria* (translated by K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop and A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop; New York 1954) and H. W. F. Saggs, *Everyday Life in Babylonia and Assyria* (New York 1965) are to some extent outdated now but still of interest.

K. R. Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Mesopotamia* (Peabody 1998). Eight of the twelve chapters in this book deal directly with daily life under the following headings: writing, education and literature, the sciences,

⁸ This observation applies generally across the ancient Near East, but particularly to Egypt.

society, recreation, religion, government and economy. M. Stol, "Private Life in Mesopotamia" (*CANE* I, 485-501) considers phase of life, identification, the family, marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, education, sexuality, old age, widows, work and subsistence, food, the house and entertainment. G. Leick, *The Babylonians. An Introduction* (London / New York 2002) has sections on the family, palace and temple households, housing, furniture, clothes, hygiene, food and drink and even cooking.⁹ H. Klengel, *König Hammurapi und der Alltag Babylons* (Darmstadt 1992).

Supplementary studies are: L. Battini-Villard, *L'espace domestique en Mésopotamie de la II^e d'Ur à l'époque paléobabylonienne* (Oxford 1999); P. Brusasco, "Family archives and the social use of space in Old Babylonian houses at Ur" (*Mesopotamia* 34, 1999-2000, 53-174); "Theory and practice in the study of Mesopotamian domestic space" (*Antiquity* 78, 2004, 142-157); M. Civil, *The Farmer's Instructions* (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 5; Barcelona 1994); K. R. Nemet-Nejat, *Cuneiform mathematical texts as a reflection of everyday life in Mesopotamia* (AOS 75; New Haven 1993); "Systems for learning mathematics in Mesopotamian scribal schools" (*JNES* 54, 1995, 241-260) and H. W. F. Saggs, *Civilization before Greece and Rome* (New Haven 1986).

4. EGYPT

The sheer wealth of pictorial material from Egyptian tombs and temples provides considerable data for all aspects of ancient Egypt, particularly of daily life there. Not unexpectedly, then, there are more books on life in ancient Egypt than on other areas of the ancient Near East. Here is just a sample.

J. K. Hoffmeier, "Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt" (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 327-351) discusses (with illustrations) farming, fowling and fishing, artisans and craftsmen, the army and the workers' village Deir el-Medina.

⁹ See especially J. Bottéro, "The Cuisine of Ancient Mesopotamia", *Biblical Archaeology* 481 (1985) 30-47; *Textes culinaires mésopotamiens* (Winona Lake 1995).

K. Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt: Recreating Lahun* (Blackwell 2008) has adopted an unusual approach. She has attempted to reconstruct “everyday life in Egypt as experienced by a young girl of the middle class” (p. 1) in the town of Lahun (near Herakleopolis) during the Late Middle Kingdom period (1850-1750 BCE). This girl’s life is described from her birth, through infancy, her education and her experience of religion. There are also chapters on sickness, and death. The last chapter deals with adolescence and marriage. Due of lack of direct evidence, a degree of inference was necessary for some aspects. Note also E. Feucht, *Das Kind im alten Ägypten* (Frankfurt / New York 1995).

Less speculative is E. Teeter / J. H. Johnson (eds.), *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt* (The Oriental Institute Museum Publications 29; Chicago 2009). Using finds from Egypt as illustrative material, the book sets out the life of an individual temple singer in the context of her time. Her home life and household cults are described, and there are sections on fertility and birth rituals, on the social, economic and legal rights of women and on how they were employed. Careful inspection of Egyptian artefacts reveals considerable detail about daily life in ancient Egypt.

Other titles are as follows: L. Casson, *Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore 2001); R. David, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford 1998); A. Donadoni (ed.), *L’uomo egiziano* (Rome / Bari 1990); A. C. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt: Laundry Lists and Love Songs* (Oxford 1999); L. Maskell, *Private Life in New Kingdom Egypt* (New Jersey 2002); M. R. Guasch Jané, *Wine in Ancient Egypt A cultural and analytical study* (BAR International Series 1851; Oxford 2008); N. Morris, *Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt (Uncovering History)* (McRae Book 2008); R. Schulz / M. Seidel (eds.), *Egypt. The World of the Pharaohs* (Köln 1998); J. Tyldesley, *Daughters of Isis: Women of Ancient Egypt* (London 1995) and B. Watterson, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (New York 1991).

5. THE LEVANT

The area here conveniently labelled “the Levant” includes Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

5.1 Syria

For one general aspect see L. Milano, “Food and Diet in Pre-Classical Syria” (in C. Zaccagnini, ed., *Production and Consumption in the Ancient Near East*, Budapest 1989, 127-168) and on particular sites in Syria see A. Otto, *Alltag und Gesellschaft zur Spätbronzezeit: Eine Fallstudie aus Tall Bazi (Syrien)* (Brepols 2006) and M. W. Chavalas, “Puzurum, A Homeowner from Khana-Period Terqa” (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 153-170), which deals with domestic houses in Tell Ashara (ancient Terqa) in Syria. More generally, see C. Castel / M. al-Maqdassi / F. Villeneuve (eds.), *Les maisons dans la Syrie antique du IIIe millénaire aux débuts de l’Islam: pratique et représentations de l’espace domestique: actes du colloque international, Damas, 27-30 juin 1992* (Beirut 1997).

5.1.1 Ebla

Tell Mardikh, ancient Ebla, has yielded an enormous amount of tablets which are still in the process of being understood. Even so, much information is available on everyday life there in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE.

M. G. Biga, “Frauen in der Wirtschaft von Ebla” (in H. Hauptmann / H. Waetzoldt, eds., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft von Ebla. Akten der Internationale Tagung Heidelberg 4.-7. November 1986*, Heidelberg 1988, 159-171); V. Brugnattelli, “I nomi di parentela ad Ebla” (*ASGM* 29, 1987-1988, 1-12); L. Milano, “Lessicografia e storia sociale: gli ‘schiavi’ di Ebla” (*SEL* 12, 1995, 121-134). M. Widell, “Some Observations on the Administration, Agriculture and Animal Management of Tell Beydar” (*UF* 35, 2003, 717-733);¹⁰ G. Pettinato, “Nascita, matrimonio, malattia e morte ad Ebla” (in H. Hauptmann / H. Waetzoldt, eds., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft von Ebla. Akten der Internationale Tagung Heidelberg 4.-7. November 1986*, Heidelberg 1988, 299-316) and P. Fronzaroli, “Osservazioni sul lessico delle bevande dei testi di Ebla” (in L. Milano (ed.), *Drinking in Ancient*

¹⁰ See G. del Olmo Lete / J.-L. Montero Fenollós (eds.), *Archaeology of the Upper Syrian Euphrates: The Tishrin Dam Area* (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 15, Barcelona 1999).

Societies. History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East. Papers of the Symposium Held in Rome, May 17-19, 1990, Padua 1994, 121-127). On crafts and craftsmen see J. Pasquali, *Il lessico dell'artigianato nei testi di Ebla* (Quaderni di Semitistica 23; Florence 2005).¹¹

5.1.2 Ugarit

The town of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) is the best representative of ancient Syria.¹² The most complete survey is W. G. E. Watson, "Daily Life in Ancient Ugarit (Syria)" (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 121-152). The material remains and texts are used to describe the climate, resources, buildings, the inhabitants, the family, schools and scribes, crafts and trade, farming and agriculture, the armed forces, the calendar, religion, medicine and magic, music and entertainment, death and burial.¹³ M. Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra* (Winona Lake 2006; translation by G. Walker and B. Schmidt of M. Yon, *Cité d'Ougarit sur le tell de Ras Shamra*, Paris 1997) is based directly on archaeological evidence. Especially significant are "Artifacts Illustrating Official and Everyday Life" (pp. 123-172) as well as sections of the "Description of the Tell" (pp. 27-122), notably on the residential quarter, the lower city and the tombs.¹⁴

¹¹ Kindly sent me by the author.

¹² See W. G. E. Watson / N. Wyatt (eds), *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (HdO 1/39; Leiden / Boston / Köln 1999), especially chapters 10-13.

¹³ For supplementary information on flora and fauna see W. G. E. Watson, "A Botanical Snapshot of Ugarit. Trees, fruit, plants and herbs in the cuneiform texts, *AuOr* 22 (2004) 107-155; "Additional Botanical Items in the Ugaritic Texts", *AuOr* 25 (2005) 129-139; "Names for Animals in the Ugaritic Texts", in G. del Olmo Lete / L. Feliu / A. Millet Albà (eds.), *šapal tibnim mû illakû. Studies Presented to Joaquín Sanmartín on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 22; Sabadell / Barcelona 2006) 445-458 and "Additional Names for Animals in the Ugaritic Texts", *Historiae* 4 (2007) 93-116.

¹⁴ See also O. Callot, *Une maison à Ougarit. Etudes d'architecture domestique* (RSOu 1; Paris 1983); J. C. Courtois, "L'architecture domestique à Ougarit au Bronze Récent", *UF* 11 (1979) 105-134; A. Curtis, *Ugarit (Ras Shamra)* (Cities of the Biblical World; Cambridge 1985); A. F. Rainey, "Family Relationships in Ugarit", *Orientalia* 34 (1965) 10-22; A. van Selms, *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature* (London 1954); M. Yon, "Ugarit: The Urban Habitat, The Present State of the Archaeological Picture",

J.-M. Michaud (ed.), *La Bible et l'Héritage d'Ougarit* (Proche-Orient et Littérature Ougaritique I; Sherbrooke, QU 2005) has the following relevant chapters: C. Roche, "Introduction à la civilisation d'Ougarit" (29-44), Y. Calvet, "L'environnement antique d'Ougarit" (45-66) and J.-P. Vita, "Ougarit entre la guerre et la paix" (67-98).

See also J. Vidal, *Las aldeas de Ugarit según los archivos del Bronce Reciente (siglos XIV-XII a.n.e.)* (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 21; Barcelona 2005) for aspects of village life and on the army and navy see J. Vidal, "Ugarit at War (2). Military Equestrianism, Mercenaries, Fortifications and Single Combat" (*UF* 38, 2006, 699-718) and J.-P. Vita, *El Ejército de Ugarit* (BDFSNO 1; Madrid 1995).

On death and burial see S. Marchegay, "Les pratiques funéraires à Ougarit à l'Age du Bronze", in J.-M. Michaud (ed.), *Le Royaume d'Ougarit de la Crète à l'Euphrate. Nouveaux axes de recherche* (Proche-Orient et Littérature Ougaritique II; Sherbrooke, QU 2007, 423-447) and H. Niehr, "The topography of death in the royal palace of Ugarit: preliminary thoughts on the basis of archaeological and textual data" (*ibid.*, 219-242).

A recent issue of *NEA* (63/4) was devoted to "The Mysteries of Ugarit" and included a section on daily life there: M. Yon, "Daily Life"; O. Callot, "A Visit to a Home"; J.-C. Margueron "A Stroll through the Palace"; S. Marchegay, "The Tombs"; Y. Calvet, "The House of Urtenu" and C. Roche, "The Lady of Ugarit".

5.1.3 Emar and Mari

On Emar see M. W. Chavalas (ed.), *Emar: the History, Religion and Culture of a Syrian Town in the Late Bronze Age* (Bethesda 1996),¹⁵ especially G. Beckman, "Family Values on the Middle Euphrates in the Thirteenth Century B. C." (57-79). Also N. Bellotto, "La struttura familiare a Emar: alcune osservazioni preliminari", (in E. Rova, ed., *Patavina Orientalia Selecta*, Padua 2000, 187-198). T. Kämmerer, "Zur

BASOR 286 (1992) 19-34; P. Xella, *La terra di Baal* (Rome 1984) especially the section "Economia e società" (90-103) and J.-A. Zamora, *La vid y el vino en Ugarit* (BDFSNO, Monografías 6; Madrid 2000).

¹⁵ For a general bibliography see B. I. Faist / J.-J. Justel / J.-P. Vita, "Bibliografía de los estudios de Emar", *UF* 35, 2003, 191-230.

sozialen Stellung der Frau in Emār und Ekalte als Witwe und Waise” (*UF* 26, 1994, 169-208). On the military aspect see J.-P. Vita, “Warfare and the Army at Emar” (*AoF* 29, 2002, 113-127). For Mari, see S. Dalley, *Mari and Karana: Two Old Babylonian Cities* (London / New York 1984) and P. Bry, *Des règles administratives et techniques à Mari. Contribution à la mise au jour multidisciplinaire de modes opératoires* (Aula Orientalis Supplementa 20; Barcelona 2005).

5.2 *Israel and Palestine*

For older periods J. R. Ebeling, “Archaeological Remains of Everyday Activities. Ground Stone Tools in Bronze and Iron Age Palestine” (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 311-324); P. M. M. Daviau, *Houses and Their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine* (Sheffield 1993) and C. Foucault-Forest, *L’habitat privé en Palestine au Bronze Moyen et au Bronze Récent* (BAR International Series 625; Oxford 1996) can be consulted. M. I. Gruber, “Private Life in Canaan and Ancient Israel” (*CANE* I, 633-650) discusses houses, furniture, food and drink, recreation, clothing, work and home economics, school and marriage but there is nothing on death and burial.¹⁶ Other relevant studies are: Y. Shiloh, “The Four Room House: Its Situation and Function in the Israelite City”, (*IEJ* 20, 1970, 180-190); K. Lawson Younger, “«Give Us Our Daily Bread». Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees” (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 269-288); R. D. Miller, “Modeling the Farm Community in Iron I Israel” (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 289-309) and T. Levy (ed.), *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (London 1996).

5.3 *Phoenicia*

The most comprehensive work available on Phoenicia is J. A. Zamora (ed.), *El hombre fenicio. Estudios y materiales* (Rome 2003).¹⁷ It describes man as king, magistrate, scribe, soldier, peasant, artisan,

¹⁶ The information used there for Ugaritic comes almost exclusively from the literary texts.

¹⁷ This book, written by a team of international scholars, is richly illustrated and has indexes as well as a classified bibliography.

merchant, slave and emigrant. It also gives information on women and children within the family and discusses death. In addition there is G. E. Markoe, *Phoenicians: Peoples of the Past* (London 2000) especially “The City” (68-92) and “Economy: Commerce and Industry” (93-107). Note also C. Baurain / C. Bonnet, *Les Phéniciens. Marins des trois continents* (Paris 1992) and S. Moscati, *The World of the Phoenicians* (ET: London 1965).

6. ANATOLIA: THE HITTITES, HURRIANS AND URARTIANS

Here, Anatolia is considered to comprise present day Armenia and Turkey. For a general survey see H. A. Hoffner, “The Hittites and Hurrians” (in D. J. Wiseman, ed., *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, Oxford 1973, 197-228).

6.1 *The Hittites*

Unlike the Egyptians, the Hittites lived life in the present. This is shown by F. Imparati, “Private Life Among the Hittites” (*CANE* I, 571-586), which deals with demography, dwellings and their furniture, the family (marriage, procreation, adultery, birth, abortion, adoption, etc.), labour (craftsmen, scribes), wages and prices, medicine, food and entertainment. More recent is H. A. Hoffner, “Daily Life among the Hittites” (in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 95-118). Topics discussed are climate and geography, natural resources (flora, fauna and sources for water), exploitation of these resources (for building and food), clothing, sanitation and personal hygiene, transport, social life (the family, marriage, trades, entertainment), rites of passage (birth, puberty, burial).

Only parts of the classic O. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Harmondsworth 1952) are related to daily life, namely, the sections on social classes, marriage and the family and burial customs. More recent is T. Bryce, *Life and Society in the Hittite World* (Oxford 2002). A comprehensive

account of food and food production is provided by H. A. Hoffner, *Alimenta Hethaeorum* (AOS 55; New Haven 1974).¹⁸

Other studies are: G. M. Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals* (Wiesbaden 1983²); D. Symington, "Hittite and Neo-Hittite Furniture" (in G. Herrmann, ed., *The Furniture of Western Asia Ancient and Traditional. Papers of the Conference held at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London June 28-30, 1993*, Mainz 1996, 111-138); S. de Martino, "Music, Dance, and Processions in Hittite Anatolia" (*CANE* III, 2661-2669).

6.2 Hurrians and Urartians

Due to lack of evidence, little can be said about the daily life of either the Hurrians or the Urartians. Some information is provided by U. Seidl, "Urartian Furniture" (in G. Herrmann, ed., *The Furniture of Western Asia Ancient and Traditional. Papers of the Conference held at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London June 28-30, 1993*, Mainz 1996, 181-186).¹⁹

7. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

There has been some discussion of what the topic should contain and how to deal with it. For example. D. Snell examined a range of attempts at describing "daily life" and their underlying philosophy.²⁰ Similarly, D. Weisberg looked at various descriptions of everyday life in the Neo-Babylonian period by previous scholars.²¹ It is clear that attentive observation of even crude artefacts can provide a great deal information on the life of the ordinary person in ancient times. The publications listed

¹⁸ See also H. A. Hoffner, "Alimenta Revisited", in G. Wilhelm (ed.), *Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für Hethitologie, Würzburg, 4.-8. Oktober 1999* (Wiesbaden 2001) 199-212.

¹⁹ For general background, see J. Freu, *Histoire du Mitanni* (Kubaba, Série antiquité 3; Paris 2003) and G. Wilhelm, *The Hurrians* (ET: Warminster 1989).

²⁰ D. C. Snell, "The Ordinariness of the Peculiar Institution", in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 3-22. He provides his own example by examining Sumerian proverbs that deal with slavery.

²¹ D. B. Weisberg, "Everyday Life in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Integration of Material and Non-Material Culture", in Averbeck / Chavalas / Weisberg 2001, 83-91.

above show that study of archaeological finds in context, of texts and of pictorial material enables us to visualise the daily lives of the ordinary person in ancient societies. It is particularly helpful when there are illustrations.

Generally speaking, the topics discussed are more or less the same, but not every “daily life” includes them all. Life, from birth to death and burial is almost always described, with sections on marriage and childbirth. There may also be descriptions of domestic housing and furnishings, food and cooking. Usually there are discussions of crafts and trades, including farming and agriculture, as well as of education (writing and science), medical care, recreation (games and music) and religion. Instead, the description of Phoenician and Punic life edited by J.-A. Zamora (see above) very successfully adopts an original approach, with its focus on all aspects of Man.

The gaps in the descriptions of daily life in the ancient Near East listed here are quite apparent. In some cases, for example the Hurrians and Urartians, this is largely due to lack of available material. Even so, there is still room for further studies of this kind, either of particular aspects or of a more general nature.