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Review

Reviewed Work(s):

I Hurriti

by Fiorella Imperati

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Source: *Oriens*, Vol. 23/24 (1974), p. 492

Published by: Brill

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1580132>

Accessed: 30-04-2019 09:41 UTC

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## NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA

FIGURELLA IMPARATI, *I Hurriti*. — Firenze, Sansoni 1964. Pp. 176, pls. 13, 1 map. 80.

The Hurrians were responsible for the establishment, in the 15th century B.C., of a powerful and large territorial state which represents an interesting anomaly from the viewpoint of the patterns prevailing in the historical geography of the Near East. For, differently from what is the case in earlier and later political configurations of the Near East, the Hurrian state, or kingdom of Mitanni, was centered around the Khabur river (the principal tributary of the Euphrates) and consisted mainly of the Jezirah with extensions eastward across the Tigris and westward across the Euphrates. The book under review offers a good and up-to-date presentation of all the material pertaining to the history of the Hurrians. The book fills a gap which existed in the popularizing literature in Italian on the Ancient Near East, but it will also be useful for scholars outside Italy. While the author dispenses with a critical apparatus to support her views, the survey of the material is basically sound and thorough, and a good bibliography is appended at the end. The book is divided into seven chapters, which I would group in the following manner. Part One, Ethnic and Political History (Chs. I-III) : the Hurrians as an ethnic group, with considerations on their language; relationships between Hurrians and Indo-Arians; the kingdom of Mitanni. Part Two, Culture and Institutions (Chs. IV-VI) : legal tradition, with translation of a few documents from the practice of law; religion (pantheon and mythology); art. Appendix (Ch. VII) : Training and Tactical Usage of the Horses. There are no chronological charts, and this is an unfortunate omission in a book which is meant to be a survey for a broad audience. The lack of charts is especially felt in a chronological discussion such as the one on pp. 58-61, which is otherwise commendably lucid (the author favors the reconstruction which puts Idrimi of Alalakh before Niqmepa, and considers him as a contemporary of Barattarna).

The chapter on law is a clear presentation of the material found in the tablets from Nuzi. The discussion of these texts is certainly pertinent, but one misses a clarification on the part of the author as to why and how these texts (written after all in Akkadian and in a territory outside the core region of the Hurrians) are relevant to a discussion of Hurrian law. It is stated passingly that the texts show influence of Hammurapi's law (p. 83), but nothing else is stated concerning Mesopotamian law and practice of law, so that the reader is left with the impression that the texts and the tradition of which they give evidence are purely Hurrian in character. It is not even stated (except for an incidental remark on p. 93 concerning the term *šimtu*) that the texts are actually written in Akkadian, however barbaric this may have been. (As a minor point it may be noted that both *dimtu* and *qištu*, referred to on pp. 85-87, are feminine nouns in Akkadian.) Another point on which I would like to take exception is the use of the term "Canaanites" to translate *Ha-na*. MEŠ in the text *ARM* VI 76 : 20-21 (p. 141 f.); even if this term is preferred against the term Amorite when referring to the people mentioned in Mesopotamian texts and characterized by West Semitic personal names, it is indeed too confusing to simply translate any tribal name by "Canaanite". The confusion is only compounded by the usage, on the same page (p. 142), of both terms "Canaanite" and "Amorite" to refer to the same entity. None of these remarks, however, affect the substance of Imparati's work, which is of good quality and fulfills well its purpose.

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