

[Mobile ebook] The Might that Was Assyria (Great Civilizations Series) (Great civilization series)

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H. W. F. Saggs

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H. W. F. Saggs : The Might that Was Assyria (Great Civilizations Series) (Great civilization series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Might that Was Assyria (Great Civilizations Series) (Great civilization series):

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A very thoughtful and thorough understanding of Assyrian culture within ...By Daniel AljetsA very thoughtful and thorough understanding of Assyrian culture within the scope of the ancient near east! Shows the Assyrians as protectors of civilization rather than as tyrants!10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Introduction to the AssyriansBy Arch StantonThis book intends to offer a basic summary of the Assyrian Empire. As such it succeeds quite well. If in many places it leaves one thirsting tantalizingly for more information then this is at least part of its purpose.The Assyrians were one of the major empires of the ancient Near East. Perhaps THE major one. Yet while the Babylonians, Egyptians, Israelis, and Persians receive a great deal of press, the Assyrians tend to slip through the cracks. The reasons for this are unclear (at least to me) but probably have something to do with the generally negative impression created by the Biblical and artistic sources. These latter feature some truly harsh (but beautiful) images. Dr. Saggs likes the Assyrians however, and while I wouldn't say that this book was written to rehabilitate them it certainly doesn't give much focus to the more negative side of their culture. Saggs says right at the beginning his distaste for judging other cultures from such a politically correct perspective. And he certainly isn't politically correct. When discussing the sexuality of the Assyrians he refers

to homosexuality among women as abnormal, while mentioning positively that Assyrian women avoided this. The book is divided into two parts, a fairly common feature of such books. The first section provides a chronological narrative of Assyrian history. This part especially left me hungering for more since it covered over 2,000 years in a hundred pages. I'd love to find an entire book detailing a somewhat more limited period. He keeps mentioning times that are better documented than others, but he gives no indication where to look for more. Possibly because such books do not exist. The second section deals with various issues such as how they lived, the running of the army, and the religion. This part takes up most of the book and as might be expected from a section that deals with so many subjects the interest varies. I don't care, for example, how the ancient Assyrians dressed, but there may be others who do. As mentioned earlier he seems quite upset at the negative image which people have of the Assyrians. Having established in his introduction that he doesn't believe that they were that bad, he should have just left it at that. However he goes on about it in the army chapter and manages to convince me of the opposite. He views any actions they took as being justified as long as they were done for a reason, and then he adduces the lack of evidence for purposeless cruelty among the common soldiers to imply that we're actually more violent now. Left out is any reference to the actions of their contemporaries, whose use of these punishments (or not) would be instructive in determining the comparative brutality of Assyrian rule and possibly suggest whether such brutality (if extreme) assisted or hurt them in their goals of regional domination. Since he doesn't provide any reference to similar treatment among their rivals or successors the impression is given that these actions were indeed uniquely Assyrian and therefore represent a genuine cruel streak in Assyrian character. They may not be uniquely sadistic, but they certainly sound like they were unusually cruel. The biggest problem with both of these sections is that (perhaps because it's an introductory text) Saggs doesn't provide footnotes or attribute facts. This means that a reader does not know where to turn to for further information, and furthermore can't always figure out what he's talking about. The worst example of this is a quote from a children's program which goes "No one shall take his life but me. I shall flay the skin from his living body and wear it around me like a cloak." He uses this as an example to show that we have no right to judge the Assyrians for their cruelty (as if that kind of statement is normal in children's tv shows), but since he doesn't list where it comes from such a statement is worthless. All in all this book makes a good introduction to the topic. I know of no other books providing competition except for Henry Rawlinson's sprawling *The Seven Great Monarchies Of The Ancient Eastern World* from the 1800s which is more concerned with their appearance in the Bible than anything else. A useful companion book for this though is Saggs book on *Babylon: The Greatness that was Babylon*. Assyrian history was tied up with Babylonian history and it can be hard to understand either of them without reference to the other. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Like a Wolf on the Fold By Matthew Brennan A thoroughly researched history of Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea with a smattering of Egypt and Israel thrown in for good measure. Imagine black Nubians, the guardians of Egyptian culture, battling Semitic Assyrians inside ancient Egyptian cities. Or an Egyptian army marching one thousand miles north, only to be so thoroughly destroyed that it disappeared from history. Assyria was a small, but highly organized culture until close to its end. Then its very success destroyed it.

Written by Assyriologist H. W. F. Saggs. It illustrates the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Saggs spent half of his life studying the ancient Assyrians, before he wrote this book. - from Wikipedia