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Book Reviews

Charles Méla et Frédéric Möri en collaboration avec Sydney H. Aufrère, Gilles Dorival, Alain Le Boulluec, *Alexandrie la divine*. (2 vols). Genève: Éditions de la Baconnière, 2014. Pp. 1132, incl. illustrations and maps. €196/CHF 219. ISBN:978-2-9404-3122-9.

The size of the two-volume study reflects its scholarly magnitude: it measures 25 × 31 cms and weighs approximately 8 kilos (!). This beautifully edited and most welcome study appeared alongside a fascinating exhibition (5 April to 31 August 2014) at the Fondation Martin Bodmer in Cologne near Geneva. This immense publication offers a collection of 118 papers, 400 nearly monochromatic photos, including ancient maps and all necessary indexes. While the first chapter introduces the complex cultural climate surrounding the foundation of Alexandria, the final chapter collects papers discussing the legacy of Alexandria in the period of European Renaissance. Although both volumes embrace many centuries, crucial attention is given to the Hellenistic megalopolis. That enormous historical scope is covered by contributions written by approximately one hundred established scholars representing the whole range of academic fields related to the central theme of the two volumes. These short but insightful contributions are intended to introduce general readers to a particular subject; they combine references to the ancient sources with selected modern publications. The study gives a coherent, attractive and inspiring testimony to the impressive richness of life in the ancient city. That outstanding affluence includes various elements of cultures (e.g. literature and poetry), religions (Egyptian beliefs and later syncretism of cults, Judaism, Christianity, Hermetica, Islam), different schools of Hellenistic philosophies found in the city, its interest in various types of science, a variety of architecture and of course the complex history of the city.

I particularly value the contributions dedicated to the Jewish and Christian legacy reflected in literature and archaeology. On the subject of Alexandrian Judaism, the volume offers articles written by Marie-Françoise Baslez on Yahweh and Dionysus and their conflict in Wisdom Literatures and the Books of the Maccabees (pp. 716–726), together with Lucia Saudelli on the relationship between the Law of Moses and Greek philosophy as a particular Alexandrian motif (pp. 726–733) and Maren R. Niehoff on the Alexandrian Jews and the pagan school of textual criticism (pp. 733–742). Baslez rightly highlighted the main dialectic of Jewish culture/religion in Alexandria as the ongoing development between two spheres: integration and resistance (p. 722). Saudelli's reconstruction of Philo of Alexandria's assimilation of

Greek philosophical wisdom, although summarised in such a limited space, gives justice to his main (and brilliant) theological intuition (p. 731). Niehoff shows a number of exegetical (e.g. Hebrew terminology, idioms) dilemmas faced by Jewish translators and commentators (e.g. Philo of Alexandria) while working on the Septuagint (p. 739) and concludes with confirmation of multiple approaches (i.e. not exclusively allegorical) to the Scriptural text by Jewish authors (p. 740).

Equally, in the second volume, Chapter 1 examines the origin of Alexandrian Christianity (pp. 750–820), with Chapter 2 discussing Christian theological diversity (Gnosticism), thus offering a number of papers which combine brief but comprehensive study with sound and insightful elaboration. Among the presented themes are: the origin of Christianity in Alexandria (Alain Le Boulluec, pp. 750–757); the Christian ‘school’/*didaskaleion* (Alain Le Boulluec, pp. 757–765); Jewish and Christian Sibylline poetry (Jean- Michel Roessli, pp. 768–774); the beginning of Egyptian monasticism (Ewa Wipszycka, pp. 774–782); the conflict between Arius, Arians and Athanasius (Annick Martin, pp. 782–789); the Bible of the Copts (Nathalie Bosson, Anne Boud’hors, pp. 789–796); Alexandrian theology in the 5th and 7th centuries CE (Christian Boudignon, pp. 802–809) and the assessment of pagan culture in relation to the domination of Christianity (Myrto Malouta, Garth Fowden, 809–820). Chapter 2 offers five papers, which discuss the main trajectories of the development of some alternative theologies (Jean-Daniel Dubois, pp. 820–829 and later Paul-Hubert Poirier, pp. 834–837); the relationship between Gnosticism and Judaism (Madeleine Scopello, pp. 830–833), philosophy (Paul-Hubert Poirier, 839–841) and magic (Madeleine Scopello, pp. 842–845). The limited nature of the current review does not allow detailed evaluation of all these and other papers in relation to the appearance and development of Christianity in Alexandria; these observations will, nonetheless, allow the reader to grasp the main factors which stimulated that process.

Finally I wish to point out the main values of this encyclopaedic oeuvre. The vital combination of papers and iconography gives the reader a highly impressive and well documented insight into the spirit of ancient Alexandria. The study gives testimony not only to the brightness of the megalopolis, such as its well known intellectual legacy and passion for knowledge, wisdom and even its desire for immortality. It also testifies to the moments of darkness: ethnic tensions, persecutions of minorities and the suffering of the Alexandrian people. The moments of glory as well as the moments of pain are documented by the contributors in their short but inspiring papers, and are also illustrated by outstanding photographs.

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Michael D. Press, *Ashkelon 4: The Iron Age Figurines of Ashkelon and Philistia: Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon 4*. Harvard Semitic Museum and Eisenbrauns, 2012. Pp. xiv + 264. \$49.50. ISBN:978-1-57506-942-5.

The monograph, published as Volume 4 of the reports of The Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, is a revision of the author's PhD dissertation, entitled *Philistine Figurines and Figurines in Philistia in the Iron Age*, and presented at Harvard University in 2007. The change in title is appropriate, considering the focus on the figurines of Ashkelon, in the wider context of Philistia. The academic style reflects closely its genre as a PhD project, and has the merits of clearly delineating the goals of the project, and each chapter. Press first addresses two theoretical concepts: figurines and Philistines (Chapter 2). In defining the notion of figurine, Press outlines key works in the field, and also shows an awareness of more recent theoretical debate on issues of social identities and relations which, however, he does not follow through in his work, where he opts for a more traditional iconographic approach. Press problematizes the definition of Philistine, in the context of debates about ethnic and cultural identities.

The author, then, outlines the history of research of the figurines of Palestine in general, and Philistia in particular (Chapter 3). Press draws attention to the emphasis on female figurines, the increased focus on the figurines of Judah, and the tendency, despite occasional caution, to remain within traditional views. Moving to the Philistine figurines, Press is particularly critical of the work of Dothan (1967, 181–184; 1982, 234–249), and his approach which is not comprehensive, often marking exceptional figurines as those which define the norm. True to PhD form, Press outlines his method, proposing a set of four characteristics to his work: bounded, comprehensive, systematic and archaeological (Chapter 4). Press dwells at length on the first ('bounded'), needing to specify the boundaries for Philistia, a concept he problematized in chapter 2. He ultimately adopts a pragmatic approach, proposing a working definition to circumscribe an area, remaining aware that boundaries change over time. Within these boundaries, Press opts to be 'comprehensive,' including objects from 25 sites. Press describes his 'systematic' way of dealing with the material, adapting Panofsky's traditional art-historical study: moving from a first level of typological definition, to iconographic analysis and a consideration of textual evidence, to move towards figurine function and identity. Finally, in his archaeological approach, Press proposes to consider the figurines in both their find site-context and in their general distribution. Central to the work is the catalogue of figurines from Ashkelon. All the Iron Age types from the site are measured and described, and presented with colour photographs and drawings, providing a view of the figurine fragment from all angles. Non Iron Age types are included, but without illustration.

The catalogue is admirable for its clarity, and provides explanation of the meanings of registration numbers and find-spot information, helping to lock in the material contextually with the work of the expedition. An index of entries is also included in the work. It is unfortunate that the pdf version of this volume, available on the expedition website (<http://digashkelon.com/current-projects/>), is not linked to the finds database, unlike Volume 3 of the reports. For the material from the later Iron Age, the catalogue overlaps significantly with Cohen's chapter in Volume 3 (Cohen 2011), and the two works acknowledge each other, without significant debate.

Press moves to the core of his work, with a chapter on typology and iconography. He defines a typology, which he already applied to the figurines of Ashkelon, and extends it to the rest of the figurines from Philistia. Understandably, Press does not provide a detailed catalogue of this material, as plenty of material awaits publication. References to published figurines divided by type are spread throughout the chapter, and the work would have profited from a summary list in the appendix. Press redefines some important categories, particularly the Philistine Psi, in place of the often mislabelled "mourning" figurines. He discusses the iconography and possible identity of all the figurines types, and is commendable in the effort not to focus narrowly on anthropomorphic material.

In his contextual study, Press situates the figurine types in their inter-regional, regional and site context. On a site level especially, Press highlights the difficulty with interpretation, considering the lack of criteria to judge the function of buildings, which often leads their function to be reinterpreted (p. 217). On the site level for Ashkelon, Press provides ten plans (in the Appendix), showing the exact find-spots of the figurine by grid and phase. Considering the rather small area of excavation, the difficulty with discerning any wider scale patterns is more than expected. In his conclusion, Press outlines briefly the various types of figurines found. He also addresses key questions regarding ethnic identity, and criticises the superficiality of a series of arguments which equate too quickly differences and similarity of material culture to distinctiveness or loss of identity on an ethnic or cultural group level.

The monograph is highly commendable for its scientific rigour and for providing a solid basis for further study. We should look forward to further work by Press on this field, moving further into an understanding of the figurines and the construction of meaning for the people who made them.

Cohen, S.L., (2011). 'Terracotta Figurines.' Pp. 441–471 in L.E. Stager et al., *Ashkelon 3. The Seventh Century* (Winona Lake, IN).

Dothan, T. (1967). *The Philistines and their Material Culture* (Jerusalem, Hebrew).

Dothan, T. (1982). *The Philistines and their Material Culture* (Jerusalem).

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Irving Finkel, *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2014. Pp. 421, incl. b/w and col. illustrations. £25.00. ISBN:978-1-44-475707-1.

At the core of this exuberant book is a cuneiform tablet written nearly 4,000 years ago. It was acquired at the end of World War II by an RAF officer stationed in Iraq whose son, the late Douglas Simmonds, brought it to the British Museum to find out about its contents. Irving Finkel, Assistant Keeper and Assyriologist at that museum, realized that its text described how the ark was built, an account that differed from other, long-known cuneiform versions of the Flood story. More than that, it supplied details otherwise known only from the Book of Genesis.

Around the decoding of ‘The Ark Tablet’ the author weaves various strands: how and when the previously known cuneiform accounts were found and deciphered; how to read the script; his own career of study and research; and a smattering of history. His style is discursive, dramatic, and often amusing, even when esoteric texts such as manuals of omens are described. Some brief explanations and references are rightly relegated to end notes. Episodes unrelated to the core subject, such as his discovery and elucidation of the Royal Game of Ur, and a digression on the invention of the alphabet, provide a kaleidoscopic backcloth against which, eventually in Chapter 4, Babylonian, Assyrian, Greek and Quranic accounts of the Flood story are set out. With the fifth chapter we come at last to ‘The Ark Tablet,’ with an English translation and photographs of the tablet. The builder of the Ark is named as Atrahasis. Whereas earlier-known versions of the Flood story seem to describe the ship as a multi-storey cube, the new text gives details of a different shape: a coracle. Enticingly Finkel picks out words from damaged passages in the *Epic of Atrahasis* and in an Assyrian fragment found in 1872 which indicate that those versions also described a coracle, and should not, therefore, be forced to conform to the cuboid shape of the ark in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Details of materials and measurements for building the ark in the Simmonds tablet are compared with the much less specific accounts in the other sources: the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Epic of Atrahasis. Finkel looks at questions of which animals went into the ark, and has found the Babylonian word for ‘two by two’ in ‘The Ark Tablet.’ Although there is a close-up photo of the relevant signs, unfortunately the photo is too poor to confirm this. His discussion of how

to keep the animals harmoniously and feed them all correctly is highly amusing, and he uses the issue to introduce the reader to lists of animals in cuneiform lexical (dictionary) texts, as well as to Athanasius Kircher's drawings of the ark and how the accommodation was arranged for the animals. He digresses in order to introduce the Documentary Hypothesis in relationship to the Genesis accounts, and shows how more than one version of the story can be disentangled in the Hebrew text.

Moving on to what happened when the Ark was complete and loaded, and when the Ark grounded after the water receded, Finkel makes comparisons between biblical and cuneiform accounts. He argues that composers of the story for the Bible did their work in Babylonia after the Exile, perhaps giving a rather simplistic view given the textual variations in Hebrew; but he shows through Babylonian texts of that time that some key Babylonian and Judean beliefs had much in common. The argument allows the story of Nebuchadnezzar and the Exile to be retold, along with the recent discovery on tablets in the British Museum of names of magnates named by Jeremiah. Finkel lists the types of Hebrew scroll texts likely to have been taken from Jerusalem in 597 BCE, and digresses into the story of the Tower of Babel, suggesting that the building was unfinished. His statement that "the religion of the Old Testament Hebrews from its inception differed crucially from that of all its predecessors and contemporaries" will not meet with the agreement of many scholars including liberal Jews, and is not, in any case, indicated by the various accounts of the Flood Story. His understanding that the Hebrew Bible was composed by many 'human hands' reworking pre-existing texts for the benefit of stateless Judeans in exile is, however, commonly held by a majority of Old Testament scholars. He explains how the Flood story from early second millennium cuneiform was incorporated, with expert insights into the process of scribal education and the importance of emergent scripture. This seems to contradict his earlier statement, p. 28, that scribes transmitted texts without intentional changes. Even though very many copies of the Flood story were found at the Assyrian capital Nineveh, dating to the seventh century BC, a possible Assyrian contribution to the formation of scripture is, surprisingly, never suggested.

Chapter 12 presents the different strands of text telling where the ark landed after the flood water receded. This leads to a brilliant link that Finkel has made with the *Babylonian World Map* and an intriguing interpretation of two sections of its partially restored text, based on similarities with lines 13–14 in 'The Ark Tablet,' allowing a better understanding of the Map as a whole, and accounting for the naming of Mt. Ararat. The different name for the mountain in the *Gilgamesh Epic* is explained, and Finkel gives an ingenious speculation that an Assyrian incantation may refer to an expedition made by Sennacherib to look for the Ark on Cudi Dagh, ancient Mt. Nipur, where he carved panels of inscription, an expedition apparently

referred to in the Talmud (p. 291). But no reference is given to the incantation text, which is presented only in translation.

Finkel points out that 'The Ark Tablet' does not include vital elements of the Flood story, but concentrates on the character of Atrahasis and precise details of the ark, claiming that a theatrical play explains unusual features, and that the measurements given are practical and realistic for a Euphrates audience to whom the coracle was more familiar than a cube-shaped boat. (His talk at the Oxford Literary Festival seemed to give a different interpretation: that of apprentice scribes showing off their expertise in mathematics within a mythical context, which this reviewer found more convincing).

Appendix 1 expounds the several cryptic techniques encapsulated in the Babylonian word for 'spirit/ghost' used in the *Epic of Atrahasis* when man is created, compared with similar techniques used in omens. This is unrelated to the story of the ark. Appendix 2 explains some odd features in the Flood story in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* by comparison with 'The Ark Tablet.' Appendix 3 written with Mark Wilson explores the mathematics and the measures used in 'The Ark Tablet,' with supporting diagrams and discussion of the materials, but does not tackle the feasibility of scaling up a working design. Appendix 4 gives a transliteration of the new text line by line, each with a translation and vocabulary.

It is unusual for a scholar to write about a discovery in this way, and lack of rigour occasionally shows. In Appendix 4 the disadvantage of the choice Finkel has made is apparent: his presentation is no substitute for a thorough text edition, and has not been prepared with enough care. Some of the readings are certainly wrong. One example is line 10, for which the translation makes no sense, and where *kannu* cannot be accusative at that period; the following word is dual nominative, a well-known measure $2 \times 60\text{m}$, giving a meaning, 'A *kannu*-rope (nominative) of 120 metres...' for the first part of the line. If the word for 'back' has indeed been written wrongly twice instead of 'rib' in lines 13 and 29, analysis and explanation are required. The scribe appears to have written the logogram for 'finger' incorrectly on no less than five occasions, but there is no comment to evaluate the mistake; the signs as written should be translated 'sixty': 'sixty (measures) of bitumen for the outsides/interior/cabins, and 300 (measures) of lard.' Photos as reproduced here are not good enough for the reader to see the end of the line, but enough to see that the brackets showing damaged signs are sometimes slightly but crucially misplaced. There is no hand copy of the text. Assyriologists will hope for an edition presenting the text in much more careful detail.

The sixth century date Finkel gives for the *World Map* is at variance with the 'late eighth or seventh century' of recent research, with the possibility that the map on the obverse and the text on the reverse have different dates of composition. It is not 'sure,' as he maintains (p. 82), that Gilgamesh was a 'real man' rather than an

archetype of kingship. Speculations over the Hebrew word *tevah* for the ark and possible cognates in Babylonian (p. 147–48) are unconvincing; editing is shoddy—the rodent is repeated in the list of creatures on pp. 199–201; tomatoes (p. 251) are anachronistic, and the caption for the sacred dragon with its long, vertical tail and long legs ‘probably modeled on a giant and carnivorous monitor lizard’ is unlikely to meet the approval of David Attenborough, to whom the book is dedicated. The illustrations, both black-and-white and coloured, are interestingly varied, but unnumbered. On pp. 278–79 two sentences are repeated by accident. The publisher might have taken more care. Because the author is a scholar who, after a rigorous training, has spent most of his life working in the British Museum (as this book describes), there is a danger that many readers will not realize how many details in the book are untrustworthy. But much of the book is brilliant, giving splendid insights into the variety and interest of cuneiform texts of many kinds, to engage its readers in the wonderful texts found on clay tablets; full of unusual but relevant illustrations, and a thoroughly entertaining read.

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Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant, c. 8000–332 BCE. Handbooks in Archaeology.* Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xxiii + 885, incl. 212 figures and 18 tables. £110.00. ISBN 978–0–19–921297–2.

This volume aims to cover the archaeology of the Levant between the Neolithic period and the coming of Alexander, or about 8000 to 332 BCE. By ‘Levant’ is meant Syria-Palestine, or the eastern Mediterranean between the Euphrates and the border of Egypt, plus Cyprus. This book fills a gap since such a comprehensive one-volume overview has not existed before. It does this with 55 chapters and 54 contributors. The contributors are nicely divided between the older and more mature scholars and younger ones who are nevertheless starting to make a name for themselves. Also, although all contributions are in English, there is a good mix of international scholars, not only from the USA and Israel but plenty from Europe (including the UK), Canada, and Australia. It was good to see one contributor from Jordan. The editors rejected editing a volume on ‘biblical archaeology,’ which they were initially invited to do. This is commendable (but see some further remarks below), and a very welcome volume is available here.

This reference work is not for the beginner but ‘advanced students’ (both undergraduate and graduate), as well as professionals. Thus, the contributions generally presuppose a certain knowledge of archaeology and archaeological

terminology. There is no list of definitions: ceramic types and technical terms generally are not explained, or are only briefly clarified in context. The table of contents gives chapter titles but not subdivisions of chapters, while the single index is limited primarily to broad topics and proper names, and only some of the occurrences of particular archaeological and geographical sites are usually listed. Each chapter ends with a list of ‘Suggested Reading’ and a more extensive list of ‘References.’ Many will find these up-to-date bibliographies some of the most valuable parts of the volume.

There are many figures, illustrations, and maps, and these are generally helpful. Unfortunately, the maps tend to be small (usually only a portion of a page), many relevant sites or places in the discussion are omitted, and occasionally the sites are even placed wrongly. For example, Beersheba and Beth Shean are wrongly placed on Fig. 1.3. This does not seem to happen often, but it is a shame that this accompanies a chapter on historical geography. But perhaps more of a problem is the map Fig. 1.1 which has Tyre slightly wrong, though it is problematic mainly because many of the important major features (e.g., the Homs Gap) mentioned in the article are not indicated.

The scope of the volume is fully justified. The coverage is dictated by the field of archaeology, not external interests such as those of history or religion. For those interested in the earlier periods, this will be a useful reference, while those interested in the period of the historical Israel or ‘biblical’ history will find plenty to keep them going, at least to the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586 BCE. Some of us regret that the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods are so briefly treated, and the Greek and Roman periods not at all. Yet these could not all have been included in one volume, and still do an adequate job of covering the field. One cannot complain about what has been included in this volume; indeed, we should be grateful to the editors for giving us such a useful survey of the field.

After an Introduction by the editors, the volume begins with a first section on ‘Background and Definitions,’ with chapters on historical geography, peoples and languages (in the Bronze and Iron Ages), history of research, and chronology. Part II is on ‘The Levant as the Crossroads between Empires,’ with chapters on the Levant and Egypt, Anatolia (Hittites), Mesopotamia, and Achaemenid Persia. These two sections form a good introduction and framework for the body of the work, ‘The Archaeological Record,’ which is divided into seven sections on the Neolithic period, the Chalcolithic period, the Early and Intermediate Bronze Ages, the Middle Bronze Age, the late Bronze Age, the Iron Age I, and the Iron Age II.

All sections under ‘The Archaeological Record’ have an introductory or overview chapter, which is an important means of orienting the reader to the topic of the section. Then, there are chapters on the northern Levant, the southern Levant (Cisjordan), the southern Levant (Transjordan), and Cyprus. But this scheme is

varied according to the demands of the material. In the chapters on the Bronze Ages, for example, the northern Levant is divided into two chapters, one on Syria and one on Lebanon. The Iron Age II section, with much fuller material available, contains individual chapters on the Aramaean states, Phoenicia, Philistia, Israel, Judah, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Cyprus (as well as an introductory chapter and the chapters on the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods).

The book is very well designed as a proper archaeological reference. Yet I could not help feeling that there was an educational service that could have been attended to here and quite appropriately. The fact is that—however much the editors and contributors may regret it and I think most of them would—‘biblical archaeology’ dominated many earlier works, especially on the popular level, that are still very much in circulation. In wisely rejecting to edit a volume on ‘biblical archaeology,’ perhaps they have gone a little too far in ignoring the subject. I agree that a reference work on archaeology does not have to be constrained by past ill-advised fads, but even some archaeologists are still willing to refer to their work as ‘biblical archaeology.’ Yet apart from a brief paragraph in the ‘History of Research’ and the occasional sentence here and there (e.g., on pp. 82 and 396–97), ‘biblical archaeology’ and the past interpretations that it occasioned are not discussed. Professionals will generally be aware of the debates, but not all of those who read this Oxford Handbook.

Thus, in the section on the Middle Bronze Age, I miss any reference to past interpretations about the ‘Patriarchal Period.’ Indeed, the chapter on Cisjordan does not include the region south of Hebron. Any reader who could use guidance about how the archaeology does not fit with the biblical text would not find it here, which is a shame. Similarly, it would have been legitimate to include discussion about how the archaeology, as well as recent historical discussion, did not favour the biblical account in Joshua. Some no doubt feel that the best way to deal with past misinterpretations is to ignore them, but I am not convinced that now is the time to exclude any discussion of such things. They are still too recent, and there are still too many who have heard nothing else, not to mention popular archaeological publications that continue to cater for the biblically conservative market. I agree with those who would like to expunge ‘biblical archaeology’ (both the expression and the concept) from Syro-Palestinian archaeology, but that does not preclude us from pointing out—gently and non-polemically—why certain concepts based on a particular understanding of the biblical text have now been generally abandoned.

Yet having said that, I found the chapters on Israel (A. E. Killebrew) and Judah (J. W. Hardin) in the Iron II, as well as the introductory chapter to the Iron II (M. L. Steiner), exemplary chapters that are well written and well presented. In such a reference work as this, the data often have to be presented in rather condensed

form, which does not make exposition for the non-specialist easy. I think most contributors have succeeded well in their presentations, though an index of terminology (including, for example, some of the main terms for pottery) would have been a useful addition.

In sum, this volume is to be highly recommended. It will be hard to find another volume that covers the ground so expertly and lucidly. The editors have done a wonderful job of choosing good contributors and editing the results. This is a reference work to be found on the shelf of anyone interested in the archaeology of ancient Syria-Palestine.

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Eliot Braun with David Ilan, Ofer Marder, Yael Braun, and Sariel Shalev, *Early Megiddo on the East Slope (the ‘Megiddo Stages’): A Report on the Early Occupation of the East Slope of Megiddo (Results of the Oriental Institute’s Excavations, 1925–1933)*. OIP 139. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2013. Pp. xxxii + 174. 34 figures, 98 plates, 22 tables. \$75.00. ISBN 978–1-885923–98–1.

The pioneering work of the Oriental Institute (OI) at Megiddo several decades ago has served as a major cornerstone for scholars studying the region of the southern Levant, despite its rather cursory publication in varied iterations. This fact is particularly true for the late prehistoric period represented in this volume, since the OI’s publication provided rare documentation of a generally under-represented archaeological period. As a result, scholars of the Early Bronze Age I (EB I) have had to rely heavily on the OI’s incomplete reports, which have only been supplemented by more recent archaeological excavations elsewhere in the region.

This detailed report substantially completes prior publications of the work carried out by the OI on the southeastern slope at the base of Megiddo from 1925–1933 (Fisher 1929; Guy 1931; Engberg and Shipton 1934; Guy and Engberg 1938). The archaeological remains encountered on the ‘East Slope’ comprised a relatively large exposure down to bedrock belonging to periods of the Early Bronze Age and earlier. This report focuses on Square U16 of the East Slope, in which most of the early remains were encountered.

The volume introduces the OI excavation and describes the site of Megiddo, the history of research on it, and the variety of archival sources used in the study, namely those of the OI and Israel Antiquities Authority. Braun pays due respect to the original OI excavator’s pioneering methodology and

documentation, which were vastly superior to contemporary (and even some subsequent) methods. The major lacunae encountered in this study result less from the nature of the original documentation and more from the fact that some of the presumed documents have been lost.

Chapter 2 is devoted to describing and illustrating the stratigraphy and non-mortuary architecture of the East Slope. The generally incomplete written documentation of the OI is at least supplemented by the digitized photographic archive of the excavation, which Braun utilizes successfully. Altogether, Braun's painstaking and meticulous investment in organizing and studying the unpublished information in the archives has resulted in perhaps the best presentation one could hope for according to modern excavation and publication standards. By annotating original plans and photographs of the excavators, as well as presenting new ones, Braun helps clarify several stratigraphic issues and facilitates interpretation of the major phases under examination.

The concept of the 'Stages' (I–VII) on the East Slope was conceived by Engberg and Shipton (1934) to explain their interpretation of sequences based primarily on the evidence of certain ceramic types found in sequentially excavated deposits. Unlike the more discrete strata on the main mound of the site, the Stages were much more hypothetical constructs encountered in different localities based more on ceramics than discrete features or fills. In Braun's warranted reassessment, Stages IV and V do not reflect discrete chrono-cultural deposits, because of both the apparent internal phasing and stratigraphic relationships of architectural elements (or lack thereof), as well as the paucity of coherent assemblages of related objects of material culture.

Braun's contribution to the phasing of activity on the East Slope expounds the sequence of building events that controvert the simple two-stage sequence of buildings in the early deposits. Quite rightly, he suggests that these two Stages are predicated on the reality of two slightly sloping bedrock terraces, one upslope from the other, rather than actual superimposed strata. After describing the later post-Stage IV deposits on the East Slope, Braun enters a detailed critical treatment of the earliest constructions belonging to Stages IV and V (and earlier). The evidence for the earliest activity on the East Slope comprises several features cut into the bedrock that do not seem to be compatible with other features, particularly later architectural features. EB I buildings are dated on the basis of pottery recovered in association with the architecture (mainly floors). The small rectangular B/V/1 (and later B/V/2) had externally rounded corners, as well as other features normative of building practices of this period. Most of the finds associated with B/V/1 indicate a simple domestic function of the building; however, Braun delineates possible

points of evidence that may indicate certain mortuary-related activities associated with the structure. Building B/IV/1 appears to have utilized previously flattened bedrock on Stage IV and may have had two phases, the latest phase of which comprises a somewhat ‘apisidal’ plan, or rather a hybrid resulting from a curvilinear tradition appended onto a previously rectilinear layout. This correct interpretation counters the notion that the apisidal plan (born from the 1934 publication) is a typical feature of EB I architecture, not only at Megiddo but elsewhere in the region.

Chapters 3 through 5 provide a detailed discussion of the artefacts and their significance, in which Braun’s command of ceramic typologies is well-attested in great detail. Despite serious limitations, Ofer Marder’s study of the flint collection provides useful criteria for dating pre-Stage V activity on the East Slope. In Chapter 6, David Ilan elaborates on research regarding Tomb 910. Although the criteria for dating this tomb to the EB I are fairly tenuous (almost all the pottery derives from fill, not floors), Ilan presents a compelling interpretation that Tomb 910 was that of a very high-status person contemporary with the monumental J-4 temple of Megiddo.

Altogether, this work represents a valuable contribution to our understanding of the EB I at Megiddo and in the wider region, and comes at a crucial time when our notions of the period are changing—in great part due to Braun’s contributions in recent decades. The work of the Jezreel Valley Regional Project alluded to in various places in the text has, in fact, recently excavated an EB I settlement at Tel Megiddo East in very close proximity to the main tell, with phases of development paralleling those of the monumental constructions of J-4 (Adams et al. 2014). Thus, this volume constitutes a major authoritative revision of the EB I and an essential resource for ongoing research on the period.

Adams, M.J., David, J., Homsher, R.S., and Cohen, M.E., (2014). ‘The Rise of a Complex Society: New Evidence from Tel Megiddo East in the Late Fourth Millennium,’ *Near Eastern Archaeology* 77/1:32–43.

Fischer, C.S., (1929). *The Excavation of Armageddon* (Chicago).

Guy, P.L.O., (1931). *New Light from Armageddon: Second Provisional Report (1927–29) on the Excavations at Megiddo in Palestine* (Chicago).

Engberg, R.M., and Shipton, G.M., (1934). *Notes on the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Pottery of Megiddo* (Chicago).

Guy, P.L.O., and Engberg, R.M., (1938). *Megiddo Tombs* (Chicago).

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Esther Eshel, and Yigal Levin (eds.), *'See, I will bring a scroll recounting what befell me' (Ps 40:8): Epigraphy and Daily Life from the Bible to the Talmud Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Hanan Eshel.* Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 12. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Pp. 245, incl. 60 figures. €99.99. ISBN 978-3-525-55062-5.

This tribute to the much missed Hanan Eshel, founding director of the David and Jemima Jeselsohn Epigraphic Center for Jewish History, presents of a rich array of early Judaeon inscriptional finds. The papers, initially delivered at an international conference held in Eshel's memory, are accompanied by Marlene and Lawrence Schiffman's warm appreciation of his scholarly achievements.

Renowned for his synthesis of archaeological, textual and historical data, Eshel's doctoral work examined the origin of the Samaritans. His subsequent research concentrated upon the period of Hasmonean rule, the historical context of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bar Kochba revolt. His extensive knowledge of the geography, economy and agriculture of the Judaeon desert, informed his identification of Qumran with the biblical Secacah, which he believed to be the communal centre of the Essenes. In addition Eshel authored guidebooks on Qumran and Masada, reflecting his experience both as an archaeologist and a tour guide. His numerous articles focussed on the areas of numismatics, weights, pottery and burials, which complemented his close readings of the sectarian scrolls. Each paper in this volume is of a consistently high calibre, and in keeping with Eshel's investigative approach, contextualizes the inscriptional sources in their archaeological, historical (where available), and comparative paleographic and philological settings.

Commencing with 'Notes on the Kuntillet 'Ajrud Inscriptions,' Shmuel Aḥituv surveys the writing found at this Iron Age II site, noted for its striking mention of 'YHWH of Samaria/Teman and His *'asherah,*' which is preserved also in the inscriptions at Makkedah (Khirbet-el-Kôm). Overall he concludes that now the earliest Hebrew poetry should be pushed back to the end, or the middle of, the 9th century BCE. Together with Amihai Mazar, Aḥituv then examines the palaeography and onomastics in 'The Inscriptions from Tel Rehov and their Contribution to the Study of Script and Writing during Iron Age IIA.' Although the majority of these are incised upon pottery or stone vessels, the authors conclude that writing was more common in the 10th and 9th centuries than has to date been acknowledged. Conversely, Aren Maeir and Esther Eshel suggest that writing in Philistia may have been more limited, based on the data in their publication of 'Four Short Alphabetic Inscriptions from late Iron Age IIA Tell es-Safi/Gath and their Implications for the Development of Literacy in Iron Age Philistia and Environs.'

Next Aaron Demsky examines 'Researching Literacy in Ancient Israel - New Approaches and Recent Developments,' where he informatively evaluates the

development of the alphabet, in the ostraca from Izbet Sartah (c1100 BCE), Khirbet Qeiyafa (late 11th - early 10th BCE) and the Tel Zayit abecedary. He identifies the known gaps in our present knowledge, while outlining new research trajectories for the future. Moving closer in time, Lester Grabbe explains how early Jewish scribes were integrated in their ancient Near Eastern and Hellenistic environments, in 'Scribes, Writing, and Epigraphy in the Second Temple Period.' This is followed by 'Aramaic and Latin Graffiti in an Underground Complex at Khirbet 'Arâk Hâla–North of Bet Guvrin,' submitted collectively by Boaz Zissu, Boaz Langford, Avner Ecker and Esther Eshel. Here an exceptional Latin note (inscribed on an olive press) records a transaction relating to oil, and thus hints at the possibility that the Roman army may have been stationed in the Judaeian shephelah (i.e. in Israel's south-central lowlands).

A rewarding analysis of ancient Jewish coinage is provided by Uriel Rappaport, in 'The Inscriptions on the Yehud and the Hasmonean Coins: Historical Perspectives.' This treatment, especially his assessment of the differences between the Persian period *Yehud* and the later Hasmonean coins, has substantial implications for biblical scholars as well as historians. New light on ethnic, *halakhic* (legal), artistic and epigraphic issues is then shed by David Amit[†] in 'Jewish Bread Stamps and Wine and Oil Seals from the late Second Temple, Mishnaic, and Talmudic Periods.' Each of the three staple crops (i.e. grain, grapes and olives, producing bread, wine and oil), are considered in their religious, as well as nutritional, contexts. Finally, Eitan Klein and Haim Mamalya, present 'Two Dated Christian Burial Inscriptions from The Negev Desert,' published here for the first time. These complement the existing corpus from the ancient cities of Nessana and Sobota adding new data to the regional onomasticon. A separate selection of photographic images and accompanying line drawings for each inscription is provided, although the size and resolution of each of the maps (particularly that on p. 185) was disappointing. An index of ancient sources and scholarly references complements the publication.

Both individually and collectively, these papers enrich our understanding of daily life from Iron Age Israel and Judah. Aside from some of the new inscriptions presented here for the first time, several contributions provide excellent teaching materials for undergraduate, and postgraduate, courses on post-biblical Jewish history and early rabbinic Judaism. As a highly respected lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, Eshel would have deeply appreciated the fruits that these contributions will bear in the related disciplines of archaeology, history and geography and which will, no doubt, continue to grace his enduring legacy.

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Nicholas Postgate, *Bronze Age Bureaucracy: Writing and the Practice of Government in Assyria*. Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 484 incl. 40 figures. £65.00. ISBN:978-1-10-704375-6.

The role of Assyria as an international power in the late Bronze Age, alongside the Egyptian, Babylonian, Mittanian and Hittite empires, has been long-recognized for its political and military impact. This fresh study explores its daily administration, by investigating the role of writing in ten archives from the Middle Assyrian period (1500–1056 BCE), which present ‘the Assyrian government in action through the eyes and hands of its scribes,’ (p. 336). This period has yielded the greatest variety of written sources, all of which are clearly differentiated in the introduction, where a valuable account of the ruling infra-structure is conveniently provided. Organized around the activities of the royal house, select elite households (commissioned by the king to act on his behalf), could also engage independently in private enterprise. In this context the palace functioned both as the residence of the monarch, as well as the seat of government, where its scribes ‘the literate administrators of the Assyrian state’ (p. 7), monitored the movement of state-owned commodities, as indicated in by the term, *ša ēkalli*, meaning literally ‘belonging to, or of the palace.’

With these preliminaries in place, the chapter on ‘Writing in Assyria: The Scribes and their Output’ clarifies the necessity for recording time and metrological observations with precision. Here Postgate itemizes the known weights, capacity and area measures and identifies the differences between the various writing boards and clay tablets, which preserved legal receipts, accounts, debt-notes and other formal directives. The discussion of seals, sealing documents, archives and their storage then segues into his major treatment of archives at the capital city of Aššur, where he examines the following five collections: The Offerings House Archives, which traces the movement of commodities to the temple; The Stewards Archive, which affords a glimpse into the management of raw materials, produce and finished goods in the royal palaces; The Archive of Mutta the Animal-Fattener, who was responsible for managing the sheep and goats conventionally brought as ‘audience gifts’ to secure the attention of the ruler; the Archive of Babu-aḫa-iddina, a well-placed official whose urban household was involved in extensive commercial activities, including leather work, carpentry, stone-work, textile and perfume production. Of interest to readers of this journal is that this includes records of trading journeys to Canaan (Texts 62 and 64:5–6, p. 258). The final corpus from Aššur is a family archive comprising of 84 documents, representing three generations, over a period of at least 44 years. The strength of the evidence from these sources justifies the distinction between public and private transactions, where the identification of state property is readily apparent in the cuneiform

documentation relating to commercial household activities. In addition to these city-centre accounts, five provincial archives are then examined: from Tell-al-Rimah (ancient Karana or Qatara), Tell Billa (ancient Šibaniba), Tell Chuera (ancient Ḫarbu) and Tell Sheikh Hamad (ancient Durkatlimmu).

These finds inform the next chapter where ‘The Government of Assyria and Its Impact,’ includes discussions of ‘Holes in the Canvas,’ and other methodological factors affecting the modern interpretations of the bureaucratic processes in these sources. For example, where the relationship between private and public functions blurs in the face of inherited appointments, as officials hand their posts directly to their sons. Postgate concludes that ‘the Assyrian state seems to have functioned like a business venture,’ (p. 337) where government activity outside of Aššur was largely controlled by palace staff in each of the provincial capitals, which acted as local branches of the enterprise. A useful synopsis of the (poorly attested) role of the army, in relation to military service and supplies, complements this assessment. Written documentation at Nuzi, Alalakh (Tell Atchana/Açana), Ugarit (Ras Shamra), and Greece are next compared to the local systems found at Aššur. The final chapter synthesizes the vast amount of data, indicating that the Middle Assyrian infrastructure, with its ‘strong ethos of written accountability’ (p. 427) remained reasonably consistent in its use of bureaucratic documentation, in marked contrast to the less-reliant use of administrative records in the Neo-Assyrian period of the first millennium. The astute observations on the role of writing ‘as a bridging mechanism’ (pp. 424–426) remain additionally relevant to the transmission of early Hebrew Biblical texts—despite their being written centuries later.

This is a fluent and rigorous treatment, the kind that is destined to become a classic resource, although probably less accessible as an introductory work. Its contribution, far beyond the discipline of Assyriology, will be felt by historians of economics, politics, law and sociology. In providing a systematic analysis of the mechanics of empire, Postgate has demonstrated how bureaucratic authority was imposed in what was clearly one of the most sophisticated economies of pre-classical antiquity. The data from each archive offers fascinating insights from the use of early accounting, to the range of available occupations—where the appearance of leather workers, exorcists, felt-makers, confectioners and eunuchs belie the richness and diversity of elite Assyrian society. Other gleanings inform many various social contexts, including deportations and rations, ethnic and national (Assyrian) identity, family relationships, the complexities of debt-slavery, and the relationship between palace and temple, to name but a few of the most compelling issues presented. The volume includes appendices of reigning kings and eponyms, together with a bibliography and extensive indices for scholarly reference. The maps, tables and illustrations, although black and white, are of a consistently high quality and resolution. It is a superb monograph:

a real must-have for all university libraries, colleges of higher education and anyone interested in the material nature and purpose of writing in Near Eastern Bronze Age cultures.

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Andreas J.M. Kropp, *Images and Monuments of Near Eastern Dynasts: 100 BC-AD 100*. Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xx + 497; 137 black & white figures, 4 maps. £105.00. ISBN:978-0-19-967072-7.

This volume, which is a revised version of the author's PhD thesis (University of Oxford, 2007), provides a commented survey of the art and architecture of the Near East, including Asia Minor east of the Taurus Mountains and as far south as northern Arabia (Nabataea), over a period of two centuries, between the demise of the Hellenistic monarchies and the assumption of Roman control over the eastern Mediterranean. Kropp's study excludes regions that were under partial or total Parthian domination, such as Armenia, Palmyra and Osrhoene (Edessa). It is encyclopaedic in scope and fairly well illustrated: the monuments examined are palaces, tombs and sanctuaries, each of which is assigned a chapter, but rather little consideration is given to the corpus of inscriptions from the region. Much has been published on all the topics covered and the author demonstrates an impressive mastery of the scholarship of the field in English, French and German—although not of the substantial literature in Hebrew—making this work a useful sourcebook, particularly for students, but with some reservations, as explained below.

Kropp's book retains the structure of a PhD thesis, with an opening chapter given over to defining the scope and methodology adopted in the study. The final chapter is a summing up, with conclusions that consider how the images and monuments surveyed yield insights regarding 'royal ideology.' Five chapters have been accounted for so far. The remaining chapter looks at royal portraits in the sculptural and numismatic repertoire. Reading this book is like being transported on a 'grand tour' of the Near East, as it was two millennia ago, being guided around the principal monuments of the kingdoms and principalities of the region by a leading expert, and dropping in on their rulers and learning something about their personalities and religious cults that they promoted (although much about the various religious practices remains shrouded in mystery). What we find is a kaleidoscope of heterogeneous monarchies, religions and cultures, to partly quote Kropp, about which he finds it somewhat difficult to pull out many common threads.

Considering that all these states, with the exception of the Nabataean realm, crystallised out of the Seleucid Empire, it is somewhat surprising that they manifest such diversified characteristics in their art, architecture and cultic and burial practices. According to this book, the Seleucid legacy seems to be only sporadically visible in such artefacts as the coinage of Hasmonaean Judaea, somewhat ironically perhaps, and the pride of place given to the royal Seleucid ancestry (and also the Achaemenid roots) of the Commagene kings in the sculptural programmes of the highly distinctive tomb sanctuaries (*hierothesia*) of Antiochus I of Commagene.

It is important to point out what this book is not. For sure, it is not specifically about the phenomenon of client kingdoms of the Roman Empire. In particular, it omits consideration of the important client states of Mauretania in the west, Thrace, Cappadocia and Pontus in the north, which, together with Judaea, formed the mainstay of the client network of the Roman Empire through the Julio-Claudian period (Jacobson 2001; Braund 1984). These states were all Hellenized to a similar degree and their monarchies were bound together by marriage from the reign of Augustus. They patronised Greek culture and were commemorated in Athens and other Greek cities for their benefactions. They functioned as agents of a coherent Imperial policy, all participating in building cities named after Caesar Augustus, as either Caesarea or Sebaste. In the rather disparate assortment of kingdoms and principalities selected, Judaea appears as the ‘odd man out,’ distorting the picture of mainstream Roman imperial policy that applied across the Mediterranean. Kropp’s partial choice of dynasts makes some of his generalising statements off the mark. So, for example he states that ‘Roman appointees [as client rulers] were usually accepted by local populations, albeit grudgingly’ (p. 11), although he recognises that this was not true of Judaea. However, there was also considerable resistance to rulers foisted on other populations by Rome, including those of Cappadocia (Dio 57.17, 3–4) and Mauretania (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.52; 4.26).

Kropp offers a number of insightful observations. For example, he highlights the fact that the art and architecture of the region blend pre-classical Near Eastern influences that go back to the Iron Age with Greek and Roman elements. For the most part, the client states did not imbibe Roman influences neat, but blended them with local traditions (pp. 7–8). The author provides crisp accounts of facets of royal ideology and cultural issues relating to the kingdoms and principalities under consideration; to give but one example, his brief treatment of the policy of euergetism (benefaction) that was widely practised, where he points out that it was an activity developed by Hellenistic rulers to promote political cohesion (pp. 253–56). Kropp reminds us of the aniconic preferences of the Nabataeans, albeit not a prohibition, which helps to account for the primitiveness of the human representations in their art and including their coin images. He is quite right that too much has been made of the choice of an eagle on a coin of Herod the Great.

As Kropp saliently notes, an eagle features prominently on the Tyrian shekels and half shekels approved for transactions in the Temple of Jerusalem, to which should be added that eagles frequently recur on the earliest Judaeen coins ascribed to the Achaemenid and Ptolemaic periods. One of the most original and intriguing claims made by Kropp is that Herod's ambitious building programme had a direct impact on places and communities in the Near East beyond those listed by Josephus, including Heliopolis (Baalbek) and Petra (pp. 161, 278–79, 367), and he marshals strong evidence in support of his case.

It is felt that Kropp misses an essential point regarding the practice of aniconism by Herod the Great. While the taboo on figural representation was strictly enforced in public rooms in his palaces, as we now know, this was not the case in the private quarters of his palaces: hence we encounter a *labrum* (basin) adorned with Silenus heads and frescos representing populated scenes displayed on the walls of the Royal Room of the theatre, both in Herod's palace complex at Herodium (Netzer et al. 2013:144–45; Rozenberg 2013:174–89). The evidence provided by these adornments attests to Herod's opportunism on religious and cultural issues and reminds us of the statement in Josephus that Herod was 'less intent upon observing the customs of his own nation than upon honouring them [his Roman patrons]' (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.330).

Some other of the author's judgements are equally at odds with the material evidence. Thus, for example, Dioscuri imagery is not at all 'virtually absent' on Seleucid coins (p. 235), as Kropp would have us believe. The cosmic twins feature on issues of no less than eight Seleucid kings and their distinctive starred caps on coins of a further three Seleucid monarchs (see Houghton and Lorber 2002, I.2:212; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008, II.2:461). While I can agree with Kropp that it is true that Herod's adoption of Roman architecture and building technology does not by itself imply the institution by Rome of a policy of *cultural surveillance* of Judaea (pp. 346–48), the range of duties undertaken by Herod and his fellow client kings as part of a close-knit network under imperial direction, spelt out by Suetonius (*Augustus* 48, 60), were doubtless intended to achieve both political and cultural integration. This is exactly what occurred in practice, so it must have constituted official Imperial policy. Herod was assigned the epithet *Philorhomaïos* (*OGIS* 414 = *IG*² II 3440; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.387; Braund 1984:105–107), which would imply that he was recognised as a promoter of Romanization just as, according to Kropp, the epithet *Philhellen* applied to Antiochus I of Commagene signified that he regarded himself as a Hellenizer (p. 363). It is telling in this regard that client kings were encouraged, if not instructed, to send their children to Rome to be brought up and educated there, a point not mentioned by Kropp. In the event, within two or three generations, Judaea and the other kingdoms lost much of their distinctive cultural and religious character and were effectively assimilated into

the Empire. The Jewish city of Jerusalem was replaced as capital of a territory that was no longer even called Judaea by the cosmopolitan port of Caesarea, and similar changes occurred elsewhere.

In several places, Kropp lends undue credence to the erstwhile opinions of particular individual scholars even when ideas are subsequently revised. In my view, he gives far too much weight to one particular recent interpretation of the layout of Herod's Temple, which I find fundamentally flawed in being awkwardly out of geometrical congruence with its surviving outer enclosure, a highly unlikely arrangement for a temple complex which was substantially rebuilt in the Augustan period. To boot, he also misspells the name of the author responsible (p. 269). It would have been far more appropriate and useful for Kropp to have provided a brief review of the principal reconstructions that have been put forward to date. While he judiciously notes that the venue for the main cultic action in the precinct of Jupiter at Heliopolis (Baalbek) were the altars at the centre of its *temenos*, why might something similar not have been true also of the Temple of Jerusalem, as rebuilt by Herod, and therefore have been reflected in its layout, as well (p. 275)? Then, again, Kropp seems rather quick to latch on to a view promoted by A. K. Marshak (2006) that Herod's dated coins commemorate his re-founding of Sebaste in 27 BCE (pp. 245–46), for which there is absolutely no independent evidence, whereas D. T. Ariel, a leading authority on Herod's coins, after first entertaining that idea, subsequently revised his opinion on this point (Ariel and Fontanille 2012:90–92).

For the most part, Kropp takes care over accuracy of detail in his descriptions, but there are occasional lapses. For example he states that the sarcophagus found at Herodium by Netzer, which he believed contained Herod's body, 'had its long side decorated with large rosettes with large rosettes very similar to those on the sarcophagus of Helena of Adiabene' (p. 108). In fact, the sarcophagus from the Tomb of the Kings, inscribed in two lines with the name of the queen in Aramaic (referred to as *Šdn mlkt/Šdh mlkth*) is rather plain, its decoration having been left incomplete (see Yardeni, Price and Misgav 2010).

The book as published suffers from poor editing. There is repetition in the text, e.g. the mention of a 9 m deep cut in the courtyard of the temple of Jupiter at Baalbek in one sentence after another (p. 275). There are quite a few annoying typographical errors, such as 'meres' for 'metres' (p. 334). Fortunately, 'the head of a bearded male god in from (sic!) of a thunderbolt' (p. 287) is redeemed by a photograph (fig. 96). There are some awkward turns of phrase, like 'only in Arabic times' (p. 277). Problems, too, are noted with the referencing. Those of the same author and year are differentiated in the text by letters a, etc., attached to the year, but this differentiation is not observed in the bibliography, which results in some confusion. Also, Duyrat 2002 is mentioned in the text (p. 240), but is nowhere to be found in the bibliography. On the other hand L. C. Kahn 1996

(‘King Herod’s Temple of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima’) is included in the bibliography but not on p. 325 of the text, where one would expect to see it.

The maps and coin tables at the back of the book are also not up to scratch. For a start, maps 1 and 2 are barely legible and many site names mentioned in the book are not shown. The coin tabulation might have been more useful, but it is blighted by numerous faults. In the first place, coin sizes are not included and, while photographs of all the coins are provided, they are not reproduced to scale. It follows that different denominations of a coin type are skated over (e.g. Agrippa II, Meshorer 2001: nos. 129–131). The coin catalogue references (under the confusing heading ‘Type’) are to Meshorer 2001 (*Treasury of Jewish Coins*), although this is not indicated on the first few pages, nor included in the bibliography. Kropp uses unusual abbreviations, including ‘Hasm’ and the German ‘o.ä’ (oder Ähnliches, meaning ‘or similar’). For the most part, the abbreviated entries in the ‘Comments’ column are quite ridiculous. This table is little more than an improvised jotting for work in progress, rather than an addendum to a respectable volume.

The myriad of blemishes, which is all the more inexcusable in a publication bearing a premium retail price tag, detracts from what is otherwise an important addition to the literature on the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman periods by a promising young scholar.

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William G. Dever, *Excavations at the Early Bronze IV Sites of Jebel Qa’aqir and Be’er Resisim*. Harvard Semitic Museum Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 6. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014. Pp. viii + 366. \$79.50. ISBN 978–1-57506–947–0.

The appearance of this volume is of paramount importance for the study of the non-urban phases of the 3rd and early 2nd Millennium Southern Levant, and to other periods and topics as well. The volume is the final report on excavations that were conducted at two sites of major importance for the study of the Early Bronze Age IV (known by some as the Intermediate Bronze Age or the Middle Bronze Age I), on which much has been written in the last few decades. Although too much time has passed since the actual excavations and the publications (more than 45 years for Jebel Qa’aqir and close to 35 years for Be’er Resisim!)—and this has a clear effect on some of the reports included—Professor Dever is to be effusively thanked for not letting these materials ‘wither away and die,’ but rather bring them out in a comprehensive and attractive manner.

The publication is divided into two sections, one dealing with the excavations at Jebel Qa’aqir and the other at Be’er Resisim. The first site, Jebel Qa’aqir, located in the southwestern Hebron Hills, while primarily being a burial site, includes other interesting remains, including habitation caves, several cairns, a pottery production site, etc. The second site, located in the Central Western Negev, near the present border between Israel and Egypt, is a very well-preserved arid zone habitation site.

Each site is discussed in detail, with overviews of environment, architecture and stratigraphy, the various finds, and chapters which attempt to place these sites within the broader contexts of this period and its culture. While the two sites are in different zones and quite far from one another, Dever stresses the connection between these two types of sites, as they reflect what he believes is the major theme of this period—a collection of mainly nomadic pastoral communities who moved between the arid and Mediterranean zones throughout the year.

In addition to the analysis of the sites and their finds by Dever himself, one notes the 16 included appendices, in which types of finds are discussed by various experts, even if some of these are unfinished preliminary accounts prepared

decades ago. I found particularly interesting the assessment of the human remains by P. Smith (pp. 237–241), the faunal remains by L. Horwitz (pp. 243–247), and pottery production techniques by G. London (pp. 253–277).

While reading over the book, several studies which might have added to the discussions came to mind:

1. In the examination of the caves which served for occupation at Jebel Qa'aqir, I believe that some interesting insights might have been derived from contemporary caves used for living in the southern Hebron Hills until this day (Habakuk, 2012).
2. In Dever's discussion of the chronology of the period (p. 227), he notes several 14C dates from sites in the Negev, some of which go back to the mid-3rd Millennium BCE—which he believes is too early for the EB IV. This though is not necessarily the case, as recent results of the high radiometric dating of the EB indicates that the EB III ended during the mid-3rd Millennium BCE (Regev, 2012).

While the overall implications of this chronology are still being processed, one must take into account that in all recent discussions, the EB IV was most probably longer than previously assumed, even up to five centuries in length.

Overall, given the long time between the excavations and the final publication, the author is to be commended for managing to provide a very comprehensive overview of these sites, even if it probably would have been more complete if concluded closer to the time of the excavations. This volume is an important addition to any library dealing with the ancient Southern Levant.

Regev, J. et al., (2012). 'Chronology of the Early Bronze Age in the Southern Levant: New Analysis for a High Chronology,' *Radiocarbon* 54: 525–66.

Habakuk, Y., (1985). *Life in the Hebron Mountain Caves* (Tel Aviv, Hebrew).

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Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* The Library of New Testament Studies, 450. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. xiv + 263 incl. illustrations. £60.00. ISBN:978–0–56–728257–6.

One of the dominant assumptions in scholarship concerning the origin of early Christian meeting places has been that the first Christians met exclusively in the homes of individual members, buildings that became known as *domus ecclesiae*, and that before Constantine there was no such thing as a church building with

its own distinctive architecture. The adoption of the basilica after Christianity became the official religion of the Empire coincided with some of the most important developments within the nascent Church, but this was several centuries after Christianity had evolved. Edward Adams challenges this strong consensus view that the early Christians met ‘almost exclusively in houses,’ which is the force of his subtitle. Such was the assumption of Michael White’s groundbreaking study in 1990, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture: Building God’s House in the Roman World* (Trinity Press International), and many other works. Richard Krautheimer, however, was one who had noted that bathhouses were taken over as basilical church buildings after Constantine and that funerary structures were also adapted in church architecture as a form of memorial architecture (White 1990, 19, 154). These are but several of the options for the place and setting of early Christian worship offered by Adams.

In questioning the scholarly consensus Adams examines the literary evidence together with the archaeological and comparative evidence alongside and convincingly demonstrates that the evidence for the old theory is simply weak or in many cases lacking. He does this effectively in Part I: Evidence for Houses and Meeting Places (pp. 17–136). In Part II (137–197), subtitled ‘Evidence and Possibilities for Non-House Meeting Places,’ he goes on to illustrate the possibility of places for Christian worship in a number of settings not previously taken seriously, some of them based more on literary sources than material evidence, though in the end he takes all into account. Some of these imagined spaces for Christian worship are quite novel, such as Roman barns and warehouses, shops and workshops, inns, bathhouses, gardens, open urban spaces, and burial sites. Several appendices are added: Appendix 1, ‘The Setting of the Corinthian Communal Meal,’ and Appendix 2, Figures, which include photos and plans that illustrate the various sections of the book.

Adams’ thesis or broadened view of the earliest Christian meetings places in his view supports Justin’s reply to Rusticus that Christians met ‘wherever was chosen and was possible for each group’ and such a view also supports White’s classification of the *domus ecclesiae* as ‘any building specifically adapted or renovated’ for ecclesial use (p. 201). A clear implication of this hypothesis is the assumed connection between the house and the communal meal that was so central to the worship of early Christians. Consideration of the greater variety for Christian worship will thus greatly affect our understanding of worshipful dining.

It is not surprising therefore that the author in the end suggests that the term ‘house church’ be abandoned altogether in New Testament and Early Christian Studies. Rather, Adams concludes that a much wider discussion on ecclesial space should now take place. This volume has wide implications for a variety of fields within Early Christian Studies and offers a new way of evaluating the data on

Christian assembly, worship, and the material culture associated with it. I for one applaud the effort and commend the book highly.

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Y. Samuel Chen, *The Primeval Flood Catastrophe: Origins and Early Development in Mesopotamian Traditions*. Oxford Oriental Monographs. Oxford: OUP, 2013. Pp. 352 incl. 16 b/w plates. £90.00. ISBN 978–0–19–967620–0.

‘After the Flood had swept over (the land), when kingship had descended from heaven ...,’ the best-preserved copy of the *Sumerian King List (SKL)* relates, ‘kingship was in Kish,’ then passed to other cities. Beside this ‘chronographic’ source are the famous Sumerian and Babylonian Flood stories. Did they tell of a catastrophic deluge in Sumer, or is their language figurative, making them mythologized versions of a political calamity? In this published form of his Oxford doctoral thesis, Chen argues strongly for the latter explanation.

His introduction states he will focus on textual sources from c. 2000 to 1600 BCE—mentioning others—to demonstrate how ‘the ‘Flood motif and its mythological and historiographical representatives ... only began to emerge and flourish’ later in that period (pp. 2, 3). Noticing hints from other scholars, he explains why Flood traditions should be seen as insertions in the *SKL*, the *Instructions of Shuruppak*, and the *Gilgamesh Epic*. He recognizes the imponderable elements of oral tradition, transmission, authorship and school exercises, beside the incompleteness of texts and limits in understanding Sumerian language and attitudes to literature.

Chapter 1 (pp. 21–66) studies words for ‘flood,’ revealing their almost wholly figurative uses in Sumerian prior to 2000 BCE, and often later, so that it would be hard to suppose it was used of the Deluge in earlier times. Chen devotes Ch. 2 (pp. 67–127) to literary compositions before 2000 BCE which tell of primeval times, beginning in ‘days, nights, years’ of long ago, as the basis for his view that the collapse of the Third Dynasty of Ur, about 2000 BCE, ‘gave rise to the motif of the primeval flood catastrophe’ being added to those settings and to the concept of a ‘royal hero who restored the devastated world’ (pp. 125–26). Therefore the ‘Antediluvian Traditions’ are examined in Ch. 4 (pp. 129–96) to show how they thus developed. The oldest copy of *SKL* (dated palaeographically to the Third Dynasty of Ur) and several others do not have the pre-Flood section and the six manuscripts that preserve it disagree on the sequence and names of some rulers, as listed in a chart on p. 192 (it should be noted many copies disagree about post-Flood rulers, too), so it seems to be a late addition. Texts of the *Instructions of Shuruppak* written about 2500 BCE do not name the speaker’s son, only in Old Babylonian

copies is he Ziusudra, a name of the Flood hero. The *Instructions of Ur-Ninurta*, king of Isin, c. 1923–1896 BCE, seem to be the first to have the Flood as a marker of distant time after which order was restored, a theme found in hymns of the same period praising kings for pacifying the land. That may reveal how a metaphor was turned into an event. This idea is elaborated in Ch. 4, ‘The Flood Epic’ (pp. 197–252), comparing elements in the Epic with those in laments for cities and the land, both dealing with catastrophic events. The laments were composed in the Ur III period and afterwards to account for the downfall of major cities and of Sumer and Akkad. They use imagery of storm and flood for the destructions gods inflicted. Listing the terms for catastrophes and comparing them with terms in the Flood stories indicates that the latter were inspired by the laments. Notable is the theme of noise as a cause and as a consequence of destruction in laments and in the *Atrahasis Epic*; both the latter and the *Lament for Sumer and Ur* have ‘the land bellowing like a bull’ in its prosperity.

Chen marshals impressive evidence from a wide range of sources. He is aware that new discoveries may affect his case, but some weaknesses deserve notice. Interpretation is sometimes too literal, thus, ‘The notion that the Flood hero had a wife must be a late development. It is lacking in ... the Old Babylonian ... *Atrahasis Epic*’ (p. 178, fn. 90) is misleading, for the Epic states ‘he sent his family aboard’ (III ii 42, parallel to Gilgamesh XI 85), surely including his wife, who is not mentioned in the Gilgamesh version until the Flood is over. *The Sumerian Flood Story (SFS)*, he asserts, ‘in polemic fashion hailed the Flood hero Ziusudra as the only ruler in the antediluvian era’ (p. 194, cf. 120, 151–53), unlike SKL. However, there was no reason for *SFS* to name kings of the pre-Flood cities. To deduce this difference implies opposition between *SFS* and *SKL* on the nature of kingship seems unjustified. Again, the laments tell of religious observances ceasing and shrines destroyed while *Atrahasis* is told people should not worship their gods and goddesses. Yet the comparison is weak; the *Atrahasis Epic* knows nothing of rites ended or temples destroyed - the instruction was for a particular time and purpose.

Storm and flood were frequent, major threats in Babylonia, the laments often describing ‘storm’ as the destructive agent. While the word could be applied metaphorically to ‘battle, drought and fire,’ storm winds can batter gates and break locks, storm-whipped water can leave heaps of corpses so such results cannot be easily dismissed as figurative (pp. 208–14). One case Chen cites is the name of the 22nd year of Ibbi-Suen, last king of the Third Dynasty of Ur, telling how he restored Ur after it was smitten by a divinely sent flood which ‘blurred the boundaries of heaven and earth’ (p. 47). Although he allows ‘an actual meteorological catastrophe’ might be recorded (p. 98), he treats it rather as a figure (p. 214). The last phrase echoes, he thinks, the ‘image of stormy weather used to portray the separation of heaven and earth during cosmogony’ (p. 48). The more

banal explanation of a hurricane that created flooding and obliterated the horizon deserves to be considered.

The question remains: Did figures and metaphors create the Flood Story, or was an existing tradition dressed in literary clothes? The absence of the Deluge from early Sumerian might indicate an external, Amorite, origin and local adaptation, as suggested for the battle between the gods and the ocean, or the *lex talionis* which both appear in the Old Babylonian period.

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Isaac Kalimi, and Seth Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography*. Oriental Institute Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 71. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014. Pp. xii+548, incl. illustrations. €181/\$234. ISBN 978-90-04-26561-5.

‘The Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.E. was a “world event,” both historically and historiographically’ declare the editors in their introduction. What happened at Jerusalem? How can we know and what has been the lasting impact of the event? The editors have collected thirteen essays to demonstrate the significance of the seige, divided into three groups: Part One, ‘I will defend this city to save it,’ deals with the event in textual sources; Part Two, ‘The Weapon of Aššur,’ investigates Sennacherib and his resources; Part Three, ‘After Life,’ describes the life of the event and of Sennacherib in post-biblical literature. This review will concentrate on Parts One and Two.

Sennacherib’s inscriptions, archives and palace reliefs, Egyptian texts, archaeological discoveries and Hebrew narratives together provide the most extensive resources for any event in ancient Judah. The Assyrian ‘annals’ concur with the biblical passages in telling of Hezekiah’s submission and tribute, while silent on the disaster 2 Kings 19:35 says befell Sennacherib’s army. In ‘Cross-examining the Assyrian Witnesses to Sennacherib’s Third Campaign: Assessing the Limits of Historical Reconstruction’ (Ch. 3), Mordechai Cogan concludes Hezekiah’s submission was complete, so it was not ‘in Assyria’s interests to pursue further military action against Jerusalem’ (p. 71, similarly E. Frahm, p. 207). He argues against views of Sennacherib’s ‘annals’ as presenting an unusual case, thus concealing the disaster 2 Kings 19 reports. Mario Fales agrees in ‘The Road to Judah:701 B.C.E. in the Context of Sennacherib’s Political-Military Strategy’ (Ch. 7), where he discusses Sennacherib’s role on the northern frontier as crown prince and his reaction to his father’s death in battle. Elements of his first and second campaigns are seen

to foreshadow those of the third, leading to the same conclusion as Cogan. How far these activities followed the patterns of his predecessors, how far they were determined by circumstances or by the personality of the king are questions. Eckhard Frahm explores ‘Family Matters: Psycho-historical Reflections on Sennacherib and his Times’ (Ch. 6), providing an in-depth portrayal drawing on all available contemporary documents. With a new reading of a damaged stele, he finds Sennacherib’s mother was Ra’īmâ. Buried in a tomb at Nimrud were Yabâ, wife of Tiglath-Pileser III and Atalyâ, Sargon’s queen. The names of all three with Sennacherib’s wife Naqi’a point to West Semitic influence in the royal family, suggesting Sennacherib’s native language was Aramaic. Frahm inclines towards Stephanie Dalley’s identification of Yabâ and Atalyâ as Hebrew princesses, but note the ending *-yâ* is not the Israelite divine name as it is not written thus in cuneiform (see A. Millard 2013, 841). Little can be said of Sennacherib’s childhood, but as crown prince he was heavily engaged in securing Assyria’s northern frontier for his father. Sargon’s death in battle brought ‘almost complete denial’ from Sennacherib, a factor scrutinised here together with ‘the enhanced role’ of women at his court. Dalley’s supposition of a link between Judah and Sargon through Atalyâ is doubted, although Frahm sees indirect links between Assyrian officials and Judah in Rab-shakeh’s speaking Hebrew (2 Kgs 18:26, 28). Frahm’s extensive, major, if somewhat imaginative study, deserves careful reading. ‘Sennacherib’s Invasions of the Levant through the Eyes of Assyrian Intelligence Service’ (Ch. 8) is Peter Dubovský’s detailed assessment of necessary preparations, based largely upon letters, many from the time Sennacherib was crown prince, also bringing analogies from modern history, especially the Cold War period. Not directly related to Judah, the texts indicate the variety of sources informing the king. That suggests the Rab-shakeh could have used an interpreter to address the people of Jerusalem rather than speaking Hebrew himself; the narrator of 2 Kings 18 had no need to specify that.

Assyriologists are used to analyzing royal propaganda, usually the only account of royal deeds. Here the results of their analyses can be set beside studies of the other sources. David Ussishkin’s excavations at Lachish show signs of a siege and heavy destruction, with destructions at other sites, followed by lighter occupation, while Jerusalem has uninterrupted occupation, with signs of new fortifications, perhaps against a siege, although the Siloam Tunnel was not prepared for that purpose. (Ch. 4, ‘Sennacherib’s Campaign to Judah: The Archaeological Perspective with an Emphasis on Lachish and Jerusalem’). Correlating the Lachish reliefs with the topography enables him to locate the site of Sennacherib’s throne outside Lachish. Note that his presence at Lachish is not mentioned in his ‘annals.’

While both Sennacherib and the Bible (2 Kgs 18:17; 19:8) relate the confrontation with Kushite Tirhakah, 'it is certainly noteworthy' that two Egyptian stelae often cited as indicating Tirhakah's campaign did not bother to claim 'the Kushites' most memorable intervention in Levantine affairs,' according to Jeremy Pope in his rehearsal of Kushite policy, based on geography and longer term history (Ch. 5, 'Beyond the Broken Reed: Kushite Intervention and the Limits of *l'histoire événementielle*'). The 25th Dynasty, he asserts, was interested in maintaining links with the Levant primarily for imports of copper and cedar wood, while concerned to secure the north-eastern frontier; Tirhakah's foray into Philistia was exceptional. The sealings imprinted with Shabaka's name from Nineveh, described on p. 116, were republished by Terence C. Mitchell and Ann Searight (2008), *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Stamp Seals III, Impressions of Stamp Seals on Cuneiform Tablets, Clay Bullae, and Jar Handles* (Leiden and Boston), nos 12, 13.

Only Kalimi's 'Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: The Chronicler's View Compared with His "Biblical" Sources', (Ch.1), discusses the lengthy biblical texts. To elucidate the Chronicler's purpose, he shows how Chronicles created an account of good king Hezekiah and his faith in God contrasted with wicked Sennacherib and apparently treated the Assyrians as actually besieging Jerusalem unlike 2 Kings. Chronicles portrays Hezekiah as triumphant and prosperous, ignoring the submission to Assyria 2 Kings 18:13–16 recounts. (Those verses need not be divorced from 18:17–19:37 but taken as a summary the whole narrative, see W. J. Martin, 'Dischronologized' Narrative in the Old Testament,' *Vetus Testamentum, Supplement 17, Congress Volume, Rome 1968* [Leiden: Brill, 1969], pp. 179–86.) The 'miraculous' destruction of the Assyrian army finds a place only in this essay, but Kalimi is only concerned to distinguish between 2 Kings (1:15) 'the angel of the lord' and 'the Lord sent an angel' (2 Chron. 32:21), stressing divine initiative. However, agents act on their master's orders, so this distinction may not be significant, as in Judges 6:11, 14, where 'the angel and 'the Lord' are interchangeable, a feature common to other biblical and ancient near eastern texts.

Ignoring the divine intervention means discounting the record of the supernatural disaster to Sennacherib's army, as if the writer of 2 Kings was a modern historian for whom such things do not occur. Yet that was how ancient rulers reported the unexpected. The Hebrew text has to be read in that context. It relates a catastrophe befalling the enemy which had no other obvious explanation - it was 'an act of God.' The ancient writer's assumption of a supernatural event does not prevent the modern historian from accepting Assyria's army suffered a reverse, any more than Sennacherib's report, 'By the command of the god Ashur ... the king of Elam died prematurely' would prevent acceptance that the

king died; the narrative has to be treated equally with the other sources - see A. Millard (1994), 'Story, History and Theology,' in A. R. Millard, J. K. Hoffmeier, D. W. Baker, eds, *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake, Indiana), 37–64. Sennacherib's boast of the reduction of Judah's boundaries, the despatch of elite troops, heavy tribute and court personnel to Nineveh, beside the survival of Hezekiah, the rebel who had imprisoned the pro-Assyrian ruler of Ekron, needs explanation. Other rebels either took flight or were captured, their capitals either submitted or were taken and plundered, in no other case did one send tribute 'after' Sennacherib to Nineveh; the episode is peculiar. No-one should expect Sennacherib's 'annals' to reveal such a reverse, nor the Egyptian stelae to tell of the defeat at Eltekeh. Rather than 'Assyria's interests' preventing the capture of the rebel, reading all the texts together allows the conclusion that there was a less positive reason - as the Bible relates.

Sennacherib's name lived long in many regions. Gerbern Oegema surveys 'Sennacherib's Campaign and its Reception in the Time of the Second Temple' (Ch.10), demonstrating a shift from historiographic interest to apocalyptic, with the king beginning to become an evil despot, as Rivka Ulmer portrays in 'Sennacherib in Midrashic and Related literature' (Ch. 11) and even 'The Devil in Person, the Devil in Disguise' according to Joseph Verheyden, 'Looking for Sennacherib in Early Christian Literature' (Ch. 12). In her essay 'Memories of Sennacherib in Aramaic Tradition' (Ch. 9), Tawny Holm finds two traits: firstly 'the benevolent patron of Ahiqar' in the 5th century BCE *Story of Ahiqar*; secondly the unjust oppressor based on the biblical texts in Christian Aramaic literature. She discusses proposals for the origin of the Ahiqar story, positing a home among Egyptian court tales. (The Assyrian dialect forms of proper names, such as Nabu-sum-iskun, rather than Babylonian, Nabu-shum-ishkun, may count against that, as Oegema notes, p. 327.)

Seth Richardson closes the volume, considering the whole range of texts, in 'The First "World Event." Sennacherib at Jerusalem' (Ch.13), asking why it had so long-lasting a legacy across so many societies and languages. He perceives a focus shifting from kings to elite officials, from local to empire-wide, multi-ethnic affairs and audiences the dramatic qualities and reversal of kingly ambitions. His essay deserves close attention.

The volume contributes significantly to understanding the original events and their after-life, with the regrettable omission of adequate assessment of 2 Kings 19:35. Readers of *Strata* should note the new definitive publication by A. K. Grayson and J. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC)*, Parts 1 and 2 (Winona Lake, IN. 2012, 2014), was not available to most of the authors.

Millard, A., (2013). 'Transcriptions into Cuneiform.' Pp. 838–47 in Khan, Geoffrey (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, Vol. 3, (Leiden):838–47.

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Vasile Babota, *The Institution of the Hasmonean High Priesthood*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 165. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013. Pp. xvii + 347. €123.00. ISBN:978–90–04–25177–9.

There is a sense of *déjà vu* in reviewing a book on a topic about which one has oneself written, especially when one's own work is referenced periodically in the book under review. Such was the case as I worked my way through Babota's monograph: the various *cruces interpretum* sprang to life anew, and I was back assessing the validity of the historical sources, weighing and interpreting the evidence to be found in them, scouring the terrain for evidence missed or undervalued by other scholars, all this time in Babota's company. Not that our two works are entirely comparable, since his focuses exclusively and in great detail on an era which was only one part of mine; nevertheless, his often adds contours to the picture painted more summarily in mine.

What kind of contours, then, are we talking about? Babota sets himself the task of understanding exactly how the Hasmonean high priesthood came into being; at least, I think that is what he does, because the title of his book and the description of his intentions in the introduction are ambiguous. 'The general aim of this study is the institution of the Hasmonean high priesthood,' he says on p. 4. Should 'institution' be construed as a verb or as a noun? Is the book about the process of instituting the Hasmonean high priesthood, or about the Hasmonean high priesthood as an institution? The ambiguity appears to be relieved by a statement on the next page: '[T]he central question that this study raises is what kind of institution was the Hasmonean high priesthood' (p. 5). However, the same ambiguity runs throughout the study, and while using the term 'institution' might have seemed like a clever way of encompassing both the process and the product—for both, indeed, are discussed—it does not make for clarity of argument. A similar point could be made about 'Hasmonean high priesthood.' Babota uses the term 'Hasmonean' to refer to the entire dynasty beginning with Judas, Jonathan and Simon, but his investigation ends with the death of Simon, so that he only considers the first generation of nationalist rebels, who are elsewhere referred to as Maccabeans. This limitation of scope, while perfectly legitimate and justified in itself, means that the study covers the period of the incipient but not the mature Hasmonean high priesthood, and

it raises the question of what it means for Babota to make claims about ‘the nature of the Hasmonean high priesthood.’

On balance, however, it appears that Babota is examining the emergence and the nature of the high priestly office that was held by the Maccabean brothers Jonathan and Simon in second-century BCE Judah. As part of this examination, Babota is particularly concerned to elucidate the relationship between the newly emerging high priesthood and the Seleucid overlords. His major conclusion in this respect is that these Hasmoneans operated as Hellenistic high priestly rulers after the manner of such rulers elsewhere in the Seleucid empire, who were appointed by the overlord and who had both cultic and military/political authority in the regions where they were appointed. In this way, he suggests, it is possible to account for the various elements in the depictions of Jonathan and Simon in the books of Maccabees and in Josephus. In addition to presenting detailed analyses of these major literary sources, Babota supports his arguments by drawing on epigraphic and archaeological sources, using them to strengthen his proposals about the chronology, the nature and the veracity of events as recorded in the literary sources.

How well, then, does Babota achieve his purported aims? There are two issues here, namely, structure and content. To begin with structural issues, the monograph is the result of Babota’s doctoral thesis, and it bears the hallmarks of that genre: division into a very large number of small sections, a desire to include as much as possible of the information unearthed, periodic reviews of scholarship on the issues being discussed, and the attempt to offer new interpretations. The resultant investigation that it presents is minute and incredibly detailed, and this, together with the features just mentioned, means that it is not always an easy read; it is still basically a thesis rather than a monograph. Of course, any decent monograph will offer reviews of scholarship and new or reformulated interpretations of data, but the division into small sections, often of less than a page in length, is inimical to presenting a clear argument and makes the work read like a report, not a book. It gives a sense of disjointedness, which is aggravated further by excessively short paragraphs breaking up the flow of thought in an unhelpful way. A related issue is that the use of English is often ambiguous (as noted earlier) and unidiomatic, not to say grammatically incorrect, so that it is frequently an effort for the reader to understand precisely what is meant. I must confess to being surprised that Brill would allow such a low standard of English to prevail in its scholarly monograph series. That aside, though, in terms of content, what of Babota’s proposal to understand Jonathan and Simon as ‘Hellenistic/Seleucid high priests’ rather than ‘Jewish/biblical high priests’? If I understand him correctly and can dare to paraphrase his conclusions, he is arguing for the (early) Hasmonean high priesthood as a Hellenistic version of sacral kingship; that is, he argues for these Hasmoneans as civil and military rulers,

who in line with a pattern found elsewhere in the Hellenistic world bear the title of high priest (*archiereus*) and have ex officio responsibility for their dominion's cultic worship, however that responsibility is expressed in any given case. Babota mentions this model of oversight in chapter 2, where he cites the cases of Ptolemy, whom inscriptions designate as *strategos* and *archiereus* of Koile Syria and Phoenicia, and Olympiodorus, who some scholars think on the basis of recently discovered inscriptional evidence, fulfilled a similar role. In Chapter 6 Babota also gives three more examples of such Hellenistic high priests (that is, individuals called *archiereus* who also appear to have had considerable civic and military power). Nevertheless, given that the book's dust-jacket blurb presents Babota's idea that the Hasmoneans were 'Hellenistic high priests' as a major conclusion of his study, I was surprised at how little direct attention (about half-a-dozen pages in total) was given to these figures, especially in light of the detailed analysis of so much other material concerning the precise sequence and location of events, much of which appeared tangential at best to the 'Hellenistic high priest' issue. Even the content that was about the Hellenistic high priests felt more like assertion than demonstration, and Babota's case would be considerably strengthened by more detailed discussion of these figures and a closer description of how they operated that would enable a more informed comparison with the Hasmoneans. That said, though, to the extent that he understands Jonathan and Simon as something different from the 'traditional' biblical picture of the high priest and as figures who are just as concerned with military and governmental matters as with cultic issues, I think he is correct, although he differs from others—myself included—in his conception of the model on which they based their self-understanding (Hellenistic high priest rather than biblical sacral king).

Overall, then, as a minutely detailed discussion about a wide range of matters relating to the history of high priesthood in second-century Judah, this works reasonably well, but as a project of which the central aim is to present a new understanding of the early Hasmonean high priesthood in terms of Hellenistic *archiereis* it is less successful. Indeed, despite the dust-jacket blurb and Babota's own statement of intent in the introduction, the 'Hellenistic high priest' issue comes across as only one of a multitude of questions that Babota sets himself to answer as he sifts through the history of the period. If it really were the central plank of his investigation I would expect to see far more wood and far fewer trees.

Rooke, D.W., (2000) *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford and New York).

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Dan Bahat, *The Jerusalem Western Wall Tunnel*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2014. Pp. 432 incl. illustrations. \$104. ISBN 978-965-221-091-3.

This is an important book, and a massive one. It gives a complete description of the Western Wall Tunnel that runs alongside the base of the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and it leaves no stone unturned, no stone unphotographed and no stone undrawn. Its author Dan Bahat was district archaeologist of Jerusalem under the Israel Department of Antiquities until 1990, then a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University and at present is associate professor at Toronto University, Canada. He made a detailed study of the Western Wall Tunnel prior to its opening in part to the public in 1996.

The opening of the tunnel was arranged under the auspices of Israel's Ministry of Religious Affairs, and their workers prepared many areas for visitors by clearing away later fill, removing plaster from stone walls and building additional sections of walls and pillars for better stability and safety. This made the work of the archaeologists more complex and Bahat describes many instances when it was not possible to see the original structures due to modern modifications. Nevertheless he was able to locate the early discoveries that had been made and recorded by Charles Warren and Charles Wilson and he describes and acknowledges the valuable work they and other early explorers had done under difficult conditions.

Bahat is amazed at the myriad of arches and structural walls that is seen in the Tunnel and finally was able to discover that a large portion of this material is indeed part of a two-storey Crusader building that somehow got built into the substructures supporting later Mamluk and Ayyubid institutions, especially the Al-Tankiziyya Madrasa, above ground. This is well illustrated by drawings on pp. 154-155 and a reconstruction on p. 204 by Mark Kunin. Similarly a Roman public latrine, with multiple seating and integral drainage (reconstructed on p. 174), was found under the mosaic floor of one of the rooms in the Crusader building. These finds indicate the complex series of layers that Bahat found adjoining the Tunnel, and the different functions that they served in their time.

Later Bahat describes the Master Course that lines part of the east wall of the Tunnel. He attributes the name to Nahman Avigad who coined it in 1968 when he saw the massive ashlar at this level. The largest stone is 13.6 m long and 3.3m high. Judging by destroyed stones alongside it was deemed to be 4.6 m thick, which would have given it a weight of 570 tons. Bahat, perhaps wisely, offers no thoughts on how such a monster could have been moved and placed in position. This may be because in the Appendix to the volume (p. 395) ground penetration radar (GPR) measurements were made of the stone and the thickness was found to be only 1.8 to 2.5 m, so the weight works out at about 250 tons, still

a monster, and its handling is still unexplained. The reason for the Master Course is also unclear. It was thought that it may have been necessary to act as counterweight to pressure from some possible internal vaulted space structure (p. 244) but that has again been found wrong by the GPR survey, which indicated no void but a mass of fill behind the Course. Why the Course is there and how the massive stones were set in place remains a mystery.

Bahat says that his comprehensive work is not a typical dig report (p. 3) but its very completeness in nature, and the division of the site into loci, belies his claim. There is discussion of the assignment of the loci and a full description of nearly every one of them, with photographs and drawings, which together bring the necessary clarity to the records. The drawings of the walls on pp. 6 to 16 are remarkable for their detail, showing both grain and surface dressing of each stone in its position, penned by Sharon Ma'ayan, who also drew the useful explanatory section, from Wilson's Arch to the secret passage to the East, on p. 18.

After the main body of the work, there is an interesting chapter asking, "When did the Western Wall (which Bahat calls the Prayer Plaza) become a place of Jewish Prayer?" and then a full catalogue of pottery and small finds which covers all of 31 pages. It is complemented by a chapter on the work done by the late Alexander Onn and Shlomit Wechsler-Bdolah in the area of Wilson's Arch and the Great Bridge that led from the eastern cardo to the Western Wall. This is followed by an Appendix with the full report of the GPR survey of the Master Course (a reprint of a 2006 article by Jol, Bauman and Bahat), and finally an Index of loci and walls.

All this information is most valuable and helps to make understandable this complete survey of one of the most important and precious remains of Jerusalem, the most significant of all biblical cities. The book itself is a monument of original survey and a mine of valuable information.

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Ze'ev Meshel, with A. Aḥituv, Liora Freud et al., *Kuntillet `Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border.* Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012. Pp. xxxv + 364 incl. plans and illustrations. \$96. ISBN 978-9-65-221088-3.

The small hill of Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Ḥorvat Teman) is mysterious and provocative. Located in the far south of the eastern Sinai, it contains remains from only one period, probably the beginning of Iron Age IIb (c. 800–750 BCE, though see Singer-Avitz 2006, 2009; Finkelstein and Piasefsky 2008). It was most likely abandoned

after its collapse in an earthquake (*cf.* Amos 1:1; Zech 5:14). Its location beyond the site of Kadesh-Barnea meant that it was a stopping place for traders and others on their way from Arabia and Judah to Egypt, but, according to the site's excavator Ze'ev Meshel, its core identity was as a cultic centre.

The buildings of the site were almost entirely excavated by Meshel in 1975–6, over three seasons, and this final report volume begins with some nice pictures of the volunteers and descriptions of the hardships of the dig itself, which is actually quite relevant to imagining the hardships experienced by those who lived at the site some 2800 years ago. This is a place with a harsh environment, prone to dusty wind and extreme heat, with a limited water supply. Meshel co-writes and edits a significant part of this final report, adding comments at the end of some chapters by individual experts. This seems a good way of proceeding, and allows evidence to be presented in a way that does not presuppose that all issues have been solved.

The site of 'Ajrud lay on a main route from Judah to Eilat via Kadesh Barnea, linking with the Gaza road, and it was reasonable to suppose at the start of excavation that it was a fortress guarding the road, but it is argued that this is probably not the case. In the discussion by Meshel with Avner Goren it is suggested that while Building A (29 × 15 m) is somewhat fortress-like with four towers the finds there indicate it was largely used for storage, and there is an interesting bench room with plastered walls, including images. In Building B, divided into a northern and southern wing of two small structures, there were hardly any finds, but it was covered with white plaster (including the door jambs) with an entrance via a raised platform that could be understood as a *bama* or high place. In the plaster of the site as a whole, and also on pithoi and other items, there were a considerable number of inscriptions—mainly in Hebrew script—most famously 'YHWH of Teman/Shomron and his Asherah.'

However, what seems to come across here is evidence that asks us not to think in 'either-or' categories. Building A is surely a fortified building with multiple uses, not a 'fortress' in purely military terms but nevertheless a defensible way-station populated by people who did ordinary household things, like weaving and cooking. Building B, with its high uncovered platform (W51), is striking because of the decorated plaster interior in the northern wing, and was most likely built up in its upper courses by mud-brick, the remains of which were found collapsed (p. 53). The classification of Building B as one building is not quite explained, but since this was the entrance-way to the site the assumption would most naturally be that these were two structures on either side of the entrance, which makes the suggestion of the raised platform as a *bama* highly unlikely, since it is simply in a very unlikely location for cultic activity. The *bama* is well placed strategically, however, as a base for a higher wooden or mud-brick look-out structure that has

not survived. The plaster art of the Building B northern wing actually shows men next to such a look-out tower, and it is reasonable to assume that the depiction is relevant to the place. Likewise, it is hard to understand why the function of two basins in L167 remain ‘unclear’ (p. 59) when pack animals needed water troughs, and this is a perfectly reasonable area for sheltering them.

The inscriptions containing Hebrew names with the spelling ‘Yo’ rather than ‘Yahu’ (see p. 128–9) and the mention of Shomron (Samaria) strongly link the site with the northern Kingdom. Meshel plausibly attributes it to the initiative of Joash (Jehoash) son of Joahaz (Jehoahaz) of Israel (c.806–791 BCE), who defeated Amaziah son of Joash of Judah (c. 796–776 BCE), according to 2 Kings 14:7–16 and 2 Chron. 25:5–24. This certainly would explain the links with the northern Kingdom at the site, but somewhat less convincing is the suggestion (curiously on the basis of 1 Chron. 26:32) that Joash settled priests and Levites in this remote location (p. 69) (see below).

As for the dating, radiocarbon results provided by Israel Carmi and Dror Segal cluster around 830–750 BCE (p. 61) though it has to be said that there are some significant anomalies in these dates in terms of some later (Persian) period results, and the issue of the sporadic opportunistic use of the site by later people is not greatly explored.

The volume then continues with specific studies on artefacts. Most interesting are the benedictory or dedicatory inscriptions, and writing exercises, with numerous names being written in paleo-Hebrew script, including mention of products being ‘to/of the governor of the city’ (e.g. 2.4, 2.5, 2.8). Imagining this site as a ‘city,’ even in the most minimal way, seems challenging given the surviving stone structures and one wonders whether ‘the city’ was largely built of mud-brick, meaning that further explorations for vestiges outside the region of the stone ruins might prove illuminating.

The chapter on the inscriptions, written by Shmuel Ahituv, Esther Eshel and Ze’ev Meshel, is very well done, but there seems to be an underlying resistance to interpretations that would indicate Asherah worship. The authors appear to reject the suggestion that Asherah was a companion of YHWH or that she was widely worshipped in Iron Age Israel, pointing out that she disappears from the pantheons of neighbouring cultures by the first millennium and ‘[o]ne finds it difficult to accept that the goddess Asherah had vanished from all other lands except Israel’ (p. 131). This is an extreme statement in view of the plethora of quite local deities of the ancient Near East that apparently should be dismissed by means of applying the same criterion of authenticity. They sharply distinguish a sacred cultic object (the asherah) from the goddess herself (Asherah), which is exactly what I argued against in my own study on this (Taylor 1995), since a divine power/entity could essentially inhabit an object, which in this case

(as I have suggested) is actually a type of stylised tree, often an almond tree. The discussion in this chapter overall seems slightly thin and rigid, and lacks detailed interaction with scholarly literature. From the Kh el-Qom inscription to the Lachish ewer the fact is that the evidence of Asherah/Elat as a companion to YHWH in both biblical and archaeological sources seems rather too strong to dismiss, especially given that regionally such a goddess could be called by different names and be modified/syncretised in different cultural/cultic environments. We have in the Elephantine papyri a dedication of temple funds for Yahu, Anath-Bethel and Ashim-Bethel (Papyrus 22.123–125/15:1–14). Ashima is found as a name in both 2 Kings 17:30 (made by the ‘men of Hamath’), and in Amos 8:14 the name appears as a pun (‘guilt’): Ashimah of Shomron. That this really indicates a goddess has been traced through Pheonician sources in the brilliant analysis of Hans Barstad (1984, 155–80). Whether she was called Asherah, asherim or Ash[er]jima, or assimilated to Anath (Mondrian 2013), we clearly have some female deity/ies and/or feminine sacred items linked with YHWH, making the appearance of the name ‘Asherah’ not that surprising at ‘Ajrud. The more interesting thing is that it is YHWH who is paramount, as the writers of this chapter rightly note, with reference to Ps. 89:7 and other biblical passages. In ‘Ajrud, YWHH is associated with Baal and El in the inscription 4.2 on the wall plaster of the bench room, but likewise paramount.

The two pithoi (A and B) with significant ink inscriptions mentioning ‘YHWH of Teman/Shomron and his Asherah’ have other images described in the next chapter by Pirhiya Beck. In the case of Pithos A there is on one side the depiction of a sacred tree (in my view an Asherah tree with an almond at the top, see Taylor 1995) in between ibexes, with other images of a lion, lioness, boar, horse and another animals (that are often associated with Anath) and, on the other side a cow and suckling calf, two pictures of the Egyptian god Bes and a female lyre player. On Pithos B there are pictures of a group of worshippers, an ibex, the cow in a suckling calf picture, an archer. Such representational images, which have strong parallels in the ancient Near East, along with Egyptian Bes, would require us to think fairly expansively about the possible meanings of the Hebrew inscriptions here. The inscriptions were written after the figures were drawn, but none of the images were rubbed out. Beck states that ‘[w]hen we consider the geographical position of ‘Ajrud as, among other things, a crossroad desert station, it seems only natural that the caravaneers and other wayfarers who stopped there would have been inclined to ask the inhabitants of the site to dedicate inscriptions (and perhaps even drawings) in order to secure the protection of their gods during their perilous journey’ (p. 183). One wonders though whether the travellers, bedding down in the bench room, might also have drawn these themselves: Bes is, after all, a protective deity that might not be quite appropriately drawn by an

Israelite. This would make the bench room show not only distinctive Israelite belief but rather a melange, and an indication of considerable religious toleration if not blending. The inscription on the wall plaster of the bench room of Building A (Inscription 4.2) mentioning both YHWH, El and Baal testifies to YHWH worship with that of other gods.

Less well known here is a painting in yellow and black on a sherd showing an enthroned (female) figure and a similar seated figure drawn large. Beck provides an excellent reconstruction of this Egyptian-style seated female figure smelling a lotus flower painted at the entrance to the bench-room of Building A (wall painting no. 9) in red, black and yellow. Another image of a female face in profile was found at the entrance to the western storeroom of Building A. As Beck notes, the various motifs are iconographically derived from the Phoenician-Syrian world (p. 197). While Beck does not speculate on the identity of the figure, the throne suggests a queen or female deity, and the gesture is one of enjoyment

The pottery is presented by Etan Ayalon, who notes that it is almost a complete assemblage and homogeneous, coming from one period. As such it will undoubtedly prove very useful for comparative dating. It did not include Negebite (nomad) ware, but rather most of the pottery was made of motza clay from the area of the Judaeen hills, but also from other places, as demonstrated by the INAA analysis by Jan Gunneweg, Isadore Perlman and Ze'ev Meshel. 50% of the pottery comprises storage vessels, along with a range of small vessels in Building A, and there were 30 cooking pots (p. 205). The petrographic analysis of a shallow globular cooking pot determined the clay as coming from the southern Shephelah or northern Negev (p. 216, 244). Plugs of various kinds included those made of mud, stone and pottery, as well as simple lids. One of the clay and chaff stoppers had an impression of a linen cloth, placed over the mouth of the jar before a wet clay stopper was pushed into the opening (p. 315); this is examined in the discussion by Orit Shamir, who also presents the cordage, used for tying and packing. There were no identifiably cultic items; either this was really not a site of cultic practice or the inhabitants took every last piece of equipment, though Meshel states that 'it is difficult to explain such extreme behaviour' (p. 69). Indeed, surely, the lack of cultic items does argue against the identification of this site as cultic.

ʿAjrud has provided 120 items of textiles, the largest amount of textiles from a single Iron Age site, and these, along with basketry, are analysed very finely by Avigail Sheffer and Amalia Tidhar. They note that the bulk of the finds were in the southern storeroom and eastern kitchen, largely in bundles, and generally quite small. In three cases the linen has been woven together with wool, and one of these has dyed wool. Lev. 19:18 and Deut. 22:11 prohibit this mixing of linen and wool in clothing, but it is often noted that priestly girdles were composed of mixed yarns (Exod. 28:5-6, 39:29). Meshel links both the shatnez and the linen

garments themselves with priests and Levites living at the site (p. 308), but this seems far-fetched. By the time of the Mishnah the shatnez exception among Jews was distinctly linked to Temple service (m.Kil. 9:1), but to assume that the shatnez of the textiles in ‘Ajrud indicates the site was run by priests (on duty) seems rash, especially as the shatnez textiles do not come from girdles. I am not convinced that they should even be defined as coming from clothing, since these textiles may have been from sheets, hangings, table coverings, towels or any other kind of cloth, and there is no biblical prescriptions forbidding shatnez in textiles that are not worn. If from clothing, they may have come from non-Israelite travellers. That these textiles were often found in bundles of scraps would suggest that they were used as rags. Moreover, the notion that linen is to be associated particularly with priests is completely wrong. Sheffer and Tidhar in fact state that ‘[a] simple linen garment was also the primary clothing of the Israelite male (Jer. 13:1). In fact, one may add that Josephus (War 4:469–70) indicates that in his day linen was worn in hot weather. Meshel himself notes that carbonised linen was found in Kadesh Barnea (Shamir 2007:255). The simplest explanation then is that people may have worn linen (if these are actually clothing items) because it was hot. While the discussion by Sheffer and Tidhar is very good, it seems that Meshel is forcing an interpretation upon it that seems quite awry.

Interesting is the fact that loom weights were found at the site, and there are wooden remains from the warp-weighted loom, fibres and threads. Basketry included a complete sieve and another that is fragmentary. The warp beam in place is shown in a diagram within the discussion of wooden objects by Yigal Sitry. This is also interesting for its identification of wood as being simple and of low quality, coming from local trees such as *Tamarix* and *Phoenix dactylifera* (date palm).

A discussion of faunal remains provides evidence of sheep-goat consumption and possibly cattle (L252), but a sand fox skeleton was also found (L51), as well as a dog. Interestingly there were at least two immature hares, ostrich eggshells and feathers, snakes, as well as Mediterranean fish and Nile perch and shells. The paucity of remains, yet their somewhat exotic nature at times, is quite consistent with what we might expect of a way-station. Finally there is a presentation of more recent human remains found at this site and botanical material is discussed by Nili Liphshitz and stone artefacts by Nadin Reshef.

Overall, scholars now have a full presentation of the remains from ‘Ajrud in a beautifully-presented volume that will undoubtedly be used profitably by researchers for years to come. The theory of Israelite establishment seems strong given the pottery alone, yet the artefacts, iconography and inscriptions indicate to this reviewer less of a cultic centre and more of a way-station in which people looked to a variety of gods for protection on their journeys. Religion, after all,

inhabited daily life as much as cultic buildings. The enthroned female figure smelling a lotus, positioned just at the entrance to Building A, might surely be the most provocative of all images from this fascinating site.

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David Stacey and Greg Doudna, with Gideon Avni, *Qumran Revisited: A Reassessment of the Archaeology of the Site and Its Texts*. BAR International Series 2520. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013. Pp. 150 incl. illustrations. £29.00. ISBN 978-1-40-731138-8.

The present volume combines three essays: a review of the archaeology of Qumran by David Stacey (pp. 3-74), a discussion about the Qumran texts by Gregory Doudna (pp. 75-124) and an analysis of the Qumran cemetery by Gideon Avni (pp. 125-36).

In David Stacey's discussion of the site of Qumran, it is largely identified as a Herodian estate, operated seasonally for economic reasons, with a close connection with the royal estate of Jericho associated with palaces at Tulul Abu al-Alaiq. Stacey presents his argument in studies on various areas of the site, focusing on the minutiae of published evidence and his own personal observation. In terms of chronology, Stacey joins the voices of most others who see the post-Iron Age resettlement of Qumran as a modest construction in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. He fuses some of de Vaux's Ia and Ib phases into a pre-earthquake (of 31 BCE) Hasmonean form, with a development after the earthquake of 31 BCE into what became the Period II shape that de Vaux identified, while little is said of Period III apart from a summary chart on p. 74. Stacey only uses the stratigraphic terms of de Vaux, and does not much

engage with the work of Humbert or the detailed discussions of Cargill (2009).

There are some suggestions that are unlikely. Stacey speculates that the upper level of the tower might have functioned as a dove-cote. Stacey notes that there are two slit windows facing north, and a lot of mud bricks in the fill of the lower rooms, and so there might have been an upper level columbarium made of mud bricks and the slits could have been for doves to enter. But slit windows in towers used as defensive lookouts are very common (so Hyrcania, nearby) and a pile of mud bricks is no evidence at Qumran, when most of the superstructures, partitions and upper storeys were made of mud bricks. There is no shaping for nesting birds or dove-cote openings in any of the Qumran mud brick pieces, while the columbarium at Masada shows that these slots were inward facing and clearly moulded, with square windows for the doves to fly in, and dove slots from the floor up. Multi-use structures there may be, but a defensive look-out post that doubled as a columbarium—designed to furnish dung for fertilisation of fields—seems an amusing scenario for the people manning this space.

More significantly, it has formerly been assumed that the aqueduct system of Qumran was established prior to the earthquake of 31 BCE. Thus, for example, right at the outset J. T. Milik noted of the Qumran aqueduct that: ‘The closest parallel to the Qumran aqueduct is the one that supplies the fortress of Hyrcanian, built by Hyrcanus I and the contemporary with the Qumran water installations. I had an occasion recently to study its early sections in the Wadi Ennar (near the monastery of Mar Saba). It was built on the deep gorge’s northern slope so that it would be able to trap all the rainfall. The way in which the channel is cut into and through the rock, and built up on stone fills at places where the rock drops away, so as to maintain the water’s level, the dimensions of the aqueduct itself, the composition of the plaster—all these details are identical in the Hyrcania and Qumran aqueducts’ (Milik 1959:152). De Vaux likewise saw the aqueduct developments as taking place in Period Ib, which he dated prior to the earthquake of 31 BCE, and the study by Ilan and Amit (2002) placed it in this period also.

Stacey differs, and he sees the aqueduct largely as a result of Herodian engineering. Yet, on the basis of the work of Netzer and Gabrecht (2002:373–7), he states that it was the Hasmoneans in Jericho that ‘had to go to considerable lengths to bring water by aqueduct from Ain Qelt, some 8 km to the west in the Wadi Qelt’ in order to develop ‘irrigated agriculture on the relatively flat ground to the north of where wadi debouches into the canyon,’ with the area south of the wadi ‘irrigated via a pool, Birket Musa ... which must have been fed by diverting some of the water than ran in the wadi’ (p. 3). The Hasmoneans also brought water from Ain Na’aran, to the north of Ain es-

Sultan, ‘by an aqueduct that ran for some 5 km.’ With all this ascribed to the Hasmoneans, why Stacey defines the Qumran aqueduct system as Herodian is buried in a dense discussion on pp. 11–23 in which he asks: ‘when was the “main” aqueduct built?’; the title is key, as it indicates how Stacey pushes attention away from the aqueduct not defined as ‘main.’

Since this argument does not read in a very coherent way, it is probably better in this review to divide the discussion between the aqueduct proper and the channels within the site, which in Stacey’s discussion are dealt with in a different order. The discussion begins with little introduction on p. 11 and then is interrupted by a dating discussion on pp. 34–37, returning to the water system again on p. 38.

In terms of the aqueduct in the nearby cliffs Stacey notes on the basis of Ilan and Amit (2002) that there were two phases: the earliest phase was built as a 1.1 m. channel through the lower part of the cliffs to the system of pools L.110, L.117 and L.118, but the ‘capture of this limited quantity of water was abandoned’ and a better aqueduct was constructed. In fact, Stacey reduces the earlier aqueduct system to a single channel at the bottom of the cliffs without allowing for a system in which water is fed to it. While Ilan and Amit had this first aqueduct running from a (now missing) dam in the Wadi Qumran (Ilan and Amit Fig. 1; 3, 6–16), Stacey ascribes this dam also to Herod (p. 21) and imagines a sophisticated concrete construction (p. 17). Stacey then (a) cuts the imaginary dam out of the first system and (b) largely ignores even what he allows to remain of the first aqueduct system.

The argument for the Herodian date of the expanded ‘main’ channel system in the buildings is not really found in such assertions about the aqueduct in the cliffs but in the detailed analysis of the stratigraphy in the region of the area around pools of L.110, 117 and 118, largely already published in Stacey’s article in *DSD* 14 (2007), in which he is critical of de Vaux’s analysis. He stresses how there was heightening of the walls of L.110, 117 and 118 associated with this developed aqueduct (p. 38). The most important evidence Stacey points to is that a developed outlet channel in L.117 is associated with steps added when the walls of this cistern were heightened. These ran over a rubbish dump, Trench A, which has pottery dated to the early Herodian period (pp. 11–12, 21). Thus it would be quite plausible to conclude that a development of the ‘main’ aqueduct took place in the Herodian period, but Stacey continually pushes for a more absolute model, whereby there do not appear to be any Hasmonean elements.

The type of detailed analysis Stacey makes to support his theory will bamboozle most readers and needs to be unravelled by close inspection that cannot be done properly in a review, but an example will need to suffice: On pp. 13–14 Stacey notes correctly that de Vaux’s notion that the north-west corner of the western building was damaged by the earthquake (of 31 BCE) and strengthened by a buttress, but then states that since the aqueduct was fed by a basin L.132 to the

north of the buttress that had its south and west walls built on to the buttress (and not an earlier wall), the aqueduct itself must post-date the buttress and thus be later than 31 BCE. However, in the drawings of Humbert and Chambon 1994: Period Ib, Pl. IV and also XIX, while an earlier western wall is not evidenced prior to 31 BCE, it is clearly shown beginning in L.142, beside *miqveh* L.138, and one should then continue the line of this wall to meet the corner. In other words, the buttress at the edge of L.132 involved the restoration of a pre-existing wall, now missing, not the construction of a new one. The previous wall was built right on the edge of the plateau, and would have fallen down the slope in the destruction of 31 BCE. Instead, Stacey writes that ‘de Vaux illogically believed that L132 was functioning as a decantation basin before the earthquake’ (p. 14). Stacey should have noted that de Vaux astutely observed that the buttress was built directly on both ash and sediment (Humbert and Chambon 1994:333; de Vaux 1973:24), associated with earthquake damage and flooding of the area. The flooding here lay on top of this same ash in L.130. In other words, there was an earthquake and fire, and then the flooding in this zone that spilt into L.130 means that the channel system could not cope with the water that arrived *from the pre-existing aqueduct*.

Stacey in fact does not even accept flooding here, and interprets de Vaux’s observation of the flood silt in L.130 as nothing but ‘Lisan marl,’ the ‘virgin soil,’ thus rejecting de Vaux’s own understanding of what he was actually seeing, even silt defined as 75 cm thick (de Vaux 1973:23), which seems remarkably brusque, given that de Vaux was so sure of it that he posited a period of abandonment at the site. Such flooding could only have taken place if a water system here functioned so that water spilt out from L.132 into L.130 on some occasion after the earthquake and fire. Thus, Stacey forgets about the Hasmonean aqueduct he himself notes in the cliffs which accounts for the first aqueduct developments (identified as Ib by de Vaux in this area of L.132), and indeed it is not shown in his Plan 1 on p. 26, where this aqueduct is outlined in blue as being Herodian. This sedimentation basin L.132 was essential in the first system, ahead of the water’s arrival in L.110, 117 and 118.

This tendency towards absolute claims mars the better discussion Stacey provides that there was a later major water system development in the Herodian period, an argument which correlates with the analysis of Hirschfeld (2004:111–28) and others, though this analysis is still flecked with assertions. While accepting that the pool L.48/9 was not in fact cracked in the earthquake of 31 BCE, Stacey still has L.48/9 damaged at some point with L.71 built subsequently as an alternative pool, but there is no evidence of the channel to L.48/9 ever being blocked off; the channel here was developed to aid flow to L.71 and elsewhere but that does not mean that L.48/9 went out of use, even with some slumping (the evidence for which seems inconclusive). It was not filled in and built in an area

of the site in which other spaces of the main building were reused intensively in all phases. Overall, the tendency to ascribe sub-phases of development to the whole site on the basis of the aqueduct system phases seems unpersuasive. In relation to parts of the site it is possible to define more sub-phases than de Vaux or others have suggested (Taylor and Wagemakers 2011), but these may be the result of regular redesign and upkeep in different parts of the settlement at different times according to need, especially in regard to buttressing walls that had become unstable. It may be a sector-based approach is more helpful than a settlement-wide one.

Stacey's discussion of industrial activity at Qumran (pp. 52–65) is interesting, if speculative, and first published in this journal (Stacey 2008), though it veers off at one point into a proposal about the manufacture of reed coracles for which there is no evidence at all. It is indeed worthwhile to remember the seasonality not only of industries around the Dead Sea, and of agriculture in general in antiquity, but ultimately Stacey is determined to sever the scrolls from the site as a result of these proposals. The fact is that the scrolls were found at Qumran (in caves actually built into the plateau of the building occupation zone in 7Q-9Q), but the suggested evidence for tanning rests on pure hypothesis. Stacey prefers the hypothetical scenario to the actual archaeological evidence, stating '[a]s the industrial processes of Qumran were malodorous, it is unlikely that any scrolls were composed or copied in the polluted atmosphere where slaughter of animals and the use of dung and urine in processing their by-products would have rendered all present ritually impure' (p. 63), apparently forgetting his own argument about the seasonality of such industries at Qumran, which would allow tanning only in winter and spring. He sees the scrolls as *genizot* from Jerusalem and Jericho, without any specifically sectarian links. Stacey then suggests a scenario in which the site of Qumran must be detached from the scrolls and the Essenes, staffed by Herod's slaves, again on the basis of no evidence at all, though he acknowledges there might have been 'Essene quartermasters' (p. 67): a strange proposal given that Essenes rejected slavery (Philo, *Prob.* 79; Josephus, *Ant.* 18:21).

What one is left with in the end is a decent observation on seasonality, some possible industries and a fair discussion of how some key developments in the water system can be dated to the Herodian period. That the later water system required the engineering expertise of Herodian builders is also perfectly plausible, but it does not require a modification of the Qumran-Essene hypothesis (see Taylor 2012).

In the second essay ("The Sect of the Qumran Texts and its Leading Role in the Temple in Jerusalem During Much of the First Century BCE: Toward a New Framework for Understanding"), Gregory Doudna offers an ambitious

revision of the entire history of the texts and their authors. His starting-point is that nothing in the S (=Community Rule) texts implies opposition to the Jerusalem temple or priesthood: no calendrical dispute, no criticism of their combination of royal and high priestly offices. The sect of the Qumran texts in fact *was* the community of the Hasmonean high priests. D. offers in support a selection of other scholars' observations and develops his earlier work on the Nahum *peshet*, in whose depiction of the doomed king and the violent death of the Wicked Priest he now discerns Antigonus Mattathias, the last Hasmonean priest-king, executed in 37 BCE. The 'Teacher of Righteousness' is Hyrcanus II, whom he usurped but who was in power when most of the texts were composed—not a remote figure to the authors but living and/or recently deceased in the first century BCE, having been exiled in 40 BCE and finally executed under Herod in 30 BCE.

The D (= 'Damascus') texts represent a rewriting of S, and relate to after the career of the Teacher, while descriptions of the 'Essenes' relate to a yet later stage in the history of the groups. Doudna's thesis thus supports Stacey in suggesting that Qumran developed as an outpost in the Herodian era. Doudna's historicist focus on identifiable historical characters and events represents a return to an agenda familiar from decades ago, and one abandoned for sound reasons. But several of the arguments here are deserving of serious consideration in the still unresolved quest for the origins of the Qumran libraries and the histories of their authors. Doudna's piece is thus interesting and well-written, providing a fresh perspective that will undoubtedly stimulate further debate.

Gideon Avni's discussion of the cemetery is also a very good review, clearly presented. The point he makes is there is actually nothing very distinctive about the Qumran shaft graves in regard to their morphology: '[s]imple shaft graves of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods similar to those in Qumran have been discovered in many sites, and they are widespread, along with other types, in the cemeteries of the big cities along the coastal plain' (p. 128); they are also found in nomad populations of the deserts, including modern Bedouin. The orientation of the graves provides no chronological indicator. The gender ratio is not that unusual, which 'contradicts the interpretation of Qumran as a monastic site where only men dwelled' (p. 129), while the minimal number of child skeletons may be a result of seasonality. The question of the dating of the skeletons does still remain crucial, however, and Avni does not quite follow through on what he observes about the dating of some skeletons earlier or later than the settlement occupation periods (p. 127–8), meaning that one cannot really state categorically that the cemetery is inconsistent with a period of occupation of Essene settlement, given that Josephus knows of both unmarried and married Essenes (i.e. we need to understand that

there were male and female people within the category of ‘Essenes,’ *War* 2:160–161). In addition, if the site in the Second Temple period was initially founded by the Hasmoneans without Essene involvement, then there would have been a period in which a normative settlement was in existence, and invariably there were women in such outposts; this holds true for the post 68 CE scenario also. But Avni is surely right that we need to see the cemetery as much more than one linked with the site alone; frankly, Qumran is much too small to account for such a vast cemetery.

In Avni’s view it was ‘an attractive site for the desert population which frequented the area at various times’ (p. 130). The trouble is that there is no evidence for a desert population roaming the area in Second Temple times, and the region was tightly administered: the comparable cemetery of Kh. Qazoun on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea served settled populations of towns and villages close by. Therefore, the template of a cemetery that functioned not only for its nearest settlement but for a wider region is established, and Avni makes it clear these can also be multi-ethnic, multi-religious, though again one wonders about periods of use. The later use of the Qumran cemetery past the time of the occupation of the settlement still needs further clarification, as does the issue of where the occupants of the Iron Age were buried.

One small error was spotted: in terms of the radiocarbon dating of the two women’s skeletons in secondary burial in the small building at the eastern end of the middle finger of the main cemetery (‘Burial 1000’): he cites ‘Broshi and Eshel 2004’ for the radiocarbon results when the citation should be Eshel, Broshi, Freund and Schultz 2002:151 n. 58. He states that they are from ‘the third or second century BCE.’ The results here are actually not reported very coherently, and quite easy to misinterpret, but the 2 sigma range of 95.4% probability (the best result to use) was 210–30 BCE, meaning that a date in the early 1st century BCE is appropriate, since in such ranges all possible dates are equally probable for the true one. This assumes, of course, that there really was enough carbon in the tooth for a secure radiocarbon date. Notwithstanding this, and the points of nuancing, this is an excellent and well-informed discussion.

The little site of Khirbet Qumran remains one of the most important and contentious in the region, because of its association with the Dead Sea Scrolls, and argument about its interpretation has been fierce. Any errors in analyses by scholars trying to understand the jigsaw puzzle of the remains can be the cause of condemnation, especially in terms of presentations that are speculative. Stacey does speculate, but this leads to some worthwhile ruminations about industries that need to be kept in mind for the future. In addition, I congratulate Stacey for trying his best to work with the material in order to argue for a different

chronology of the water system and identify other facets of the site, and clearly much hard work has gone into this book. It is a shame, then, that Stacey pushes things too far at times with groundless assertions, and can even dismiss alternative suggestions too glibly, even by apparent knowledge of Herod's 'character': 'Herod foresaw that, by the construction of a prestigious dam, the site [of Qumran] could become a cog in the extensive building programme which was so important to him' (p. 67). Such a fictionalized Herod cannot be used for history. That the very modest site of Qumran could be viewed in any way as a cause of honour to Herod, to be classified with the palaces of Jericho, Masada, Machaerus or elsewhere, does not convince. Doudna and Avni, by contrast, show a refined, scholarly and discursive mode of writing with judicious assessments, and this book is to be read for their interesting studies as much as for Stacey's proposals.

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Peter Alpass, *The Religious Life of Nabataea*. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 175. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xvi + 256, incl. 56 illustrations. €134.00/\$174.00. ISBN:978-9-00-419051-1.

In this book, which is based on the author's PhD thesis (Durham University, 2011), Peter Alpass attempts to provide a new study of the religion of the

Nabataeans by emphasising the variety of religious practices and beliefs across the territory they controlled from the 4th century BCE until the Roman annexation of Provincia Arabia in 106 CE. As stated in the introduction to the volume (Ch. 1), his work aims to explore whether ‘we can discern any coherent religious system at play that is distinctive to the Nabataean kingdom’ (p. 8). Faced with the vast and disparate body of evidence (epigraphic, historical, iconographical and archaeological) pertaining to the religious life of Nabataea, Alpass employs a geographical approach with a focus on the local experience of the worshippers (p. 8). Thus, the following five chapters each deals with a different urban centre or region of the Nabataean kingdom (Ch. 2: Petra; Ch. 3: Hegra; Ch. 4: the Negev; Ch. 5: the Hauran; Ch. 6: central Nabataea, i.e. Khirbet Tannur, Khirbet Dharih and Dhat Ras) with a survey of the key material in its context.

This methodology, he claims, is what distinguishes his work from the fundamental monograph of John Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans: a Conspectus* (Brill, 2001), which categorises the material according to the different deities and, according to Alpass, downplays variety at the expense of seeking a coherent religious system (p. 5). However, while Alpass’ work presents an intelligible and readable synthesis of the local religious traditions at play within the Nabataean kingdom, and an exploration of the problems of defining a specifically ‘Nabataean’ religion, one is left with the impression that what we have here is a rehashing of the material that has already been superbly examined by Healey just a decade ago. Furthermore, in an effort to differ from previous scholarly approaches and to emphasise variety at the regional level, Alpass’ work may even be said to run the risk of downplaying the importance of what may be the so-called ‘Nabataean’ elements of the evident religious practices.

In his conclusion (Ch. 7), he rightly asserts that three key aspects emerge as consistent throughout the Nabataean kingdom: the aniconic tradition of representing the gods, ritual feasting and the prominence of the god Dushara. Since the former two practices are also common to the Near East and Mediterranean area in general, he concludes that it is the combination of the three aspects that expresses a distinctly Nabataean identity (p. 238). At this point, it would have been fruitful to explore how the individual elements were interpreted by the Nabataeans, which ultimately resulted in a recognisably ‘Nabataean’ form and appearance—seen, for example, in the particular arrangement and design of the rock-cut triclinia at Petra and the ‘idol blocks’ (i.e. betyls). Nevertheless, Alpass insists on the lack of ‘uniformity of religious practice throughout Nabataea’ and the existence of many different religious traditions in the kingdom (pp. 239–240), a conclusion that is to be expected when

one focuses on the local level of religious experience.

With Alpass' PhD thesis previously accessible online (Durham e-Theses), readers will notice that in fact very little has been modified for publication, and the majority of the chapters are reproduced almost word for word. Thus, the book regrettably has the character of a thesis (for e.g. the catalogue of inscriptions at the end of Ch. 2: pp. 88–109 and the detailed footnotes). In addition, despite the hiatus between the defence of the thesis and its publication, the bibliography has not been updated—with the latest references dating no later than 2010. This is unfortunate, because since then several new and important volumes have been published that include articles on Nabataean religion (for e.g. Nehmé & Wadeson 2012; Blome *et al.* 2012; Kiraz and al-Salameen 2012) as well as reports on recent archaeological fieldwork (for e.g. Robert Wenning's work on the Petra Niches Project and Laurent Tholbecq's surveys on Jabal Numeir and Jabal Khubthah). The recent appearance of Judith McKenzie's volumes on the important sanctuary at Khirbet Tannur (2013), while obviously too late to be incorporated into Alpass' work, are also a rich source of new material pertaining to Nabataean religious practices and could have been utilised to provide a better scope to his work.

There are abundant images provided in this monograph, but many have been produced at a low quality and in fact appear in Healey's 2001 volume at a higher resolution. Unfortunately, Alpass has also relied on old plans of Dalman, several of which are inaccurate and have since been updated. In this volume, Alpass displays a good grasp of the material and manages to present it clearly and coherently, as well as exploring current issues and debates concerning the topic. For this reason, his work may prove useful as an introductory text book for students. Unfortunately, it provides scholarship with little in the way of new insights and does not radically change our view of religion in the Nabataean world.

Blome, P., Schmid, S., and Nimry, F. eds. (2012). *Sheikh Ibrahim and Petra 1812–2012, Exhibition Volume* (Basel).

Kiraz, G., and al-Salameen, Z., eds. (2012). *From Ugarit to Nabataea: Studies in Honor of John F. Healey* (Piscataway, NJ).

McKenzie, J. et al. (2013). *The Nabataean Temple at Khirbet et-Tannur, Jordan*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Boston).

Nehmé L., and Wadeson L., eds. (2012). *The Nabataeans in Focus: Current Archaeological Research at Petra* (Oxford).

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Manfred Weippert, *Götterwort in Menschenmund: Studien zur Prophetie in Assyrien, Israel und Juda*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 252. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014. Pp. 304. €84.99. ISBN 978-3-525-53613-1.

For many decades the second millennium BCE prophetic texts from Mari have been the subject of intense study and comparison with the Hebrew Bible. Before 1997, however, when Simo Parpola published an edition with English translation, the prophetic texts from the reigns of the 7th century Neo-Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal were almost ignored in biblical scholarship. Although they were contemporary with several of the biblical prophets, only a few sporadic attempts were made to study them; following initial efforts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they appear to have been almost completely forgotten until the 1970s. Nowadays, by contrast, they are included as standard in all studies of the biblical prophets.

Manfred Weippert, a senior scholar from Heidelberg, was one of the first to draw renewed attention to these texts' importance. Although he began work on them as early as 1971, when few even recognized them as prophetic, and when they were just referred to as 'oracles' without further discussion, his first main publication to deal with them directly dates from 1981. That extended paper and seven others dating down to 2002 are usefully collected here; some are well known but others were published in obscure, and in two cases even 'private' publications, so that few scholars will be aware of the complete corpus. An appendix and postscript are added as new material.

In addition to introducing this material to readers, so that there is an inevitable degree of overlap between some of the papers, Weippert was particularly interested in the form and genre of these texts, and he also had a good eye in consequence for some of the features which they often shared in common. Among these he noted in particular the saying to the Assyrian kings 'do not fear' and the way in which the divinity was introduced as 'I am X.' These two features led him (correctly) to identify the closest parallels in the biblical prophets with Isaiah 40–55, usually thought to have been written in Babylon during the exilic period, not very long after the Neo-Assyrian prophecies which have survived. There too we find frequent use of the 'fear not' formula, which Weippert therefore argues is not likely to have been part of a priestly oracle, as had often been previously thought, and also the characteristic divine self-presentation as 'I am the Lord.'

Apart from the value of having this pioneering research so conveniently collected (and indeed, one or two of the papers deserve to be regarded as classics), Weippert has also taken the sensible decision not to attempt to update them (though they are now attractively printed to a standard format). While some reviewers have the habit

of regretting that older work has not been revised, I share with Weippert the view that these essays played their important part in the history of biblical research at the time they were written and in the state of knowledge which then prevailed. Research has moved on since then, not least because of his work (and also because of the wider familiarity of the material following Parpola's edition), so that an update would have been misleading. Rather, he sensibly reserves his current contribution to the two new elements—an appendix which gives a German translation of the texts which Parpola edited and then a postscript of nearly 20 pages with interesting comments on several topics. First, he outlines the course of his own engagement with the material and the circumstances in which he studied it; second, he discusses the definition of 'prophecy,' a subject which crops up in several of his earlier papers and on which there has been considerable discussion since; third, he surveys some recent discussions on the second millennium material, and finally he reflects at greater length on more recent work on the Neo-Assyrian material.

On this latter topic, he correctly observes that most recent attention has shifted to a proposal that the slightly earlier 8th century prophets (Amos, Hosea, and the first part of Isaiah), usually considered to be primarily prophets of judgment, should be seen rather, like their Neo-Assyrian counterparts, as offering words of support and encouragement to the kings of Israel and Judah, with the judgment oracles added only later in the light of bitter historical experience. Weippert notes that not everyone agrees with these new proposals and he leaves the subject undecided. To those he lists in his concluding footnote, the present reviewer might add his own recent essay on this subject in relation to Isaiah in R. P. Gordon and H. M. Bartsad (eds.), *"Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela": Prophecy in Israel, Assyria, and Egypt in the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 273–300. In my opinion, Weippert was much nearer the mark when he found the genuine parallels in Isaiah 40–55 and that the speculations which radically revise previous opinions of earlier prophets fail to take a number of other important considerations into account. It is much to be hoped, therefore, that this welcome publication will help to restore a proper balance to this important source of comparative data for the study of the Hebrew prophets.

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Adam Zertal (ed.), *El-Ahwat, A Fortified Site from the Early Iron Age Near Nahal 'Iron, Israel: Excavations 1993–2000*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 24. Leiden: Brill, 2012. Pp. xix + 485 incl. illustrations and maps. €125.00/\$185.00. ISBN:978–9–00417–645–4.

Adam Zertal, editor of this volume and director of the excavations at El-Ahwat, studied archaeology at Tel Aviv University's Institute of Archaeology. That institute stressed the value of archaeological surveying, and Zertal belongs to the generation of students (along with Yehuda Dagan, Israel Finkelstein, Rafi Frankel, Zvi Gal, Zvi Lederman, and Avi Ofer) of Moshe Kochavi and others that continued that tradition for some forty years. Zertal's area was Manasseh, or northern Samaria. One can confidently state that nobody knows the archaeology of this area better than he does. His life-long investment of time and effort has resulted in several impressive publications, the most recent being Zertal 2004 and 2008. Most of Zertal's excavations stem from this survey, and this was the case of El-Ahwat, the most extensive of his excavations. The volume reviewed here is the final report of that excavation.

The text is divided into four main sections (following a brief introduction): stratigraphy, architecture and chronology according to areas (pp. 21–177); the finds (181–309); economy and environment (313–407); and conclusions (411–435). A bibliography (436–468) and locus list (469–485) follow. One might wonder why it was decided to put stone objects (313–328) and Ottoman pipes (402–407) under 'economy and environment' and not under 'finds.' Yes, stone objects shed light on economy and environment, but on the other hand, so do the coins (301–309), which are under 'finds.' The introductory material, stratigraphy and conclusions were written by Zertal and staff members of the excavation; the remaining chapters were written by both staff members and invited specialists.

The stratigraphy/architecture/chronology section provides a fairly straightforward discussion of what is, more or less, a single-period (Iron Age I) site partially covered by later material. What is commendable is that the interpretations of the architecture are presently separately from the basic descriptions. One can take issue with some interpretations presented, however. Is there enough evidence to claim that Complex 100 was the Egyptian governor's house (78–80, 434)? Is the city wall indicative of nuraghic (Sardinian) influence brought to the Levant by Shardana (one of the Sea-Peoples) mercenaries? Does it even date to the Iron Age (see below)? Is there evidence for two phases within the Iron I to complement the earlier and later pottery assemblages argued for in the pottery chapter?

The pottery chapter is a competently written typological study. It paints a picture, however, of not such a short-lived site as argued by Zertal and Brandl

(262–263) but rather one that has an early (beginning in the late 13th century) and a late (11th century or so, into Iron IB) phase (200). Two problems arise when one wishes to deal with the pottery in detail. One is the lack of quantitative details (how many of each type), the other the lack of stratigraphic details. Which types occur together? Do some occur in earlier contexts and others in later ones? Would it not be important, for example, to know how many CP1–2 examples, which are transitional LB/Iron I in date, were identified in comparison with CP3–5, which are Iron I? Or if they were found together? Two small points: (1) the possible identification of a krater rim sherd as being Sardinian, as previously suggested by Zertal (Fig. 12.7:2) is not argued in the text; on the contrary, it is thought to be local (426); (2) what the authors call loom weights (i.e., pierced ceramic disks; p. 200 and Fig. 12.14:5–7) might be spindle whorls, but they are certainly not loom weights.

I have few specific comments regarding the non-ceramic finds. Baruch Brandl's detailed study of the scarabs, seals, etc. (233–263) is crucial for the discussion of the chronology of the site (see below). That 89 beads were found (Jack Green, 264–287) in non-funerary contexts supports Green's theory that they were manufactured on-site (280). The ivory caprid head (288–294) is an exceptionally lovely piece. It should be pointed out that the parallel provided from Stratum 7b at Tel Ashdod dates to the 8th century and not "early Iron Age" (p. 292). For completeness-sake I mention here an unpublished parallel identical to the one from Tel Ashdod that was excavated at Tel Dover (southern Golan, on the bank of the Yarmuk River). Oren Cohen's contribution on a bronze linchpin adds another exceptional find; a more recent discussion of the parallel from Ashkelon can be found in Stager 2006.

The analysis of the faunal evidence is only partially represented (fish and shells) in this volume. The main report is missing. Assuming that the faunal specialist did not meet the publication deadline, Zertal could have decided to publish the abstract from a lecture presented at a conference held at Haifa in December 1997 (Kolska-Horwitz 1997) which summarized the results of the faunal analysis—better than nothing. This abstract briefly describes a rather typical assemblage, one dominated by sheep and goat, followed by cattle. Especially telling in that abstract is the concluding sentence: 'These results indicate that the patterns of animal exploitation, characteristic of many Sardinian Nuragic sites, were not practiced at El-Ahwat.' The fish remains are presented by Omri Lernau (362–369). Lernau laments that there are 'only' 50 bones that could be identified taxonomically (362), but that number comprises, to my knowledge, the largest collection from an inland Iron I site in the country. That 36 of these bones were of Nile perch adds to our perception of the volume of trade between Egypt and the Levant in Iron I.

All of the discussions in this volume are competently written and provide the reader with the basic knowledge necessary to understand the excavation results. Readers may agree or disagree with some of Zertal's theories. One might have hoped for him to have tackled Finkelstein's (2002) stratigraphic and chronological criticisms head-on; instead he chose to avoid mentioning them (The reference to Finkelstein 2002 is mentioned only once in the book, in Brandl's chapter on the glyptic finds.) Several questions remain open for future debate. One is the chronological debate. Should one eschew the 14C dates, as Zertal does, in favor of the ceramic and glyptic finds? Or should one rely on the 14C dates and date the ceramics a bit later, into the Megiddo VIA horizon (Finkelstein and Piasezky 2007)? In this reviewer's opinion, it should not be an either-or situation. Rather, two occupational phases need to be recognized; one, to include the early pottery and glyptic finds (late LB/early Iron I), the other the later Iron IB or 11th/early 10th centuries (i.e., Megiddo St. VIA horizon), which would accommodate the 14 C dates and the flanged-rim cooking pots presented in the pottery chapter. Should one accept the interpretation of nuraghic influence in the ethnic makeup of the site's population? If one removes the pottery and the animal bones from the discussion (see above), then one is left only with the features associated with the city wall. If one accepts Finkelstein's theory that the so-called city wall was a terrace wall system built in the Roman period, then Zertal's theory is bereft of evidence.

Readers can accept or reject Zertal's theories. In the end, however, they should welcome the appearance of this final report, which provides all with a basis upon which to make such judgments. Unfortunately, the high price for this volume will prohibit most scholars from purchasing their own personal copy.

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