

THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL ISRAEL CONTINUED

A REVIEW ARTICLE

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The nineteenth century "Quest for the Historical Jesus" was an attempt to strip away the Church's dogma concerning Jesus and discover who he really was. Pursuers of the "historical Jesus" believed he had been obscured by the kerygmatic accretions of the Church. They believed the raw facts of history could be excavated by tearing back the debris of later generations of faith and exposing the real Jesus. Our discussion of the quest for the historical Israel is a "continuation" because of a volume published a decade ago entitled "The Quest for the Historical Israel."¹ It assumed the historical Israel had also been eclipsed by the religiously biased authors of the biblical text.

The prevailing opinion in Old Testament scholarship today continues to be very Bultmannian. Scholars often assert that historicity has no real bearing on the value of the redemptive story contained in the Bible. A dichotomy is usually established between the brute facts of history (German *Historie*) and the *story* of redemption (German *Geschichte*).² The crucial issue becomes whether this story of redemption has become God's word for you through the exercising of your faith. Whether or not there is any historical rootage to Old Testament theology becomes irrelevant.³

In this article, I consider two recent works which share, for the most part, this approach to Old Testament historiography. Both are archaeological in point of departure, and they constitute important new contributions to our understanding of the Old Testament period. The Biblical Archaeological Society has produced *Ancient Israel: A Short History from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, edited by Hershel Shanks (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988). The other volume under consideration here is William G. Dever's *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1990).⁴ As helpful as these books are in advancing our understanding of Old Testament history, they nonetheless demonstrate the sometimes arid results of modern biblical scholarship.

In *Ancient Israel*, leading scholars in Old Testament research give a current state of the field in a convenient, easy-to-read format. After a brief introduction by the editor, eight chapters written by eminent scholars cover the periods of Israel's history: patriarchal age (P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.), Israel in Egypt (Nahum M. Sarna), settlement in Canaan (Joseph A. Callaway), united monarchy (André Lemaire), divided monarchy (Siegfried H. Horn), exile and return (James D. Purvis), age of Hellenism (Lee I. A. Levine) and Roman domination (Shaye J. D. Cohen). These authors honestly grapple with the knotty issues of Israelite historiography, primary among them the nature of the biblical

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evidence. Adding to the quality of the volume are the numerous photographs, many in ravishing color. Unfortunately this has made the volume more expensive than most books its size.

The volume opens with McCarter's excellent, though unnecessarily skeptical survey of current approaches to the patriarchs. After summarizing both the American archaeological approach to the patriarchal narratives (pioneered by Albright, Bright, *et al.*) and the German traditio-historical school (Alt, Noth, *et al.*), McCarter concludes that both methods were flawed to varying degrees. He then seeks to use a modified traditio-historical approach to Genesis 12-50 in order to isolate vestiges of genuine historical details of the patriarchal period and to distinguish these from the tendentious ideology of later generations.

The results are surprisingly close to those of the older German school. McCarter assumes the position that the nation Israel developed from various groups which occupied the central hill country around 1200 B.C. These sheep-herders by trade were joined at the end of the Late Bronze Age by new peoples penetrating the central hill forests. The patriarchal narratives are thus comprised of traditions reflecting the self-understanding of these groups at around 1000 B.C. The genealogical list of patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) resulted from the amalgamation of traditions of different groups, some rooted in the shadowy past; others completely fictional.

McCarter believes many individuals in Genesis were not historical at all, but instead were typological prefigurations of the later Israelites and their neighbors. Abraham is called a "traditional hero" about whom we can know very little, but who later became a figure of tradition and legend. McCarter has no confidence in the historical basis of Genesis 12-25. Isaac and Jacob/Israel are non-historical eponymous ancestors, and Joseph is a traditional hero, like Abraham. Even the Joseph narrative is mostly fictional, being composed after the establishment of the United Monarchy. Most of the other sons of Jacob/Israel are non-historical ancestors of later Israelite clans.

Sarna's chapter on the Egyptian sojourn and the Exodus is the highlight of the volume. Here is a well-written presentation of all the pertinent historical issues of Israel's Egyptian bondage and deliverance, and from a moderate position. Sarna accepts a thirteenth century B.C. date for the exodus and marshals a plethora of archaeological and epigraphical evidence to support it. Throughout his work, he insists these events can not possibly be fictional, as many today would aver.

Joseph A. Callaway's treatment of the settlement in Canaan begins by setting up an unnecessary dichotomy between the accounts of Joshua and Judges. These books are not necessarily at odds with each other concerning the nature of the conquest, especially when one considers the theological purpose for the respective books. Joshua emphasizes the ideological continuum with the Pentateuch and therefore highlights the swift, military occupation of the land as the fulfillment of the Sinai Covenant and its divine promises. Judges, on the other hand, is theologically forward looking, bound in content and essence with Samuel and Kings. Thus it emphasizes the basic failure of the people to complete their covenant responsibilities in occupying the land, and prepares

the reader for the other historical books by displaying their social need for a king.

Callaway's disappointing assessment of the biblical traditions is paralleled by his negative interpretation of the archaeological materials. Though it is true that the archaeological evidence is often contradictory and difficult to interpret in light of biblical evidence, it is not consistently contrary to the written sources. Callaway's skeptical suppositions drive him to conclude that accepting a military conquest is tantamount to "a blind leap of faith" (p. 69). He chooses to believe instead that Israel emerged from a "melting pot" of peoples with lost origins at the beginning of the Iron Age.

Once modern historians reach Israel's United Monarchy, they usually admit that here, finally, we are able to speak with a certain degree of confidence about the factuality of the events being described.⁵ The chapters by Andre Lemaire and Siegfried H. Horn on the Israelite monarchy admit that we are now on more solid foundation historically, though they repeat the usual caveats we have come to expect in this volume: "the biblical account is sometimes tendentious and includes traditions that are not completely reliable as history."⁶ These two chapters are excellent surveys of our present knowledge of the United and Divided Kingdoms, and do an admirable job of combining the biblical data with recent archaeological research. For example, Horn makes judicious use of extra-biblical Hebrew inscriptions from the eighth and sixth centuries B.C. (the Samaria ostraca and the Lachish letters respectively) to illustrate that Josiah's reforms were at least partially effective. The earlier documents contain Baal elements in some of the personal names where you expect a divine name (called theophoric names). But the sixth century letters contained blessings in Yahweh's name, and those personal names containing divine elements were exclusively Yahwistic names. The Josianic reforms clearly had a lasting impact on the society, though they came too late in Judah's history to save her from ruin (pp. 139-141).

On the exile and return, James D. Purvis provides an excellent survey and analysis of all the pertinent issues of this often-neglected period. He also does the reader a great service, in this reviewer's opinion, by assuming the biblical chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah, though he acknowledges the problems inherent in this approach. Purvis is helpful as a corrective to the exceptional and influential volume, now a classic, by John Bright, in which he goes to great lengths to defend the reverse order of Nehemiah/Ezra.⁷

Levine's chapter on the Age of Hellenism contains a wealth of information on the rule of the Hasmoneans and the religious sects so prevalent in the Second Temple period. Levine persuasively demonstrates the deep-seated influence of Hellenism on every aspect of Hasmonean rule, and thus helps to correct the picture portrayed by most other summaries of this period as simply a reaction against Greek paganism and a reassertion of Jewish nationalistic and religious self-determination. It will be of interest to the reader to learn how even the most extreme religious faction of the Second Temple period, i.e. the Essenes of Qumran, were highly influenced by Hellenistic culture (pp. 193-94).

It may well be argued that the history of "Ancient Israel" *per se* need not include a section on Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and the subsequent Roman domination of Judea.⁸ Nevertheless, Shaye Cohen's concluding chapter in this volume on the Roman Domination ("The Jewish Revolt and the Destruction of the Second Temple") contains invaluable insights for intertestamental and New Testament backgrounds.

Although there are many commendable aspects of this volume over all, most of the authors bring an unduly skeptical methodology regarding biblical sources to the task. With few exceptions, the authors emphasize the lack of historical reliability when dealing with the biblical sources. The dichotomy between historicity of biblical events on the one hand, and religious faith on the other is a resounding, even monotonous theme of the book. This is especially regrettable in light of the many other positive features of the work.

One wonders if the authors are not overly sensitive on this point, since the Bible nowhere claims to be a "History of Israel."⁹ The authors consistently use caveats regarding the "tendentious" nature of the sources. Yet all would agree on this point. The Bible is indeed writing about past events from a tendentious, religious point-of-view. But this does not necessitate an *a priori* position that the sources must be handled negatively and with skepticism. The editor remarked in his introduction that even where stories are definitely not historical, this fact does not "diminish the power or meaning of these stories" (p. xvii). But can this really be true wherever biblical authors based their religious concepts on the historicity of certain events? Biblical authors frequently appeal to events for validation and depend on their veracity. Thus "historical verification of the events will make possible the acceptance of the theological assertions."¹⁰

A balanced approach admits that the biblical narratives are founded upon an interpretation of certain events as historical. The mere factuality of the events would not in itself prove the validity of the Old Testament faith perspective.¹¹ Nonetheless, the particular expression of faith contained in the Bible is squarely established on the historicity of the events described. The words of John Goldingay regarding the patriarchal narratives are appropriate in critiquing this volume in general.

The narrative builds its interpretation on the factuality of the patriarchal events, so that without this factuality, faith in Yahweh as the giver of blessing, the one who keeps his promises, the God of grace, and so on, may be true but is nevertheless groundless. If they are not fundamentally factual, the patriarchal narratives have sense but not reference . . . Historical factuality is a necessary though not a sufficient basis for faith.¹²

With this single caveat in mind, I can heartily and without hesitation recommend this book as an up-to-date, concise survey of the history of Israel.

The same cannot be said, however, for the next volume under consideration here. In *Recent Archaeological Discoveries*, Dever first addresses what the proper relationship should be between biblical and archaeological studies,

then presents three case studies: the conquest, the United Monarchy and the religious cult in ancient Israel.

William Dever is known for his disdain for the older, and in his opinion out-dated, "Biblical Archaeology" school. As in his numerous other writings, Dever here rails against the classical definition and practice of "Biblical Archaeology" so prevalent from the 1920s to the 1960s.¹³ He again emphasizes that Biblical Archaeology became a handmaiden to biblical studies, and as such, was primarily an amateurish and underdeveloped field of study. It was only after the death of W.F. Albright and a series of other developments that Dever was able to pronounce Biblical Archaeology dead, and a new secular discipline grew to take its place: Syro-Palestinian archaeology. In the first chapter of this volume, Dever highlights the inadequacies of the Bible as a source for history writing, traces again the failures and eventual death of Biblical Archaeology, and then defines the proper role for Syro-Palestinian archaeology as an equal partner to biblical studies.

In our age of narrow specialization and individual parochialism, the isolation of Syro-Palestinian archaeology was inevitable, and to a certain degree desirable. In several other publications, Dever has written the agenda for what he considers a new discipline ("Syro-Palestinian Archaeology"), and he should be commended for his ground-breaking achievements. But like many other pioneering scholars, Dever overstates his case. In this new volume, he flatly avers that "archaeology can comment only on historical problems, not theological ones" (p. 3).

Of course, by definition of "archaeology" this is true. But since the Bible combines history and faith in an intimate relationship, even intertwines them irrevocably, biblical studies must involve historical investigation. The study of Israel's faith cannot be divorced from a study of her history, and ultimately of modern archaeological research, whether we call it "biblical" or "Syro-Palestinian." Dever's distinction between history and theology may be necessary early on in the process of archaeological interpretation, but it is artificial at best in a work dedicated to archaeology and "biblical research."¹⁴

Dever further clouds the issue by labelling the Bible a "curated artifact." Archaeologists use this designation for artifacts which are not found *in situ* (i.e., in their original setting), but are found in a secondary context. They have been "curated" in the sense they have been deliberately preserved or altered and usually put to a somewhat different use. This, in Dever's opinion, is an appropriate way to view the Bible's preservation through the centuries. Unlike other artifacts, the Bible was never lost to be rediscovered later by modern archaeologists.

But the Bible is different from "curated artifacts" in at least one essential aspect. Dever states that artifacts "do not come conveniently labelled as to what they are, or what they mean . . . [the message] is in a code that we must decipher" (p. 9). Surely this is an inappropriate and even naive perspective of the Bible. There is a definite sense in which the Bible *does* come pre-labelled. Unlike other artifacts, the Bible bears certain specific claims for itself which the reader must accept or reject. Those claims not only speak to the nature

of the Bible itself, as both a theological and historical document, but also to the nature of the human condition. On the basis of both history and theology, it lays claim to the reader's life. Instead of an artifact with a coded message to be deciphered, the Bible's message is transparent and inescapable.

Professor Dever's second chapter is entitled "The Israelite Settlement in Canaan: New Archaeological Models" (pp. 37-84). Like the chapter by Callaway discussed above, Dever also begins his discussion of the conquest by assuming the ideological and historical dichotomy between the books of Joshua and Judges. He states boldly, "The book of Judges, with its account of gradual Israelite infiltration and assimilation in Canaan, is diametrically opposed to the story of Joshua, which is one of overwhelming military victories" (p. 42).

This is crucial to his argument, since it sets up a bogus choice one is forced to make: either Joshua or Judges is true, but not both. Later in the chapter he asserts that Judges is more "realistic and thus more historically reliable" (p. 79). But the dichotomy he assumes between these two biblical sources is misleading. It is inaccurate, in the first place, to picture the Book of Judges as an "account of gradual Israelite infiltration and assimilation in Canaan." This approach also fails to take into account the literary and canonical purposes of Joshua and Judges (see our discussion of Callaway above).

One of the values of Dever's book is the survey he presents of archaeological evidence and theories regarding the conquest. His evaluation of the American position established by Albright and his students is uncomplimentary and Dever views their emphasis on a military invasion and conquest as *passé*. He is less critical, though still not convinced, by the older German "peaceful infiltration" model. What this reviewer found surprising was Dever's total acceptance of the "peasants' revolt" model first articulated by G. E. Mendenhall in 1962, and given full definition by Norman Gottwald in his burdensome 1979 volume *The Tribes of Yahweh* (over 900 difficult pages),¹⁵ which Dever praises as "probably the most important book to appear in Biblical (OT) studies in the past twenty years" (p. 55). In light of Professor Dever's subtitle to this chapter ("New Archaeological Models"), we might have expected a new alternative to the evidence of Israel's occupation of the Promised Land. But instead, he simply adds his voice to the limited number of scholars supporting the Gottwald hypothesis.

As always, even archaeological material requires careful scrutiny and interpretation. Dever's basic premises are periodically marred by logical inconsistencies. Page 61 reveals one of his most startling assertions: "it may be stated confidently that the archaeological evidence today is overwhelmingly against the classic conquest model of Israelite origins." But this is a logical *non sequitur* since it constitutes the conclusion for a section in which he has listed at least eight cities (perhaps as many as ten) which yield archaeological findings consonant with the biblical witness of just such a conquest model (pp. 56-61).¹⁶

Dever's third chapter ("Monumental Art and Architecture in Ancient Israel in the Period of the United Monarchy") is a survey of the building remains

of the Davidic-Solomonic period.¹⁷ This chapter is a convenient compendium of archaeological material from the tenth century B.C. which produced the earliest and most impressive evidence of Israelite material culture and monumental architecture. Dever's systematic presentation of individual sites, fortifications (i.e. city walls and gates), and royal buildings, including an interesting discussion of Solomon's temple complex is a useful update on the most recent archaeological parallels to the biblical witness in Samuel and Kings.

The final chapter of Professor Dever's volume is entitled "Archaeology Reconstructs the Lost Background of the Israelite Cult" (pp. 119-66). After complaining that previous studies are arbitrary and fail to present a genuine history of ancient Israelite religion, Dever outlines a "phenomenological" or "functionalist" methodology for this chapter. He defines these terms as a characteristic of the *Religionsgeschichte* ("history of religions") approach. Dever asserts that this approach is superior to earlier methods such as literary criticism and Biblical Theology. It is phenomenological because it "concentrates on ancient religion itself, rather than on its modern relevance," and functional in that it "emphasizes not just theoretical belief but the overall role religion plays in actually shaping society" (pp. 126-27).

But this raises a question addressed over sixty years ago by Walther Eichrodt. Is it possible to write a genuinely "objective" history of Israelite religion? All of us, whether attempting a history of religion, or a distinctively Christian Old Testament theology, must confess to what Eichrodt calls "the subjective moment."¹⁸ It becomes the responsibility of the scholar to make clear his or her guiding assumptions and values, and not to "set to work in the cheery optimism of absolute objectivity." It appears that Dever is guilty of historicism's greatest mistake, as defined by Eichrodt: "the suggestion that one can, by historical-empirical means, advance to norms or to universally valid propositions."

The heart of this chapter on archaeology and Israelite religion is a well-illustrated presentation of the material remains of the Israelite cult (pp. 128-62). Here the reader will discover a convenient, brief survey of archaeological artifacts bearing on the religious customs and practices of ancient Israel, though many will disagree with Dever's interpretations. He discusses Israelite shrines, both large, open-air cult places and smaller domestic installations. In addition, he presents religious paraphernalia used at these shrines and Hebrew seals and seal impressions, with their impressive art and iconography. Of particular interest in this chapter is Dever's rather controversial interpretation of the recent Kuntillet 'Ajrud discoveries, which he believes identify for the first time the old Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah (the consort of El at Ugarit) as the consort of Yahweh.¹⁹

The working hypothesis running as an undercurrent throughout this chapter is the assumption that "Israelite religion scarcely differed from the fertility religions of greater Canaan" (p. 128). The author believes that philosophical monotheism was a late, exilic development, and that Israelite religion was syncretistic, combining aspects of Yahweh worship with Canaanite religion throughout the monarchic period. The early Israelite cult was officially

monolatrous instead of monotheistic. He asserts that priestly parties of Jerusalem produced the biblical texts quite late and expunged the accounts of syncretistic tendencies. Since the biblical evidence is late, the archaeological evidence is primary, and those who depend too heavily on biblical evidence are "bibliophiles."

Once again, Dever has assumed a starting premise which many will find objectionable. He nowhere explains what is intended by the chapter title "the Lost Background of the Israelite Cult." What exactly does Professor Dever assume is lost? In his conclusion to this chapter, he summarizes the primary features of the pre-Monarchic Israelite cult based on the archaeological record (p. 165). But in reality, the summary is consonant with the evidence presented in the Book of Judges. The biblical witness indicates that Israel indeed struggled with syncretistic tendencies. Even throughout the monarchy, the official religion of Jerusalem was constantly challenged by vestiges of Canaanite religious practices, as the biblical sources admit. In this sense, Professor Dever's presentation fails to recover the "lost background" of ancient Israel's cult, simply because it was never really lost.

Dever has done those of us who are non-specialists in archaeology a great service in collecting these data in one place. But many readers will object to his basic premises. He has overemphasized the continuity between Canaanite and Israelite religion and culture. Without doubt, there are many points of continuity. But the picture of religion in Palestine during the late Bronze and early Iron Ages is far from monolithic, as Dever would have us believe.²⁰

Many will further object to Dever's assertion that Israelite religion was syncretistic throughout the monarchic period. The Bible clearly portrays an ideological struggle between Israelite Yahwism and Canaanite religion during this period. The archaeological evidence reveals the pervasiveness of Canaanite practices in Israel and fills out details of the struggle. But the evidence is insufficient to claim, as Dever does, that the struggle was actually a theological retrojection from the exile into the pre-exilic period, a sort of historical revisionism.

In the conclusion to his book, Dever avers that limitations are placed on the biblical message when one supposes "that the truth of the story lies in its historicity" (p. 170). Having repeatedly decried the historical reliability of biblical evidence several times in this volume, he expresses the consensus of many Old Testament scholars today when he states "religious consciousness leaps beyond event to meaning" (p. 172).

This brings us back to the central question in our quest for the historical Israel: How does the Bible itself view past events? How do the authors of the biblical texts, collectively and individually, perceive history and its role in their message? In point of fact, the Bible consistently presents theological truth as intrinsically bound to historical events. Throughout the scriptures, there are numerous passages which make clear the historical nature of Israelite faith, especially as faith relates to covenant between God and humanity.²¹ From the biblical perspective, spiritual reality is always fleshed out in historical reality. So human faith always involves works, and from the divine perspective, revela-

tion is always incarnational.

In short, the quest for the historical Israel is incomplete unless it comes to grips with Israel's views of the past and her expression of history as a means of faith. Those approaches are inadequate which emphasize the religious value of the text while at the same time denouncing the basic historicity of the story. We must recognize that biblical religion itself insists on the historicity of certain events as the foundation for faith, indeed, as the compulsion for faith. This is true no less for the exodus, conquest, etc. of Old Testament faith, than for the cross and resurrection in the New Testament.

ENDNOTES

¹ George W. Ramsey, *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Reconstructing Israel's Early History* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

² So that, for example in New Testament studies, the resurrection of Jesus may be said to be true as *Geschichte* (history-as-significance, and is therefore "historic"), but not true as *Historie* (history-as-fact, and therefore "historical"). Likewise, in Old Testament studies, the historical nature of many redemptive events is called into question.

³ Ramsey concluded his volume (*Quest*, 124) by asserting that it matters little whether biblical tradition tells of events which never occurred, or of persons who never existed: "This does not alter the fact that the tradition has spoken to believers for generation after generation with power and expressed things which they believed to be true. The tradition 'rang true' in their own experience and enabled them to develop a self-understanding and a lifestyle." Such a position has tremendous implications for one's view of revelation and inspiration.

⁴ Shanks' volume brings together contributions of leading Old Testament scholars who each contribute one chapter on Israel's history. Dever's book is the publication of a lectureship which he delivered at the University of Washington.

⁵ As with the classical statement of Martin Noth (*The History of Israel* [2d ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1960] 5-7 and 179.) But more recently, even the United Monarchy has been treated with a certain amount of historical "agnosticism." See J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 159-60, and G. Garbini, *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* (New York: Crossroads, 1988) 31-32. For a review of Miller-Hayes and Garbini, see Mark W. Chavalas, "New Perspectives in the Study of Ancient Israel's Past," *Ashland Theological Journal* 23 (1991) 62-66.

⁶ Lemaire, p. 85. Siegfried Horn's comments are more generous. He asserts in a most unbiased fashion, that the biblical authors were "more concerned

with the religious life of their heroes than with the political life of Israel" (p. 109).

⁷ *A History of Israel* (3rd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 391-402. Bright's modified theory of the reverse order dates Ezra to *circa* 428 on the basis of a textual adjustment of Ezra 7:7-8, in which Ezra is dated to the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I, instead of the seventh year as the text now stands. For an excellent survey of the problem, and a recent balanced discussion, see H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (Word Biblical Commentary 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) xxxix-xliv.

⁸ This is related to the interesting theological problem of a lack of clear ending for Old Testament history. The Old Testament simply ends without a terminus; its denouement is conspicuous by its absence. Judaism projects the unfinished business of the Old Testament through Pharisaic tradition (through the Mishnah culminating in the Talmud). But for the Christian, the truths of the Old Testament crystallized in Christ. For an excellent discussion, see Bright, *History* 458-64.

⁹ For a balanced view of the role of history in Old Testament theology, see Elmer A. Martens, "The Oscillating Fortunes of 'History' within Old Testament Theology," *Faith, Tradition and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (ed. D. W. Baker, et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

¹⁰ John Goldingay, "'That You May Know that Yahweh is God': A Study in the Relationship between Theology and Historical Truth in the Old Testament," *Tyndale Bulletin* 23 (1972) 64.

¹¹ As T. L. Thompson makes clear at the conclusion of his influential book (*The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* [BZAW 133; Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 1974] 326-30).

¹² "The Patriarchs in Scripture and History," *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives* (ed. A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 27-29 and 34.

¹³ See William G. Dever, "Archaeological Method in Israel: A Continuing Revolution," *Biblical Archaeologist* 43.1 (1980) 40-48; idem, "Syro-Palestinian and Biblical Archaeology," *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* (ed. D.A. Knight and G. M. Tucker; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) 31-74, and idem, "The New Archaeology," *Biblical Archaeologist* 50.3 (1987) 150-151.

¹⁴ The first chapter of Dever's book contains a statement which may be something of a personal emancipation for him: "Questions of faith, while paramount to me, are not necessarily related to my historical research, . . . It is incumbent upon me to suspend judgment on questions of faith while I, as ar-

chaeologist and scholar, pursue the historical quest for which I have been professionally prepared" (p. 36). The difficulty with this postulate is that it fails to account for the role of faith which is historical in nature. If one's faith has historical rootage, as I believe biblical faith must, then historical research and faith can not be so estranged. They must inform each other.

¹⁵ *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979).

¹⁶ This type of overstatement will not be new to readers familiar with Dever's writings. This volume contains several confident pronouncements. "Modern scholarship has shown *beyond doubt* that [the Pentateuch] is encrusted with much later tradition; and, above all, that it is heavily edited by the late redactors who assembled the Hebrew Bible in its present form" (p. 7). "There is *no evidence whatsoever* in the material culture to suggest that the Israelites originated outside Palestine, or that more than an insignificant number of them came from a pastoral nomadic background" (p. 79, emphasis mine). At one point, Dever avers that his conclusion is "only likely to be enhanced by future archaeological research" (p. 78).

¹⁷ The text of this chapter is almost identical to an earlier article published by Dever ("Monumental Architecture in Ancient Israel in the Period of the United Monarchy," *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* [ed. T. Ishida; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982] 269-306). Even the illustrations (charts, maps and many archaeological diagrams) have only been slightly altered. The footnotes have been condensed considerable however, and the serious reader will want to refer to the previously published article for details in the secondary literature.

¹⁸ For quotes from Eichrodt in this paragraph and a further discussion of this problem, see "Does Old Testament Theology Still Have Independent Significance within Old Testament Scholarship?," *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology, 1930-1990* (ed. Ben C. Ollenburger, et al.; SBTS 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 33-34.

¹⁹ See his more detailed treatment in "Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *BASOR* 255 (1984) 21-37. The literature on this relatively new evidence is already extensive and growing, and its proper interpretation is far from certain. See most recently, Richard S. Hess, "Yahweh and His Asherah? Epigraphic Evidence for Religious Pluralism in Old Testament Times," *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism* (ed. A. D. Clarke and B. W. Winter; Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1991) 5-33, especially 11-23.

²⁰ For an example of differences between Canaanite and Israelite material remains, see Miriam Tadmor, "Female Cult Figurines in Late Canaan and

Early Israel: Archaeological Evidence," *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. T. Ishida; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982) 139-73.

²¹ Among many which could be cited here, see especially the following: Exod 19:4; Deut 1-4; Deut 26:5-9; Joshua 24; Acts 2:29-36; Acts 3:11-16; Acts 7:1-53; Acts 13:16-38; Acts 17:31.

