

other words, just how “scientific” is archaeological evidence when viewed through the prism of the opinions of archaeologists? And how “scientific” is it to utilise one’s own opinions about particular artefacts and translate those into “historical” evidence concerning a particular period when other archaeologists have quite different opinions and would use the same evidence to amplify our knowledge of quite a different period? This Reich does in the case of Kenyon’s proto-Aeolian capital found in Jerusalem, assigning it to the late eighth century BCE at the earliest without mentioning that Kenyon thought it was from the tenth/ninth century BCE. Indeed, in the case of that particular artefact, the date can never be secure because it was found not *in situ* but rather in debris from the Babylonian destruction and thus dating it earlier will always be conjectural to some extent.

In keeping with the accepted practice of archaeologists, there is an explicit separation of archaeological evidence and Biblical story. This separation is extended to the Amarna Letters which are decried as mere “text”. Although this is done by other archaeologists also (Magrit Steiner for instance) one wonders why this should be so. The Amarna Letters had not been copied and recopied like the Bible and are as much of an archaeological artefact as the bullae found by the Spring and which Reich sets much store by. The answer probably lies in a limited understanding of the nature of ancient texts whose context is not immediately apparent and which need to be assessed in terms of 1) the semantic field of the vocabulary that appears in them 2) the literary genre to which they belong 3) their context within the literary, social, economic and political world of the time. Yet there are times when Reich does make use of texts and in ways that help to advance our knowledge of Jerusalem. His convincing theory about the names for the waterways - Siloam prior to the Exile and Gihon after the Exile - is linked with Isa 8:16 and 2 Chron 32:30. He purports that the earlier name for the Gihon Spring was En Shemesh. He derives support for this theory from Josh 18:17 and his personal observation of the effect of the sun (shemesh) upon the spring.

Generally speaking, there is an unacknowledged aspect amongst some scholars of the relationship between the archaeology of Israel and the Bible. In the case of the present work which claims to base itself on archaeology, its appeal to the popular imagination is encapsulated in the name “City of David” which alludes to 2 Sam 5:6-9 where it is claimed that David captured the city and called it after his own name. Indeed it is because of the stories in the “Book of Books”, as Reich calls the Bible on one occasion, that the early history of Jerusalem is of interest to so many people throughout the world who are potential buyers of his volume! Time and further research, both archaeological and textual, will tell whether in the future the “history” of Jerusalem conforms more closely to the Biblical story, particularly in the period of the early monarchy, than Reich and others see it as doing at present.

Anne E. Gardner  
Monash University

**James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith: A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture*, Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2012, 542pp, ISBN 9781433525711, USD 35.**

Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey

This substantial volume is the outcome of a colloquium at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in February 2009. It was prompted by Kenton L. Sparks’ *God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* (Baker Academic, 2008) and we are told that ‘the authors of the present book, a number of whom are world-class archaeologists, calmly extend invitation by implication to Professor Sparks, and others, to consider the validity of his errancy proposal’ (14). One may assume from this that the book is an argument for the inerrancy of Scripture as advocated by Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church until the nineteenth century, and some modern-day American evangelical Christians; but for those who read on, the situation may not be so clear-cut.

The book is arranged in five parts, the titles of which demonstrate its theological character; Biblical, Systematic, and Historical Theology; The Old Testament and Issues of History, Authenticity, and Authority; The New Testament and Issues of History, Authenticity, and Authority; The Old Testament and Archaeology. It has received many favourable theological reviews by evangelical scholars, but it has largely passed the archaeological community by. The archaeological contributors are active field workers, but as seminary based scholars, they work within a theological environment.

After reading Dr Arbino’s paper in this edition of *Buried History*, archaeologists who wish to engage with evangelical theology may also dip into this volume. However the repeated refutation of Sparks’ book does often lessen the general relevance of the material. For example, the first paper by Thomas H. McCall on ‘Religious Epistemology’ draws attention to a couple of relevant recent developments in the philosophy of knowledge and discusses how epistemology may relate to critical biblical scholarship. This is a reminder that people approach information and reach decisions in different ways and, as such, does have some relevance to archaeological research. However a significant portion of the paper deals with Sparks’ chapter on epistemology and hermeneutics and is the first of a number of such discussions in the book resulting in a zero-sum game.

Mark Thompson’s ‘Toward a Theological Account of Biblical Inerrancy’ begins by suggesting that the idea of inerrancy was not expounded until the veracity of Scripture was questioned in the nineteenth century. Both Warfield and the Chicago Statement maintain that the inerrant autographs are effectively the same as the current Bible. Thompson appears to look favourably on the definition of inerrancy by Paul Feinberg who proposed

that ‘Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs when properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, . . .’ (81). This has eschatological and hermeneutical dimensions. Thompson argues that conservative scholars have always realised that difficulties with the text of Scripture may remain unresolved for the present. He also says that biblical inerrancy ‘should not be misused as a way of shielding any particular interpretation of a biblical text from evaluation’ (82).

Thompson concludes that ‘inerrancy almost inevitably becomes distorted when it becomes the most important thing we want to say about Scripture’ (97). While theologians may have other things to say about Scripture, for the study of archaeology and history this is the supreme take it or leave it affirmation; tacit inerrancy of extant biblical texts leaves very little room for the exploration of meaning and great potential for accusations of heresy.

The historicity of the Exodus is a thread running through much of the book and is discussed directly by James Hoffmeier. He takes issue with Sparks because he ignores his own book *Ancient Israel in Sinai*. The fact is that biblical scholars who ignore the work of Egyptologists Hoffmeier and Kitchen when dealing with the Ramesside period should not be taken seriously. Hoffmeier devotes most of his paper demonstrating that the Exodus is important for all Old Testament writers; it is the founding narrative of ancient Israel.

A number of contributions draw on archaeological and epigraphic data. In a paper entitled ‘The Culture of Prophecy and Writing in the Ancient Near East’ John Hilber examines prophetic writings from Mari and Nineveh to show that ‘Ancient culture respected the connection between prophets and the texts that bear their names’ (241). While acknowledging that the Old Testament prophetic books have complex structures, Hilber argues that it can not be assumed that scribes ignored these conventions.

Alan Millard’s paper ‘Daniel in Babylon: *an Accurate Record?*’ explains how many apparent errors in the Book of Daniel have come into question with archaeological discoveries. Readers of Professor Millard’s paper will appreciate the complexity of Neo-Babylonian history and will, hopefully, be less inclined to reach superficial conclusions. When discussing Darius the Mede he references Professor Donald Wiseman, to whom this volume is dedicated, and only mentions Professor Sparks in the final sentence to expose his underlying bias. This paper makes no extravagant claims and is a model of scholarly analysis.

Tom Davis was director of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute in Nicosia and contributes a paper entitled ‘Saint Paul on Cyprus: *The Transformation of an Apostle*’. He describes the cultural milieu of first century Cyprus where Paul, as a Christian, first stepped into the Roman world and began his mission to the Gentiles. This paper is seminal for anyone seeking to un-

derstand the Apostle Paul and the context of Acts chapter 13. With some justification, Davis describes Cyprus as the ‘crucible’ of Christianity (423).

The core of John Monson’s paper, ‘Enter Joshua: *The “Mother of Current Debates” in Biblical Archaeology*’, is an analysis of the Hebrew text and the historical geography associated with the Ai campaign. He gives a ‘plausible and understandable reconstruction’ (452). Only in the last paragraph is there a suggestion of the meaning of the Joshua narrative, but sadly this was not the context to develop the topic.

Rick Hess surveys the evidence for Israelite religion, including the Kuntillet ‘Ajrud discovery, in ‘Yahweh’s “Wife” and Belief in One God in the Old Testament’ to demonstrate that it does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that monotheism was a late Iron Age phenomenon. Personal names, in particular, demonstrate the complexity of belief patterns during this period.

Khirbet Qeiyafa is a large single period site that is becoming crucial for Iron Age archaeology. Michael Hasel is one of the excavators and summarises their current understanding of the site in his paper, ‘New Excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa and the Early History of Judah’. As a large, unoccupied single-period site, Hasel is probably right to see it as a future type site for Iron Age I. It will also probably be the final nail in the coffin of the Low Chronology.

The final paper, ‘The Archaeology of David and Solomon: *Method or Madness?*’, is a summary of the debate about David and Solomon by Steve Ortiz. The Low Chronology does not fair well, but it is more important to acknowledge that new research approaches, such as State Formation Theory, are now being explored.

The book’s readership will be scholarly and it will be particularly helpful for seminary students who will dip into it for useful archaeological and historical references. This will be its enduring contribution.

While the volume discusses the Bible at some length the nature of Christian faith is largely overlooked and Thompson’s cautions about the role and nature of Scriptural inerrancy are not developed. Instead the authors of the papers mentioned herein aim to demonstrate the plausibility of the biblical narrative, not to prove it. For some, this will fall short, partly because of the theological framework of this book and the expectations it engenders.

The fact is we do not know exactly what the Exodus may have looked like or the exact time it happened. Faith entails living without fear of such vagueness and it also means not worrying about scholars who reject the historical character of the Bible because they can not cope with apparent ambiguity.

Christopher J Davey  
La Trobe University