

approach since. Who decided on these labels – Orthodox, Arian, Nestorian, Monophysite, Monothelite, Miaphysite, Eutychian, Pelagian and all the rest? They are – they must be – political labels as well. It is interesting to note how many of the churches condemned as heretical at the early Councils just happened to be outside the influence of the Roman-Byzantine emperor: greater Syria, Armenia, Assyria, Persia, Egypt. We read in this study of the swings between the acceptance and the rejection of the Definitions of Chalcedon and other councils. Indeed, in the last forty years, the theologians of the Eastern Orthodox (related to Constantinople) and the Oriental Orthodox (mostly the churches accused of heresy) have got together and managed to agree on a common statement on Christology, recognizing that forces other than theology had driven them apart. In fact, the first Great Schism of the Christian era (451) has been largely resolved. I suggest the categories of doctrine need nuancing, and we need perhaps to look more closely at local, cultural and even architectural factors in explaining certain repeated patterns. I am prepared to accept that theology is one of the *influences*, and that numerology, which modern people might find hard to accept, was another; coping with the architectural legacy of the last temple under your building was a factor too – and local fashions, materials, and the abilities of your builder.

Whatever your conclusion, I recommend a thorough read of this very fine piece of research, which provides detailed information for many more interests than the thread which holds it together. Pack it in your suitcase next time you wander around Middle Eastern ruins!

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**James H. Charlesworth (ed), *Jesus and Archaeology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2006, xxv+720pp, dwgs, b/w plates, ISBN 978 0 8028 4880 2, USD 35.**

*Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey*

This book contains thirty-one papers that were delivered at the millennium conference in Jerusalem in 2000. While the delay in publication is a disappointment, the volume itself represents a comprehensive and invaluable coverage of the subject.

Introducing the work Charlesworth reminds readers that no one has a mortgage on objectivity, ‘One should not imagine that biblical scholars are subjective theologians and archaeologists are objective scientists’. Comments on the differing perspectives of New Testament scholars and archaeologists occur throughout the book. Many of the contributors according to Charlesworth have a foot in both camps.

The first paper entitled ‘What is Biblical Archaeology’ by Avraham Biran, a student of Albright, demonstrates how his excavations at Tel Dan have illuminated many Old Testament references to the site. He does not defend his approach which has not fared well since the death of Albright. His claim that in the early Iron Age the tribe of Dan had within it a tradition of metal working is interesting, as it seems that in the Bronze Age there were also nomadic Semitic metal workers.

Charlesworth’s essay on ‘Jesus Research and Archaeology’ sets the scene. His approach aims to use the results of archaeological work to ‘enrich Jesus Research’. He sets aside the various quests for the historical Jesus and instead begins with open questions not shaped by the theological agendas that drove those who were attempting to write a biography of Jesus. The book aims to assess ‘what has been learned from archaeological excavation of sites known from the New Testament and how such information helps us re-create the world of Jesus’ time and his life and message’. This approach leaves archaeology as an autonomous discipline excavating and accurately recording data independently of any historical hypothesis. Biran’s does not say if his archaeology has such autonomy although it is strongly implied when he describes Albright’s method as ‘detached’ and ‘scientific’.

The demise of Biblical Archaeology is discussed briefly noting that opposition to it arose partly because of attempts to use it as a tool to prove the historicity of the Bible. Charlesworth believes that there is now a willingness by archaeologists and New Testament scholars to re-engage in the task of understanding Jesus in a historical context; this is what the volume is about.

Sean Freyne traces the history of archaeology and the theological quest for a historical Jesus and discusses the

contribution that the knowledge of First Century Galilee can make to the understanding of Jesus. In the pages that follow the topics discussed include amongst many things, Peter's House, the Galilean Boat, the Theodotus Inscription, pre-AD70 synagogues, Judas, the early church and the 'Essene quarter' of Jerusalem and 'Bethany beyond Jordan'. The sites discussed in the volume include, Sephoris, Khirbet Qana, Bethsaida, Qumran, the Herodian (before the reported discovery of Herod's tomb), Jerusalem, Ein Gedi, Ramat Hanadiv and Mount Tabor.

The birth of Jesus is discussed by Bruce Chilton, James Dunn evaluates the evidence for synagogues at the time of Jesus and the evidence for Caiaphas, Pilate and Simon of Cyrene is discussed by Craig Evans. Urban von Wahlde and Paul Anderson present substantial pieces on archaeology and the Gospel of John and its historicity. Many of these papers deserve their own reviews.

The underlying assumption of this work is that Jesus was a Jew and that he would have grown up and lived exclusively as such. This is not necessarily the New Testament story. Jesus' earliest schooling may have been somewhere like Alexandria and the Gospels sometimes quote Jesus speaking Greek, that is using Greek rather than transliterated Aramaic names. There are stories such as the feeding of the four thousand that seem to take place in Gentile regions where Jesus, unlike his disciples, was completely at home.

One slight departure is Jürgen Zangenburg's review of our knowledge of Samaria. He is right that Samaria is not directly important to the New Testament story, but that is not the point, it did contribute significantly to the cultural, religious and geographic landscape at the time of Jesus and is therefore important for those wanting to understand period. While Caesarea is mentioned, the cities of the Decapolis are not.

It is not suggested that this 700 plus page book should include more. While it may be important for some people to find Jewish remains in what is now Israel, it does not follow that any such evidence means that Jews of the first century Galilee lived in European style ghettos or contemporary Israeli cultural isolation. The complex cultural communities of pre-1917 Palestine, Baghdad and Alexandria may provide more relevant models for understanding First Century Galilee.

*Jesus and Archaeology* presents an indispensable resource for those wanting to study the world known to Jesus. It is a beginning to such study and while the results described here are most satisfying, significant anticipation arises from the apparent opportunities for future inquiry.

**Georgina Howell, *Daughter of the Desert: The remarkable life of Gertrude Bell*, London: Macmillan, 2006, xxiv+519, maps, b/w plates, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-1405045872, AUD 60 (hb), AUD 25 (ppb). (In the USA: *Gertrude Bell: Queen of the Desert, Shaper of Nations*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, ISBN 978-0374161620 USD 27(hb))**

**Janet Wallach, *Desert Queen The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, adviser to Kings, ally of Lawrence of Arabia*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004, xxviii+419, maps, b/w plates, ISBN 0 75380 247 3, USD 35.**

*Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey*

Some who knew her have argued that Gertrude Bell was one of the world's greatest women. She was the first woman to receive a first in Modern History at Oxford (1888), published an acclaimed translation of the Persian poetry of Hafiz (1897), became a fearless and renowned mountaineer (1902), travelled extensively in the remote regions of the Middle East becoming an authority on its society and politics, undertook archaeological recording and publication in Turkey and Iraq, took charge of the Missing and Wounded Office of the Red Cross for the first year of World War I, shared responsibility for the establishment of Iraq as an independent State after the War, and at her death was the honorary Director of Antiquities in Iraq and founder of its museum. She spoke six languages fluently, became a respected cartographer, was a Major in the British Army Intelligence and received a CBE and the Founders' medal of the Royal Geographic Society. Writing a boring biography about her would be no mean feat, which fortunately neither of these authors has achieved.

There have been at least nine biographies of Gertrude Bell. Recently Winstone's 1978 and Wallach's 1996 (as reviewed here) biographies have been revised and two more have been published, including Howell's. She had one of the world's most documented lives leaving dairies, letters, writings and thousands of photographs now in the Robinson Library of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and displayed on the University web site. She wrote as often as three times a week to her parents and her prose is so engaging that all books are inclined to use her material directly. The Bell hand is ever present in the two books under review.

Recent events in Iraq have rekindled an interest in Bell who was instrumental in its creation eighty years ago. Familiarity with the British experience in Iraq described by Bell in her papers and letters does nothing but emphasise US credulity in their self-inflicted predicament. 'We people of the West can always conquer, but we can never hold Asia – that seems to be the legend written across the landscape' she wrote at Ashur in 1911.