

Reviews

Yosef Garfinkel, Saar Ganor, and Michael G. Hasel, *In the Footsteps of King David: Revelations from an Ancient Biblical City*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 2018; Pp. 240, Cloth ISBN 978-0-500-05201-3; US\$34.95

Review by Christopher J Davey

The phrase, *In the footsteps of...*, recalls a time when scholars wrote about biblical figures such as Paul, Moses and Jesus in historical and biblical contexts. It may attract readers who have a respect for the biblical narrative and who are willing to take the archaeological journey the site of Khirbet Qeiyafa offers, but it should not be assumed that the outcome of the sophisticated scientific journey the book portrays will be conventional.

The site was excavated between 2008 and 2012, and there has been prompt publication; four excavation report volumes are in print and others are in press or the final stages of preparation. While it is now appropriate for a popular book about Khirbet Qeiyafa to be written, the role of this book is not entirely clear. A version of it was published in Hebrew in 2012. In 2016 a more scholarly discussion of the interpretations it presents was published, Y. Garfinkel, I. Kreimerman and P. Zilberg, *Debating Khirbet Qeiyafa: A Fortified City in Judah from the Time of King David*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society). This book characterises the debate about Khirbet Qeiyafa as deteriorating ‘into rather ugly statements, sometimes including unfounded accusations’ (12). For those who do not want to engage with the often-bitter debate about the site, *In the Footsteps of King David* is a good place to start.

The first chapter introduces the period of Iron Age I in the southern Levant, the Philistines and the story of David and Goliath, which are relevant because of Khirbet Qeiyafa’s location adjacent to the Elah Valley and the time of its occupation. The writers believe that the geographical information we now have suggests ‘that the biblical author had access to historical information originating in the 10th and 9th centuries BCE’ (18).

Chapter 2: *Bible, History, and Archaeology* reviews the data and current debate, arguing that ‘instead of entertaining ourselves with speculation concerning when the final redaction of one text or another occurred, it is more productive to look at the deeper historical question: does the text before us [biblical] preserve some historical memory’ (36). It concludes that the ‘excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa have produced sound data on which to base our proposals, including radiocarbon dating that undermines the low chronology paradigm’. This contrasts with the minimalist model, which is described to be based ‘on an absence of data and the negation of the biblical tradition as a source of information’ (50). The historiography used in the book is characterised by the writers, ‘In our

opinion, a historical event does not generally change the way of life immediately; rather, a process begins and its effects can often be seen only decades later’ (32). Thus, the approach is evidence-based and follows the *Annales* school of thought.

The background to the site, the story of the excavation and its original layout and architecture are described in chapter 3. This is comprehensively illustrated with clear maps and plans. Referencing the later cities of Beth Shemesh, Tell en-Nasbeh, Tel Beit Mirsim, and Beer Sheba, it is argued that Khirbet Qeiyafa reveals a new concept of urban planning that emerged at the time of David (91). Much is made of the casemate city walls, which existed at all these sites. The chapter concludes by describing the radiocarbon dating of the site using olive pits, and its preservation after the excavation concluded.

The finds are dealt with in chapter 4 and again everything referred to is carefully illustrated. There were hundreds of restorable pots, stone implements, much bronze and iron, beads and rare ritual and art objects. The existence of iron is noteworthy. The site is almost a time capsule having a couple of short periods of occupation defined by radiocarbon dates.

The two inscriptions that were discovered are discussed in chapter 5. The text, language and meaning of the ostrakon are inconclusive, but the name *Eshbaal* incised on a storage jar is well attested in the 10th century BC. The cultic standing stones, objects, model shrines and rooms are described in chapter 6. This material has the potential to substantially revise current knowledge of religion in ancient Israel. The writers depart from their normal practice by suggesting architectural and iconographic parallels from as far afield as the Aegean and Mesopotamia.

Chapter 7 discusses that ancient name of Khirbet Qeiyafa. The writers follow Anson Rainey suggesting that it is biblical Shaaraim. Some alternatives are considered, but Levin’s suggestion (BASOR 367, 2012, 73-86) that it is the *ma’gāl* of 1 Sam 17:20 is not mentioned and while Na’aman is mentioned (165) but his identification of Qeiyafa with Gob (2 Sam 21: 18f) is not. The distinctive culture of Khirbet Qeiyafa is explained and leads to a settlement analysis of Judah based on Hebron as the capital. The 700 storage jars with finger impressions on them are deemed to be the fore-runners of *lmlk* jars and part of Judah’s distinctive taxation system.

The biblical description of Solomon’s buildings in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6) is discussed in the light of the cultic finds from Khirbet Qeiyafa. Specifically, the entrance and window designs of the model shrines are considered in relation to some of the technical architectural terms used in the biblical description. In the context of the argument here, the appearance of these features at Khirbet Qeiyafa is seen to support the possibility that Solomon’s buildings were constructed in the 10th century BC. Most previously recognised parallels post-dated that time.

The final chapter, *Linking Bible, Archaeology, and History* summarises the book and offers useful observations about Khirbet Qeiyafa. It is seen to be a Judahite administrative and military centre that illustrates the role religion played in war and it has cultural and iconographic features later seen in Judah and especially in the buildings of Solomon.

The opening comments notwithstanding, Khirbet Qeiyafa is a point of departure for future research into the Iron Age of southern Levant. Minimalist scholars have cleared away much of the history of Iron Age I and the 10th century BC leaving Professor Garfinkel and his colleagues a clear space to occupy with their new evidence. Khirbet Qeiyafa and its archaeological assemblage is chronologically and geographically defined affording a firm foundation for the re-assessment of material culture at other nearby sites. While archaeological evidence is soundly based the minimalist enterprise is redundant. To reclaim relevance Finkelstein, a leading minimalist, queried the archaeological method at Khirbet Qeiyafa (*Tel Aviv* 39, 2012, 38–63), but he wrote before the site's publication and, as those reading *In the Footsteps of King David* will observe, he misrepresents the excavators' interpretations; his approach was premature and superficial.

The writers argue that their data support the existence of the kingdom of Judah under King David from the beginning of the 10th century BC. But they do not follow the biblical narrative and recognise the United Monarchy and King Saul. In isolation this does re-cast the biblical narrative significantly.

Comparative archaeological analyses that may characterise the Kingdom of Judah is not attempted, except where the cultic material is concerned. Casemate walls and iron for example, are common in Hittite Anatolia; there is plenty of room for further research.

The book represents outstanding value for money. It is hardcover, has many high-quality illustrations, including colour plates, that directly relate to the text, it is also documented with endnotes and has an index and a bibliography. Students will find it attractive.

In the Footsteps of King David is a good resource for those interested in exploring the archaeology of the southern Levant in the 10th century BC. It explains how archaeological evidence is obtained and demonstrates the ways it can be analysed and the kind of the information that may be obtained from it. There are many opportunities for further study, there is plenty to discuss and much to disagree with, but do not expect a quick resolution of issues. Geography, topography, demography, town planning, architecture, material culture and epigraphy are all brought to bear in one way or another. With its evidential base and reliance on scientific, rather than literary, dating the book is significant demonstration of archaeology as an autonomous discipline in the Old Testament period.

Mobile Subject Review

Mobile Ed: AR101 *Archaeology in Action: Biblical Archaeology in the Field*, Logos Mobile Education and Lexham Press, 2015–2016, <https://www.logos.com/product/54903/mobile-ed-ar101-archaeology-in-action-biblical-archaeology-in-the-field>, USD66

Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey

This package is one of an increasing number of mobile education subjects now offered by the Faithlife Corporation based in Bellingham, Washington. This company was previously known as Logos Bible Software and began in 1992. It offers over 43,000 digital texts, biblical and general in many languages, between Logos and their ebook store Vyrso, and it is now developing into the education area.

The Faithlife Mobile Education subjects are cross-platform integrating video instruction with Logos digital library resources and media and links to additional external resources and suggested readings found on sites such as Wikipedia. The AR101 courseware textbook is the primary resource. It has a transcript of the videos and links to suggested readings and the activities, guides and tools. The activities are carried out in a 'workbook' where reflections may be recorded and there are short multi-choice quizzes and a final test. It is not moderated and does not offer any accreditation.

The subject is presented on-line and videos do not download onto the host computer so that in countries such as Australia, where connectivity and internet speeds are variable and generally at the slow end, there will be limited access to the visual material. The courseware textbook may be downloaded. Other ways to view the videos include FaithlifeTV.com, Logos iOS/Android mobile apps, AppleTV, and Roku. It is recommended that those subscribing to Mobile Education have Logos Bible Software, Platinum Edition, that retails for USD 2,150.00.

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The context of this review is archaeological, which some biblical scholars may deem to lack relevance. However, archaeology is a professional discipline with defined principles that scholars and practitioners ignore at their peril. Archaeology often handles the heritage of people other than the excavators and failure to discharge the responsibilities in this situation can be grievous.

The AR101 courseware textbook begins by saying that it,

is an introduction to biblical archaeology, filmed entirely on-site in Israel. Throughout the course, distinguished scholars in the field provide