year 5 which mentions Israel. He discusses the various poetical structures that have been proposed for the final lines that deal with the Canaanite campaign and its aftermath. He concludes with his own construction of the poetic section, and concludes that the Israel mentioned in the stela was a socioethnic entity within Canaan, just as were the sociopolitical city states within the same region, Canaan.

The volume concludes with a comprehensive, up-to-date bibliography. The work is slightly marred by a few errors in textual citations and one misdating of Ramesses II's first campaign to year 10 (properly year 4), and the missed importance of the Shasu reference from Papyrus Anastasi I; but these shortcomings are few in number, so they do not overly detract from the overall value of the volume. This book will be of great importance for all scholars who are involved in studying Ramesside military activity in the Levant. It will also be of significant value to those studying the beginnings of early Israel and its emergence in Canaan. It should also be valuable to those involved in biblical studies, especially those interested in this timeframe. Consequently this volume will be a key holding for all those interested in history or archaeology of the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. and Egypt's military role in this period. The volume is well organized and cogently presented, and is very readable as well.

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REFERENCE

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The Israelites, by B. S. J. Isserlin. London: Thames and Hudson, 1998. 304 pp., 74 figures, 85 plates. Cloth. $39.95.

Every university, college, and seminary instructor who teaches an introductory course on the Israelites, or who has a section on Israel in a larger class on the ancient Near East, should own this book and have it on their course reading list, at least as a recommended text. This is the best *introductory* level text we have that covers Israelite history, archaeology, and society.

The book contains a short introduction, three main parts, and an epilogue. Part One: The Stage and the Players, is composed of four chapters: "Geography: The Land and Its Resources"; "Origins and Affinities of the Israelites"; "History"; and "Social Structure, Constitutional Ideas and Government." Part Two: The Material Culture, has five chapters: "Towns and Villages: Planning and Architecture"; "Agriculture"; "Industries and Crafts"; "Trade and the Economic System"; and "Warfare." Part Three: The World of the Spirit, is composed of three final chapters: "Language, Writing and Texts"; "Religion"; and "Israelite Art."

In his introduction Isserlin gives a brief summary of the data available for reconstructing Israelite society: the biblical text, extrabiblical texts, and archaeological material, including sections on the history of archaeological methodology and dating techniques. Here he touches on such issues as the "documentary" hypothesis and problems in assigning dates and causal agents to archaeological phenomena. He concludes this section by noting that our available sources are often not enough to reconstruct a completely satisfactory history, but are useful for providing a picture of Israelite life styles.

His chapter on geography covers topics such as the extent of Israel's geographic knowledge of the world, geographic and geologic features, climate, vegetation, animal life, trade routes (including a handy chart giving travel time between Jerusalem and other locations); his concluding section on human geography ties some of the earlier themes together, explaining how they affect settlement patterns and history. In "Origins and Affinities of the Israelites" he summarizes arguments pro and con for identifying a historical setting for the patriarchs. He likewise summarizes text-based views on the Exodus, noting that "a proper historical treatment cannot be attempted" (p. 52) and that this tradition remains archaeologically unsupported (p. 53). He then briefly covers the Conquest, Infiltration and Revolt models for the emergence of Israel in Canaan. He discusses the controversy over four-room houses and collar-rim jars as "type fossils," and cautiously favors them as such. He also notes the importance of the increase in the number of villages in the central hill country in the Iron Age I in this debate. Isserlin's attitude toward the biblical text for the monarchic era is one of guarded optimism. Generally he follows the biblical text, cites the most significant extrabiblical and archaeological sources, and mentions the major debated points (though the current controversy regarding the dating of 10th century archaeological assemblages is not covered). His chapter on social structure includes such topics as population size, Israelite physical appearance and dress, the role of women, the family, slavery, social mobility, political organization, and law. Under population size, for example, he notes the problematic nature of biblical census data and current efforts to base estimates on settlement patterns and ethnographic parallels. A welcome note is his observation that the number of non-Israelites in the country may have remained high throughout the period.

Under "Towns and Villages" he covers settlement types/functions and patterns, civic administration, building materials, types of buildings (he generally favors the identification of the pillared buildings as stables), fortifications, and tombs. For example, in his section on royal

palaces (pp. 128–31), he successfully weaves together what we know of such structures from biblical accounts, from archaeological excavations at sites such as Megiddo, Samaria, and Ramat Rachel, and from similar complexes in adjoining regions (e.g., Zinjirli). In a short chapter on agriculture he discusses the complementary nature of regional environmental variations for the Israelite farming regime, the importance of terracing in the hill country, issues related to farming in marginal zones such as the Negeb and Judaean wilderness, agricultural implements (such as the plow) and installations (such as olive presses), the roles of various animals, and the significance of social differentiation between large landholders and peasant farmers. Under "Industries and Crafts" he canvases a wide range of occupations: metal and stone working, pottery production, faience and glass, woodworking, tanning, spinning and weaving, and bone and ivory carving. In these sections biblical references take a back seat to archaeological evidence. For example, under pottery he discusses the social status of potters, clay sources and types, firing temperatures, potters' workshops and kilns, the quality and nature/use of vessels produced, and the role of imported vessels. Interesting is a concluding section on the level of productivity of Israelite workers. The chapter on trade includes sections on exports, imports, how trade was structured, merchants (Israelite and foreign), and a final section on the relative wealth of Israelite society. Under "Warfare," military organization and administration are treated, as well as training, supply, strategy and tactics, equipment, religious aspects of war, and the consequences of a successful or unsuccessful war. Good attention is paid to such issues as communications (e.g., the use of smoke signals) and required daily rations. It is somewhat misleading to say that Israelites were equipped with lance and pike as such weapons are really only known from the Hellenistic era and later; "spear" would have been a better choice.

The chapter on language and writing is the most comprehensive part of the volume, as might be expected from the author's background, and may, at times, be a bit too detailed. It covers the linguistic development of Hebrew, dialects, foreign loan words, literacy, types of scripts, the question of schools, types of extrabiblical texts (e.g., ostraca, seals), and the nature of biblical Hebrew literature. Under "Religion" he surveys Israelite beliefs as presented in the Hebrew scriptures, discusses what we know of Canaanite and Israelite sanctuaries/cult sites from texts and excavations (e.g., ᶜAjrud), Israelite temples (Jerusalem and Arad), religious ceremonies, cults connected with the dead, and the bearing of epigraphy on our knowledge of cults. In the final chapter on art he comments on pre-Israelite artistic traditions in Canaan, then moves on to cover ceramic art (plaques, stands, figures), ivory and bone carving, glyptic art, painted figural art (e.g., ᶜAjrud), music (including instruments), dance, and the question of the existence of drama.

The book's main weakness is a complete lack of footnotes, though this is partially compensated for by up-to-date bibliographies (fairly extensive to 1994, less so after that date) for each chapter. Some of Isserlin's references are very specific, and notes would help the beginning students. The volume has a good general index, though an index of scripture references would be a help. The illustrations are almost always of very good quality. The black-and-white plates are referenced in the text, but, oddly, not the figures. Much of the material surveyed is covered in only a single paragraph, at most a few pages, which is necessary in a work of such sweeping coverage. For classes devoted to Israelite history, Isserlin's work will have to be supplemented by one or more of the major works on the subject. He is generally more optimistic about the historical value of the biblical text than may suit the taste of some.

Despite these minor caveats, Isserlin has done us all a great service by covering so successfully so many of the broader social topics that usually are completely absent from works on ancient Israel which focus on either history or archaeology. For that he should have our thanks.

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***Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit*, Katalog Band 1: *Von Tell Abu Farağ bis ᶜAtlit*, by Othmar Keel. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica 13. Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997. [viii] + 802 pp., 375 plates, 34 figures, 2 endpaper maps. Cloth. SFr 230.00.**

Scarabs, more properly identified as "seal-amulets" or "stamp seal-amulets," are often difficult to date, and their use for delineating the archaeological chronology of Palestine and the development of Egyptian-Palestinian relations during the second millennium B.C. has yielded a wide range of chronological and historical interpretations. That they are utilized so frequently for such investigations derives from the fact that they occur in quantity (especially in tombs) at many sites along the coast and principal highways of Palestine and from the belief—actually, a misconception—among many archaeologists that typological parallels in Egypt and the northern Sudan allow one to date these objects with considerable precision. From the earliest days of Palestinian archaeology, scarabs and related seals have been used and often abused on a regular basis in Middle and Late Bronze Age studies. The serious misdating of the Late Bronze Age strata at Beth Shan by