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***Theology, History, and Archaeology in the Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah*, by Andrew G. Vaughn. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999. xviii + 240 pp., 9 tables. Paper. \$39.00.**

The volume under review is a revision of the author's 1995 dissertation. Vaughn sets out to determine whether Chronicles, especially those portions with no parallels in the earlier Deuteronomistic history, can be used in any attempt to reconstruct the history of Israel. He thus tacitly

assumes the general usefulness of the biblical text for such historical reconstructions, contra the views of Lemche, Thompson et al., without actually entering this wider debate. Vaughn suggests that the best approach to this issue is to evaluate the Chronicler's description of the reign of an Israelite or Judaeen king against the available archaeological data to see if the Chronicler preserves an accurate memory of the state of the kingdom at that time. He believes that the Chronicler's account of the reign of Hezekiah, which contains substantial additional material not found in the Kings account, is the best candidate to test his theory. He concedes that many of Hezekiah's activities as related in 2 Chronicles 29-32 (purifying and restoring the temple, conducting a Passover, and the conduct of the clergy) are not verifiable by external archaeological data, and so he chooses to focus his study on the description of the economic buildup and prosperity of the kingdom described in 32:27-30. While he does not explicitly state it, the material culture of the era of Hezekiah is one of the most well-documented periods in ancient Israel due to the extensive excavations of Stratum III at Lachish, firmly dated to Sennacherib's 701 campaign, and the parallels to these remains at other sites throughout Judah destroyed in the same war. This abundant archaeological data is even more important to his study than the literary material on Hezekiah in Chronicles. As a means of establishing the general economic strength of Hezekiah's kingdom, he evaluates survey and archaeological data of the late eighth century with material from the same areas dated to the seventh century (reigns of Manasseh and, more importantly, Josiah), to determine if Hezekiah's realm was more prosperous than that of his successors.

The book is divided into three chapters of unequal length. Chapter 1, the shortest, deals with Vaughn's pre-suppositions as he approaches his study. He first surveys the various theories on the dating of Hezekiah's reign, ultimately opting for 715 B.C. (not ca. 726/727) as the first year of his reign. Next he briefly discusses the date of the composition of Chronicles, accepting a date well into the Persian period, probably the fourth century. Finally he suggests that the reference in v. 30 to a water system cannot be linked to the Siloam Tunnel and its inscription because the palaeographic dating of the latter cannot be established as precisely as some scholars assume. Vaughn has treated this subject in depth in a separate article (1999) and so he passes over this point briefly. However, in a work devoted to investigating the historical accuracy of the non-Deuteronomistic sections of Chronicles, a somewhat fuller presentation of his understanding of the palaeographic issues involving the inscription seems warranted. After all, this is the only reference in Chronicles to a specific structure built by Hezekiah, which would make the tunnel and its inscription important evidence in support of his thesis, if their date to his reign could be established unequivocally.

Chapter 2 is devoted to an analysis of the settlement pattern of the kingdom of Judah at the time of Hezekiah and during the time of Josiah, or at least to the latter part of the seventh century. He examines the results of surveys and excavations in five regions: the Shephelah, hill country, Negev, Jerusalem, and Judaeen wilderness. A nice aspect of this study is his effort to summarize the redating of key strata now that the dates of Lachish Strata III and II have been clarified. The Shephelah is the lynchpin of this discussion as it has been thoroughly surveyed by Dagan (1992) and a number of key sites have been investigated by excavation. Here he notes Dagan's finding of sharp drops in the number of sites occupied (87% drop) and in the total area of these sites (75% drop) from the eighth to the seventh century. This marks a drastic reduction in the economic strength of the Judaeen kingdom.

The other regions have not been as completely covered as the Shephelah. Some scholars have argued that kings after Hezekiah sought to strengthen their economies by exploiting marginal zones such as the Negev and Judaeen desert. Vaughn accepts that these areas were more intensively settled in the seventh century but argues that many of the sites studied often have an unacknowledged late eighth-century component to their material culture, indicating that the exploitation of these areas begins somewhat earlier than usually stated. In any event, the number of sites involved in these marginal areas is extremely small compared with those lost in the Shephelah and could not have made up for those revenues. Jerusalem grew remarkably toward the end of the eighth century, but Vaughn does not believe there is sufficient data to determine if Josiah's city was larger than that of Hezekiah. Due to political turmoil Ofer's 1982–1987 survey of the Judaeen hills was not as thorough as Dagan's work in the Shephelah, making the conclusion offered—that the hill country sustained a 20% loss in settlements following the Assyrian invasion—rather tentative. Indeed, the area north of Jerusalem seems to have sustained no losses at this time, though perhaps a better case can be made for such a loss in the area to the south.

Chapter 3 is the real heart of the volume and the area where Vaughn makes his most original contributions. First, he has added over 500 new *LMLK* stamp impressions (350 from private collections), and over 130 private seal impressions (doubling the number previously known), to the previously published data on the subject. Much of this is due to his personal inspection of many previously undecipherable impressions (Gabriel Barkay also supplied a certain amount of this material to Vaughn). He convincingly argues that the production of stamped *LMLK* jars is limited to the reign of Hezekiah, and that those found in later seventh-century contexts were not produced then but simply are survivors of the earlier production still in use.

An especially significant aspect of the study is the close examination paid to the personal seal impressions associ-

ated with the *LMLK* impressions. Vaughn notes that great effort was expended to make certain that the private seal impressions could be read, such as adding fresh clay to leather-hard jars so that the seal could be impressed, and double stamping jars in an effort to improve the readability of the impression, in contrast to the actual *LMLK* impressions, which are often partially or wholly illegible. He demonstrates that a number of individuals owned and used more than one seal when impressing the jars. Based on these and other data, Vaughn argues that the seals attested were not the property of potters interested in trademarking their products, but instead belonged to royal officials.

Finally, he argues that the *LMLK* jars were not produced shortly before Sennacherib's 701 campaign, but reflect a longer-term strategy of Hezekiah's for building up stores to resist an expected Assyrian attack, the direction of which was still unknown. This is obvious from the large number of jars found at sites north of Jerusalem (Tell en-Nasbeh, el-Jib), well away from the line of advance the Assyrians did take. Probably the beginning of *LMLK* jar production should date to shortly after the death of Sargon II since vassal revolts often came in the wake of the political instability in Assyria following such events.

There are a few issues relating to the *LMLK* which Vaughn does not really cover. For example, what is the role of the individuals who stamped some of the *LMLK* jars with their private seals? As noted above, Vaughn argues convincingly that they are royal officials, but he does not specify what role these officials had in relation to the jars. Possibly the private seals belonged to officials who were in charge of the production of the *LMLK* jars. That is, certain jars out of individual production runs were stamped with the supervisor's seal, indicating that a particular quota had been met. Neutron activation analysis has shown that the jars were all made in the Lachish region. If Vaughn is right that the jars were produced over a longer period than just the days immediately leading up to the 701 campaign, and there was more than one facility in the Lachish area producing the jars, viewing the seals as those of production supervisors who might be promoted (or demoted?) to other positions might explain the number of such private seals associated with the *LMLK* jars.

Vaughn significantly advances our knowledge of the entire *LMLK* phenomenon, especially when this book is used in conjunction with the other studies of Vaughn and Vaughn and Barkay (all cited in this volume's bibliography), and provides a useful summary of the basic economic strength of Judah before and after the 701 campaign. However, the question remains: Does the general prosperity of the late eighth century really reflect the state of the kingdom summarized by 2 Chr 32:27–30 and allow Vaughn to establish his case that the Chronicler preserves accurate historical data independent of the Deuteronomist's work? Possibly. Certainly the *LMLK* jars attest to a

significant effort to accumulate quantities of some liquid, possibly wine, as mentioned in v. 28, but what of archaeological evidence for spices (v. 27) or evidence for wealth in animals, such as the stalls of v. 29? Many of the examples of Hezekiah's wealth mentioned in the text are not documented in Vaughn's study. Moreover, the test is too limited in scope. Three verses is just not enough evidence to establish the general historical trustworthiness of the material found solely in the Chronicles account. This experiment should be run again on other parts of Chronicles that may be testable against the material culture record. It is also not clear how much of the general material cultural prosperity of Judah at this point was the work of Hezekiah himself, and how much of it was due to his predecessors. Still, my feeling that the primary focus of his thesis is not completely established by Vaughn's study does not detract from the new data he has supplied us, and for which he should be applauded.

The complete lack of illustrations, photographs, or line drawings, of any *LMLK* stamp impressions is a striking omission in a volume in which over half of the discussion is devoted to this topic. Typical examples of the two main classes of impression, four-winged and two-winged, should have been provided to help orient the nonspecialist. The only illustrations of typical *LMLK* jars are on the cover. There are also no examples of the private seals he discusses. Also lacking is a map showing the locations of the sites he mentions. The volume does not have any indexes; there should be at least a site index, and another for general subjects. However, the two appendixes which document the provenance and publication data on the *LMLK* and private seals are treasure troves of resources.

The volume contains some typographical errors; most are minor, though citing A. Kempinski and R. Reich's *The Architecture of Ancient Israel as The Agriculture of Ancient Israel* in n. 252 on p. 151 may throw off some readers. The bibliography is current up to 1993–1994 with sporadic updates after that.

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***“East of the Jordan”: Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures*, by Burton MacDonald. ASOR Books, Volume 6. Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000. viii + 287 pp., 13 figures, 2 tables. Paper. \$29.95.**

In the author's own words, “This volume is intended for a reference tool for all those interested in the location of Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures' territories and sites east of the Jordan” (p. 3). In other words, the treatment of the subject matter is largely geographical, with primary attention given to site identification. The author is well qualified to carry out his task. He earned a doctorate in the study of the Hebrew Bible, and he has been involved in more than one long-term archaeological research project in central and southern Jordan.

The volume has an introduction, followed by nine chapters, an appendix of biblical site identifications in Jordan, a listing of references (i.e., a bibliography), and four indexes (biblical toponyms, archaeological sites, biblical texts, and subjects). Interspersed in the work are figures (e.g., maps) and tables (e.g., precipitation data).

Chapter 1 is an introduction. In it the author states that his work in archaeology has led him “to the general conclusion that the biblical stories about Transjordanian places and events best fit into the Iron II period and later” (p. 4). This is a literary judgment; he leaves open the possibility of earlier oral traditions which influence the shape and content of narrated events.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of method in identifying biblical sites. MacDonald first provides a brief overview of the history of investigation in Jordan and then a listing of literary sources (e.g., Near Eastern texts) that may be relevant. His list of criteria for identifying the name of an ancient site owes much to previous discussion of scholars such as A. Rainey and J. M. Miller. In this chapter it becomes clear that the primary audience of the volume is the student. For example, the reader is informed/reminded that the language of place names in the biblical text is Hebrew, that Hebrew is a cognate language to others used in Canaan, and that modern Arabic place names can be a significant clue to the location of an ancient site.

Chapter 3 is a fine 20-page description of Jordan's natural environment. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the possible locations for the “cities on the plain” mentioned in Genesis 14 and elsewhere. In this section the author runs into some tension with his general conclusion, stated in the introduction, about the origin of biblical accounts in Iron Age II. The reason, of course, is that much of the recent discussion about the locations of Sodom and Gomorrah have been influenced by the excavations at Early Bronze Age Bab adh-Dhra and Numayra. Regardless of the literary dating of Genesis 14 or of the other relevant biblical texts, there may be traditions from the region about the destruction of cities which come from an earlier period.