

to conclude that Jerusalem's potters were all exiled to Babylonia following the city's destruction in 586 B.C. Franken attributes the introduction of new vessel shapes during the Hellenistic period to the immigration of Greek potters, and the appearance of uniform, mass-produced pottery in the Hellenistic period to the use of a good thrower's wheel and improved thrower's clay—practices that he asserts "lasted well into the Byzantine period" (p. 200). Franken's presentation ends with a summary of the conclusions reached in each chapter (chapter 12).

Franken has long been criticized for his failure to rely on standard ceramic typology and for the vagueness of his chronological conclusions. While these criticisms could certainly be leveled against the study published in this volume, the statistical analysis that yielded the evidence of change on which virtually all of his conclusions rest is of far greater concern because statistical analysis was not part of Kenyon's research design and the assemblages made available to Franken for study were not randomly selected but, instead, subjectively chosen for Kenyon's purposes from larger amounts of pottery gathered in the field. Since Kenyon's method of cataloging pottery included the practice of discarding pottery in the field (Franken and Steiner 1990: 64), Franken and Steiner (1990: 69–71) strive to show that the assemblages studied are, nevertheless, statistically significant.

Most of Franken's work on Kenyon's material occurred after he retired in 1984, and sadly, he never saw the finished product because the page proofs arrived in Leiden on the day of his death, January 18, 2005. The archeological community owes Franken a debt of gratitude for undertaking this study and seeing it through to completion.

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- Volume 3 in the Bethsaida publication series, covering work at and about the site of et-Tell (identified by many as Bethsaida), definitely falls under the category of Contextual Study, rather than Excavation Project Report. In fact, no new material from the excavations is provided. The focus is clearly on filling out the social and historical background of Bethsaida (and its Iron Age precursor) primarily through literary and textual investigations. The volume consists of thirteen contributions, three of which deal with the Iron Age and earlier, while the rest deal with the Roman period. It also contains a touching tribute to Father B. Pixner who helped initiate the project, as well as general and scriptural indexes.
- The longest article is Arav's "Toward a Comprehensive History of Geshur." His survey begins with the possible mention of Ga-⟨shu⟩-ri in El Amarna 254 and its relations with neighboring Ashtaroth and Peḥel in the Late Bronze Age. He then argues that et-Tell (which he identifies with the Tzer or Tzed in Joshua 19:35) was founded in the tenth century B.C.E. as the capital of the emerging Geshurite kingdom. This is followed by a survey of the dynastic connections between Geshur and the House of David. The

strictly historical section is concluded by a discussion of the various Aramaean and Assyrian kings who campaigned through the area in the ninth and eighth centuries and which of these might have been responsible for destructions of Strata 6b–5a at et-Tell. More than half of the essay is a wide-ranging treatment of the nature of the religious beliefs and practices of the Geshurites in the light of cult loci (called “high places” by Arav), and their associated paraphernalia discovered at et-Tell, in comparison with texts and archaeological remains from Israel, Syria, and Jordan.

In his “‘Geshurite’ Onomastica of the Bronze and Iron Ages,” Hess first surveys data from Amarna letters from the region between Hazor and Ashtaroth, and inscriptions from Hazor itself, to establish the probable Hurrian-tinged West Semitic nature of the Geshur area in the Late Bronze Age. He then examines the character of three names found at et-Tell itself against the Hebrew, Phoenician, and Aramaic background of the region in the Iron Age. Finally, he similarly discusses the names that the biblical tradition associates with Geshur, found mostly in 2 Samuel.

Greene’s “Tiglath-pileser III’s War Against the City of Tzer” is mistitled. There is no account of this ruler actually taking a city named Tzer. The article is really a survey of the Assyrian king’s campaigns in the southern Levant in 734–732 B.C.E. which is used to set the context for a possible destruction of Stratum 5a at et-Tell.

Smith, in his “Bethsaida in the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder,” argues that Agrippa was Pliny’s main source of information on the area of Bethsaida, supplemented by Vespasian and/or Titus. In his second contribution, “Eusebius of Caesarea and the Fate of Bethsaida,” he discusses why Eusebius had so little to say about Bethsaida in his writings, when he was apparently reasonably well informed about other sites along the north side of the Sea of Galilee. Smith argues that in Eusebius’s day (ca. 290 C.E.), the settlement was in ruins, and local changes in the lake’s shoreline perhaps had already removed it far enough from the coast that it was no longer recognizable as an ancient fishing village, which was required of any site to be identified with Bethsaida. Eusebius could simply no longer find it.

“The Renaming of Bethsaida in Honor of Livia, a.k.a. Julia, the Daughter of Caesar, in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18:27–28,” by Strickert offers an ingenious solution to the vexing problem of the identity of the Julia after whom Bethsaida was renamed. Instead of Augustus’s disgraced daughter of that name, Strickert argues that it was actually named after his own wife, who was given the honorific title of “daughter” after Augustus’s death. This posthumous adoption facilitated Tiberius’s rise to the throne because he was only the son of Livia/Julia, not Augustus himself. Strickert’s other contribution, “The Dying Grain which Bears Much Fruit: John 12:24, the Livia Cult, and Bethsaida,” is essentially a discussion of Demeter and grain iconography as the two come to be associated with

Livia, and has little to do with Bethsaida, and even less to do with John 12:24.

Kuhn’s “Bethsaida in the Gospel of Mark” discusses the hows and whys of Bethsaida’s inclusion/exclusion from Mark’s Gospel and what this says about Mark’s knowledge of the geography of Jesus’s life.

In his “Peter in Profile: From Bethsaida to Rome,” Appold primarily discusses Peter traditions in the New Testament that associate him with Bethsaida, and related issues. He also explores the nature of the site as a cosmopolitan village, exposed to cultural currents from many directions, and how these help illuminate Peter’s life and work. Very little is said about traditions linking Peter with Rome, other than to rehash the problems associated with the bones found below St. Peter’s last century and their questionable association with the apostle.

The first part of Freund’s “*Ereimos*: Was Bethsaida a ‘Lonely Place’ in the First Century CE?” is a survey of the locations of Bethsaida on ancient to early modern maps, followed by a summary of recent geographical and geological studies of the area around et-Tell. The final section discusses how *ereimos* is used in the literature of the period (for example, did Jesus see Bethsaida as a type of Sinai wilderness?). In the end, he is unable to decide if Bethsaida was a literal or metaphorical wilderness, or both. Freund’s second essay, “The Tannery of Bethsaida?” surveys what is known from rabbinic literature about the tanning industry at this settlement, as well as the use of one of the products of this industry, scrolls. Unfortunately, only a few scraping tools have been found to date at et-Tell, none of them apparently in their original context. Thus little can be said about the nature of the tanning industry at the mound, other than there was one somewhere in the vicinity of the settlement. Freund conjectures that the site of a supposed Roman temple at et-Tell may have been turned into a tannery, if it was not located on the periphery of the site.

In “Bethsaida & the Study of Ancient Health Care,” Mark 8:22–26, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, and a few artifacts found in excavations at et-Tell (which may or may not have anything to do with healing practices) serve as a springboard for Avalos’s survey of ancient Greco-Roman, Jewish, and early Christian health care systems. He sees the Bethsaida miracle as typical of early Christianity’s interest in simplifying and reducing the cost of health care.

Roddy’s “The Antichrist at Bethsaida” is a fascinating exploration of how the medieval tradition that a Jewish Antichrist would be born at Chorazin, raised at Bethsaida, and rule from Capernaum arose. He is able to trace the possible origins of this tradition to the social context of the Jewish revolt which began in the Galilee in 351 C.E.

While many of the articles in this volume are extremely interesting in their own right, some of their connections to Bethsaida are tenuous. Given the relative paucity of references to Bethsaida in ancient texts, we may have reached the end of meaningful literary analyses regarding the site.

This reviewer looks forward to additional reports on the archaeological finds associated with this site. There are a few typos which closer editing would have caught. These caveats aside, the volume is a useful addition to the growing body of literature involving et-Tell/Bethsaida.

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***Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. xxii + 721 pp., 20 figures, 3 tables, 30 photographs. Cloth. \$59.50.**

Interest in the Persian period in Palestine has increased immeasurably in the last 35 years. In the 1960s, it was not uncommon for excavators to launch full-scale excavations at a site, probing through Hellenistic and Persian levels to get to the “good stuff”—remains from the historical periods of Israel’s and Judah’s kings. Fortunately, things have changed.

This volume is a collection of essays emanating from a conference, “Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period,” which was sponsored by the University of Heidelberg, the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg, and Tel Aviv University. The conference was held in Heidelberg, Germany, on 15–18 July, 2003. The organizers of the symposium—Lipschits and Oeming—saw this meeting as a continuing opportunity for scholars to come together from around the world to shed new light on one of the most mysterious eras in Near Eastern history.

The volume is divided into two parts: Part 1 gathers historical, epigraphic, and archeological papers, while Part 2 delves more specifically into biblical perspectives on the Persian period. Bob Becking’s “‘We All Returned as One!’: Critical Notes on the Myth of the Mass Return,” maintains that Ezra’s story of Judah’s return from exile should be viewed as “historical myth” supporting specific ideological agendas (pp. 1–18) of the “Ezra-group,” who understood themselves as the continuation of Israel’s elect. Israel did not return “as one” literally, although this rendering of “history” fit the Ezra-writer’s theological perspective perfectly. Oded Lipschits offers an article entitled “Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.” (pp. 19–52), which explores imperial policy and the settlement of Judah. He argues that Persia instituted a “rural policy” which continued the region’s character as an agrarian production zone. Lipschits’s discussion of imperial policies includes his perceptions of the increasing Persian militarization of the region in the fifth century. Even

so, Jerusalem remained small and “developing” into the Hellenistic period. While the Persians may not have been militarily “interested” in Yehud, the authorities did wish to build a “peace” in which commercial interests could thrive both in the coastlands and inland along the major trade routes.

J. Wright’s article “Remapping Yehud: The Borders of Yehud and the Genealogies of Chronicles” (pp. 67–90) takes a nontraditional look at Yehud’s borders. Wright asks questions about kinship fealty more consistent with Achaemenid hegemony rather than the “dominant model” of the early 21st century which stresses notions of a unified national identity. Modern perceptions of regional identities hemmed in by fixed boundaries have no place in an understanding of the clan structures of the southwestern reaches of the Persian Empire.

D. Ussishkin argues that Jerusalem’s size in the Persian period was significantly increased by the inclusion of the western hill inside “Nehemiah’s” wall, agreeing with an archaeological “maximalist” point of view (“The Borders and Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period,” pp. 147–66). This “addition” to Jerusalem probably remained largely uninhabited. Ussishkin cites the parallel example of 15th century C.E. Constantinople. In the Persian period, Lachish assumed increased responsibilities to the south administering parts of Yehud and neighboring Idumea, according to A. Fantalkin and O. Tal (“Redating Lachish Level I: Identifying Achaemenid Imperial Policy at the Southern Frontier of the Fifth Satrapy,” pp. 167–98).

D. Edelman develops a thesis that Tyrian traders were probably granted a franchise for trade in Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah and later (“Tyrian Trade in Yehud under Artaxerxes I,” pp. 207–46). Phoenician commercial interests were encouraged and supported by Persian satrapal overlords. Could this have been a part of Artaxerxes I’s economic development plan for the southern Levant? Edelman favors the historical reliability of the “Nehemiah Memoir” in Nehemiah 13, where some clues may be found. She also cautions against making too much of this information which, as yet, cannot be corroborated by other sources.

Could a similar situation have resulted in Tyrian or Sidonian traders working in Samaria? G. Knoppers’s article “Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian Period” (pp. 265–90) suggests much closer linkages between Samaria and Jerusalem than most scholars have previously assumed. Contact between clerics from Jerusalem’s Temple and the Samaritan cult may have been commonplace in the post-Nehemiah period. This was a time of cultures in contact—including the common cultures of Samaria and Yehud which shared so much history, tradition, and material culture.

R. Kratz poses a historical analogy between the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the YHWH temple of the Jewish community at Elephantine, in his “The Sec-