JAGNES SPRING 1991 BOOK REVIEWS

Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E.

Reviewed by Jeffrey R. Zorn
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This volume is part of the Anchor Bible Reference Library, a part of the Anchor Bible group (the other two components being the A.B. Commentaries and the soon-to-be published A.B. Dictionary).

Chapter One is an introduction which provides the geographic, chronologic and methodological framework for the volume. Chapters Two and Three cover the prehistoric period, from the Neolithic to the Chalcolithic. Chapters Four to Seven cover the Bronze Age. Chapters Eight through Twelve treat the Iron Age until the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. The Iron Age material accounts for slightly less than half the volume. Due to space considerations the author was forced to keep both notes and bibliography shorter than he had hoped. For the beginning student this makes it more difficult to gain entry to the scholarly literature. The author focuses on the archaeological remains from Israel, with references to discoveries in Jordan and Lebanon.

The photographs and plans are clear and informative. Virtually every topic discussed has an illustration. Architectural remains receive more coverage than small finds, but the latter receive adequate treatment.

The work's main strength is its balanced approach to every topic covered. Wherever possible the author cites all theories bearing upon a particular body of data, and states his preference. Within each period the author treats the historical background, questions of chronology and terminology, settlement pattern, town planning and architecture, other building remains (agricultural installations, burial practices), pottery, writing, small finds (weapons and art), and foreign relations. The table of contents makes it easy for the reader interested in a particular topic to locate the pertinent sections in each chapter. Bibliographic references are current to about 1988, another asset. The General Index lists sites, cultures, general topics (e.g. seals), modern authors and historical figures mentioned in the text.

The author has succeeded well in providing an introductory text to the archaeology of the earliest periods in Israel. Its up-to-date treatment of dozens of important issues insures that it will be the standard introductory text for years to come. It is to be hoped that subsequent volumes in this series will carry the archaeological discussion into second temple times, and beyond.

The Samaritans

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With the publication of this major volume the field of Samaritan studies has been advanced dramatically. Providing a gauge for assessing the current state of the field, this collection of essays by scholars from around the world is a complete introduction and handbook for both the specialist and non-specialist alike. Very few books have been devoted to Samaritan studies, and none until now have supplanted the