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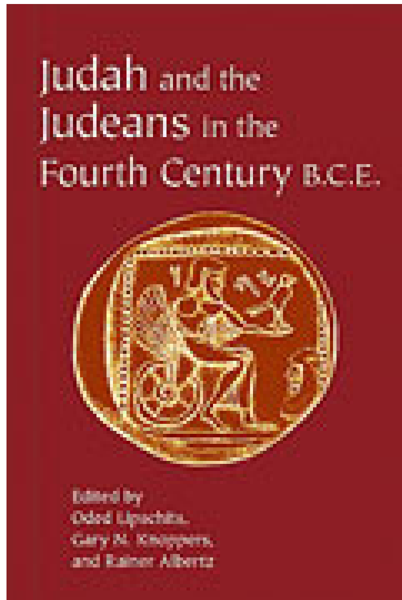

Lipschits, Oded, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz, eds.

Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.

Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007. Pp. xii + 423. Hardcover. $59.50. ISBN 1575061306.

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This book originated in a conference in Münster in 2005 that was third in a series on "Judah and the Judeans." The cutting-edge research in this book offers significant contributions to the dramatic revision that is now needed for Judahite history in the Persian Period.

In the introduction, the editors justify the volume's focus on the fourth century B.C.E. by suggesting that the late Persian and early Hellenistic periods are pivotal for the composition and editing of many books of the Hebrew Bible (1–8). Some of the new sources that dispel assessments of this era as "Dark Ages" are summarized in this volume.

Part 1 includes the lone article devoted to the Persians, Josef Wieshöfer's "The Achaemenid Empire in the Fourth Century B.C.E" (11–30). Wieshöfer rejects explanations of the collapse of the Persian Empire that appeal to classical Greek portraits of Persian decadence or potential weaknesses in the Persian administrative structure. Instead, he emphasizes that it was due mainly to the unexpected military and tactical skill of Alexander.

Part 2 is devoted to Judah. In "The Settlement Archaeology of the Province of Judah," Oded Lipschits and Oren Tal begin with the contraction in the number and size of

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archaeological sites in Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period (33–52). They argue that subsequent settlement patterns remained relatively stable through the Persian and early Hellenistic periods. Major expansion and administrative changes began only under the Hasmoneans.

André Lemaire summarizes newly discovered sources in "Administration in Fourth-Century B.C.E. Judah in Light of Epigraphy and Numismatics" (53–74). This includes a survey of names of governors, high priests, and other officials and a publication of some new Semitic inscriptions from Idumaea. Lemaire also argues that the system of taxation used in the late Persian period remained in place in the early Hellenistic period.

Oded Lipschits and David Vanderhooft analyze 532 Yehud stamp impressions found on jars in "Yehud Stamp Impressions in the Fourth Century B.C.E." (75–94). They argue that these indicate administrative continuity in Judah through the Persian period until the late fifth or early fourth century B.C.E. The Egyptian revolt in 404 B.C.E. required a new administrative structure that continued until the Hasmonean period.

Ingo Kottsieper's "On Linguistic Change in Judah During the Late Persian Era" argues that Aramaic superseded Hebrew as an everyday spoken language by the end of the Persian period (95–124). Kottsieper proposes that Hebrew was still used in religious circles such as the Jerusalem priesthood and the Qumran sect. Hebrew changed because its transmitters changed, especially after 70 C.E.

Lester L. Grabbe presents three cases studies from Phoenician history in "Relating Excavations to History in Fourth-Century B.C.E. Palestine" (125–35). Grabbe suggests that the revolts identified with Megabyzus, "the Satraps," and Tennes may have been less destructive than is often assumed. Archaeological evidence for destruction at Levantine sites may be due to unrelated troop movements or causes not related to war.

Part 3 is devoted to Edom and Samaria. Amos Kloner and Ian Stern present a demographic study in "Idumea in the Late Persian Period" (139–44). They observe that excavations indicate dramatically increased settlement in the Shephelah in the Persian period. Ostraca suggest that different Semitic groups co-existed and often were integrated at Idumean sites.

Next is Esther Eshel's "The Onomasticon of Mareshah in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods" (145–56). Eshel suggests that theophoric names with Qos and other onomastic evidence indicate continuities with earlier Iron Age Edomites. Other groups, especially the Nabateans, contributed to the multicultural nature of Mareshah.

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Yitzhak Magen summarizes excavations at Mount Gerizim in “The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence” (157–211). Magen argues that the first phase of the Samaritan temple dates to the mid-fifth century B.C.E., not the late fourth century B.C.E., as Josephus states. Magen suggests that the site began as a temple city inhabited by Yahwistic priests. Yahwists from Samaria built a new city on Mount Gerizim after their own city was destroyed by Alexander the Great. This remained the center of Samaritan culture until it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus circa 111–110 B.C.E (not 128 B.C.E.). The ethnicity of the Samaritan community thus must be viewed as Israelite.

Next is Bob Becking’s “Do the Earliest Samaritan Inscriptions Already Indicate a Parting of the Ways?” (213–22). Becking argues that the inscriptions from Mount Gerizim indicate Yahwistic practices that did not differ significantly from those in Jerusalem. However, he cites a tenuous epigraphic reconstruction and Ezra-Nehemiah to argue that the Samaritan temple differed from the Jerusalem temple in accepting foreign worshipers.

In “The Governors of Samaria in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.,” Hanan Eshel uses papyri and bullae from Wadi ed-Daliyeh and coins from Samaria to correct Frank Cross’s list of governors of Samaria in the Persian period (223–34). The most significant correction is the deletion of a Sanballat III inferred from Josephus.

Part 4 is devoted to biblical literature. In “The Late Persian Formation of the Torah,” Konrad Schmid argues that parts of Deut 34 represent a late Persian period redaction of the Pentateuch (237–51). These unified the whole of the Torah by adding allusions to Genesis and themes that gave a unique authority to Moses and the Torah.

In “The Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Torah in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.,” Reinhard Achenbach argues that the redaction of the Pentateuch and the Prophets was complementary (253–85). This parallel history appears in redactional changes made by Priestly editors in the use of the word *torah*. These changes gave Moses a role increasingly distinct from other prophets and gradually reduced other prophets to teachers of Mosaic *torah*.

Rainer Albertz deals with similar problems in “The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua” (287–303). Albertz suggests that Priestly additions to Joshua respected its Deuteronomistic origins but reveal late Priestly agendas. These included promoting theocratic leaders in the postexilic management of Israelite lands and legitimating the Priestly canonization of the Torah.

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The Nehemiah memoir is analyzed in Gary N. Knoppers, “Nehemiah and Sanballat” (305–31). Knoppers argues that Nehemiah collapsed Israelite ethnicity into the restrictive category of Judean tribal ethnicity. In contrast, opponents such as Noadiah included the northern tribes in Israelite ethnicity, just as did the canonical prophets and Chronicles. Tobiah and Sanballat shared this ethnicity.

Jacob L. Wright suggests that the view of these characters in Ezra-Nehemiah may preserve a record of a much longer evolution of Judean ethnic identity in “A New Model for the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah” (333–48). Wright argues that a brief report by Nehemiah was gradually expanded in a process lasting into the Hasmonean period. The narrowing of Judean views of ethnic identity shaped the portrait of Nehemiah and other figures.

Ehud Ben Zvi concentrates in “Who Knew What?” on anachronistic intertextual references to stories of the exile, the Psalms, and other biblical works in the speeches of David and Azariah in Chronicles (349–60). Ben Zvi argues that these were not mere historiographical errors. They offered “Yehudite literati” with ways to read Chronicles with multiple levels of meaning.

John W. Wright presents a form-critical study of 1 Chr 23:6–24:31 in “Those Doing the Work for the Service in the House of the Lord” (361–84). Wright points out similarities between this passage and a Seleucid-era temple duty roster from Uruk. From these he concludes that early Hellenistic Jerusalem operated with a similar system of temple personnel, patronage, and revenue management.

Joseph Blenkinsopp revisits older scholarship in “The Development of Jewish Sectarianism from Nehemiah to the Hasidim” (385–404). Blenkinsopp argues that the earliest history of sectarian groups known from the late Hellenistic period may be attested in Isaiah, Ezra-Nehemiah, and other early texts.

Limitations of space in this review prevent individualized evaluation of each essay. The overall impression is a consistently high quality that fittingly showcases the best work in the field. The book deserves to be in any library collection devoted to academic books in ancient history, Near Eastern archaeology, or biblical studies.

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