

Book Reviews

Amihai MAZAR, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E.* (Doubleday; New York 1990) 572pp.

Professor Amihai Mazar's book comes as a very timely contribution to Palestinian archaeology. It presents a solid synthesis of the archaeology of the land of the Bible from c.10,000 B.C. up to the Babylonian invasion of Judah. Mazar's synthesis is very up-to-date. Although he finished the text in October 1987, he succeeded to keep updating it up to the beginning of 1989.

This book is partly a translation from the Hebrew; in fact R. Grafman translated chapters 2, 3, 8, and 9 from Hebrew into English. The entire text was then edited and prepared for publication by Janet Amitai (p.XVI). Unfortunately there are quite a number of mistakes in the use of the English language. Thus for example we find "correlations to" instead of "correlations with" in note 19 on page 90, and "the pottery published appear" instead of "the pottery published appears" in note 21 on page 40*i*. More than once the word *aside* is used instead of the word *besides*; thus we read "Aside the Bichrome group, ..." (p.261). The reader can look up for himself other language mistakes on pages 175, 190 and 237.

There are also numerous omissions and misprints that have a negative effect on the published text. Thus *Cilicia* twice appears as *Cylicia* (pp.303 and 371). In paragraph one on

p.323 *a* is left out in front of *mourning woman*, whilst "in the century B.C.E." on p.512 simply does not make sense. *ASSOR* is found instead of *AASOR* (note 41, line 3, p.148). At times the misprints and omissions can really mislead the reader. For example *Bena* is found instead of *Beni* in the second line of the heading of the illustration on p.171. Even worse is the mention of Senusert III instead of Senusert II at the top of p.187. Heading number 7 in the list of headings of illustration 10.16 on p.428 mentions a shaft (quarry?) which is, however, not found on the plan itself. Finally, it must be pointed out that headings (C) and (D) of illustration 6.19 do not tally with the objects which are actually depicted with reference to them.

Mazar's book is very neatly printed and well-illustrated with plans, section drawings, distribution maps, and objects that were unearthed during the excavation of Palestinian sites. However, it is a pity that the illustrations on the following pages do not have a scale shown on them: 137, 138, 287, and 476. Besides, the maps on the following pages do not have a sign showing their orientation: 252, 297, and 342.

Mazar planned his work well. The Preface (pp. XV-XVI) and the Acknowledgments and Credits (pp. XVII-XVIII) are followed by a Bibliographic Note (pp. XIX-XX) which contains an explanation of the manner in which published works are referred to, and a list of general books not mentioned in the notes. There follow a List of Abbreviations (pp. XXI-XXIII), a List of Tables (p. XXIV), a

List of Maps and Illustrations (pp. XXIV-XXX) and a *Glossary of Geographic Terms* (p. XXX). The book has twelve chapters (pp. 1-550) followed by a General Index (pp. 551-569) and a Scriptures Index (pp. 571-572). In the Introduction (pp. 1-34) Mazar sets the scene for his work dealing with general things like the geography of Palestine, the history of research of Palestinian archaeology, the problems of stratigraphy, chronology, and ideology and interpretation in archaeology. Chapter two (pp. 35-58) deals with the first agricultural communities of the Neolithic period c. 8500-4300 B.C. The Chalcolithic period (c. 4300-3300 B.C.) is discussed in chapter three (pp. 59-90), whereas chapter four (pp. 91-150) is a study of the period of the emergence of cities in Palestine (c. 3300-2300 B.C.). The temporary dwindling of city life in Palestine (c. 2300-2000 B.C.) is discussed in chapter five (pp. 151-173), whilst the resurgence of the Canaanite city-states and their heyday (c. 2000-1500 B.C.) are presented in chapter six (pp. 174-231). The following period (c. 1550-1200 B.C.) saw the Egyptian domination of Canaan which is presented in chapter seven (pp. 232-294). When Egypt's control over Canaan started to wane, the Israelites had entered this region of the Near East and they were experiencing the period of the Judges (c. 1200-1000 B.C.) which is discussed in chapter eight (pp. 295-367). The following chapter (pp. 367-402) presents the archaeology of the United Monarchy (c. 1000-925 B.C.), whilst that of the Divided Monarchy (c. 925-586 B.C.)

is dealt with in chapter ten (pp. 403-462). Chapter eleven (pp. 463-530) offers the reader a summary of the main characteristics of Israelite culture such as those of the architecture and town planning, of the use of ashlar masonry, metallurgy, literacy and inscriptions, and burial customs. Finally, chapter twelve (pp. 531-550) is a brief presentation of the archaeology of Philistia, Phoenicia and the Transjordan during the period of the Monarchy; there is also a brief treatment of the Assyrian and Babylonian rule over Palestine. Each chapter is followed by a section of notes which offer a rich field of information on both the original and secondary sources used by the author.

On the whole, Mazar approaches his subject in a very professional way. Every Syro-Palestinian archaeologist is aware of how difficult it is to offer a synthesis of the archaeology of Palestine that is both solid and clear at the same time. Mazar is very well-informed and he tries to present an updated and comprehensive picture of the archaeology of Palestine as much as is possible. He is constantly aware of the importance of regional archaeology. In fact he is even ready to abandon the use of a general terminology that covers the first phase of the Early Bronze Age because of what regional variations in the pottery assemblages of this period in Palestine teach him: "Early and late assemblages of this period can be defined in certain regions of the country, but the regional diversity does not allow a general terminology which will be valid for the inner

division of the period in the entire country" (p.94). Another good point is his treatment of the pillared house-type (pp.343-344). He presents a very balanced picture of the Israelites' close connections with this type of house whilst honestly admitting that it was "the building fashion of the period-possibly rooted in the domestic architecture of southern Canaan in the Late Bronze Age, but eventually adopted by all the peoples living in Palestine during Iron Age I" (p.343).

The reader of Mazar's book can picture the pottery, the architecture, the social and political life as well as the general cultural life of the inhabitants of Palestine from c.10,000 up to 586 B.C. Although Mazar focuses his attention on the material culture of Palestine, he also gives the inscriptional remains their due merit. He demonstrates a good deal of intellectual honesty which also allows him to treat the material remains of Palestine in their own right, making use of the Bible only when it yields the information that is appropriate for a reconstruction of the past and not as an ideological tool. In this way his contribution to biblical archaeology is even greater because he teaches the reader not to demand from archaeology that which it cannot offer. Hence the background of the Old Testament is brought alive and the reader can see for himself how the study of Palestinian archaeology and that of the Bible are mutually helpful.

However, there are various things in Mazar's work which need to be specified or even corrected. At times he is too rash when making certain

judgements as when he says that a fourth millennium statuette of a pregnant female having pronounced sexual organs is "undoubtedly a fertility goddess so common since Neolithic times" (p. 78). On p.303 he is too sure of the identification of the name *Sicity* with that of the *Tjekel*, one of the groups of the Sea Peoples. At other times he seems to be too superficial in treating certain problems as when he says (p. 541) that Gilead is the plateau north of the river Jabbok. In fact this explanation is only one of the three possible meanings of Gilead, because the latter could also refer to the region south of the river Jabbok or indeed to the whole territory of Israel in the Transjordan. Mazar treats the methodological problem of the relationship between the bible and Near Eastern archaeology too briefly and without sufficient specification (p. 32). It would have been simpler and more precise to mention explicitly that the Bible has to be interpreted according to the principles of critical exegesis, the archaeological remains have to be interpreted according to the canons of archaeology, and that Biblical archaeology must compare the two interpretations just mentioned to get a correct picture of Palestine in biblical times. Mazar's references are usually thorough. However, it must be pointed out that a recent important work on the Phoenicians (Sabatino Moscati, scientific director, *The Phoenicians*, Milan: Bompiani, 1988) is not mentioned where one certainly expects it to be found namely, in note 6 on p. 549.

There are also matters of a rather methodological nature which need to be discussed and perhaps corrected in Mazar's work. Although stratigraphy is the backbone of archaeological excavation, Mazar is unclear with respect to the stratigraphic terms that he employs. On p. 9 he correctly shows that a stratum is a layer, but unfortunately he identifies it with a ruined city. In this way, the word *layer* is robbed of its precise meaning namely, the smallest stratigraphic unit and it virtually stands for a phase. On pp. 24-25 Mazar incorrectly identifies Kenyon's method of excavation with a "lack of comprehensive horizontal exposure". In fact, however, Kenyon's method is intrinsically bound with a respect for the earth layers as they occur and not as one imagines them to be. Her approach is open to both the "vertical" and the "horizontal" exposure. On p. 25 Mazar does not tell us what criteria are actually used to define a locus.

Mazar's approach to pottery poses another problem. His views on the relationship between pottery and ethnicity are fraught with tension. On p. 27 pottery is viewed as the best tool for studying ethnic changes. In fact, on pp. 312-313 it seems that the Philistine occupation of certain sites in the northwestern Negeb and in the southern coastal plain is based on the appearance of Philistine pottery on these sites. However, Mazar's remarks on the Israelite quality of the material culture of the Jebusite and Gibeonite enclaves leads the reader to reflect on the nature of the relationship between pottery and ethnicity.

On p. 312 Mazar himself discusses the case of Beth-Shemesh which according to biblical tradition was an Israelite town, but the material culture of which "is indistinguishable from that of its Philistine neighbor, Timnah". He then correctly concludes that "this phenomenon exemplifies the difficulty of defining ethnicity on the basis of material culture" (p. 312). It is in the light of this statement that his remarks on the relationship between a people and its pots should be interpreted.

There is also one case of an outright contradiction. In note 15 on p. 399 we are told by Mazar that it is difficult to conceive of ashlar masonry being buried in foundation courses where it is not visible. Later on, however, the heading of illustration 10.2 on p. 409 describes a particular ashlar wall as "probably a foundation of a gate structure".

In no way does the foregoing critique preclude the fact that Mazar's work offers a very positive contribution to Syro-Palestinian archaeology and that it will prove to be a great help both for the general reader and the scholar interested in the archaeology of Palestine and in the Old Testament. Mazar's book will also help the theologian of the Old Testament to base his statements on a solid foundation and not on preconceived ideas. Archaeology does teach us how to be down to earth.

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Noel MUSCAT, *The life of St. Francis in the light of St. Bonaventure's theology of the 'Verbum Crucifixum'* (Atonianum, Roma 1989) 271pp.

This work is the outcome of years of research which the author presented as a dissertation for the doctoral degree in theology at the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality of the Pontificium Athenaeum 'Antonianum'.

As the title indicates, the aim of this study/research is to show St. Francis in the light of the theology of the Cross according to the teaching of St. Bonaventure. It was in fact the merit of this outstanding theologian to write a biography of the Saint of Assisi with the main purpose of constructing a franciscan theology centred on the humanity of Christ Crucified, without discarding the historical events concerning the life of the Saint. This work produced the 'Legenda Maior Sancti Francisci' which Bonaventure finished in the year 1263 when he was Minister General of the Franciscan Order.

The methodology selected by Fr. Muscat has as its departure point the theological system of St. Bonaventure with the explicit intention of demonstrating its influence on his franciscan formation and consequently the special manner in which he looks upon Francis of Assisi.

Dependently on this general observation, the work is composed of two principal parts, each containing three chapters. The first part speaks of the theology of the 'Verbum

Crucifixum' as it appears in the writings of St. Bonaventure. The second part is a study of the life of St. Francis in the light of the 'Verbum Crucifixum'. The author studies the theology of the 'Verbum Crucifixum' in the various works of the Seraphic Doctor, particularly those strictly theological, which Bonaventure conceived and wrote during the years of his studies and teaching at Paris. These works are the Commentaries to the Gospels of Luke and John and also those in which he defends the evangelical poverty of the Mendicants which has as its basis the life and example of Christ in his 'kenosis'. A whole chapter is dedicated to the mystical works of St. Bonaventure, where the figure of the Crucified Christ is the central theme, and particularly to the classical work 'Itinerarium mentis in Deum'. The second section represents a deep study of the 'Legenda Maior' and the figure of St. Francis in the light of the Crucified Christ. Here the author expounds the theology of the 'Verbum Crucifixum', as it is manifested in the prologue of this biography, which is reputed as a truly fine page of medieval hagiography. This is followed by an attentive consideration of the virtues of St. Francis as presented by Bonaventure in the light of their great conformity with the life of Christ. A whole chapter of this second part is dedicated to the mystical experience of the 'Stigmata' received by St. Francis on Mt. La Verna - the seal of the Saint's intimate union with Christ Crucified.

This work should draw the interest of those who want to deepen their

knowledge of the figure of the Poverello of Assisi and his particular message. Notwithstanding the doctrinal aspects of the dissertation, the exposition is remarkably clear. The reader can easily follow the mind of the author. The critical apparatus is adequately presented and has the special advantage of making available the original thesis of Bonaventure to those who do not have the time or possibility of delving into the voluminous Opera Omnia of the Seraphic Doctor. The theme of the work has a special significance to those who are interested in the franciscan charism. The conclusion to which the author arrives can be synthesised in the following text: "The Cross will always remain a mystery

destined to be misunderstood and unloved. Nevertheless, if we are not to fall into the errors of the world's logic, we must face the challenge to repropose Christ, and Christ Crucified, as the only wisdom in whom human life becomes meaningful. This particular aspect of our Franciscan charism is the qualitative blend or trade-mark of our apostolate. We cannot be poor, nor present ourselves as minor brothers, nor be worthy of our name as Franciscan, if we do not love the Cross".

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