

The edited inscriptions exhibit what might be called the Jewish cosmopolitanism that characterized Jerusalem, and Isaac's introduction points us to Acts 2.5–11 – 'now there were dwelling in Jerusalem devout men from every nation under heaven...', while reminding us that one major source of this remarkable diversity was the practice of thrice-yearly Temple pilgrimage. The collected inscriptions of the Jerusalem volume of CIIP draw us right into this multi-faceted world; and the chasm between the contents of the two parts of this first volume reveal with horrifying clarity that when the Temple and the city fell, and its population was destroyed or dispersed, along with the countless casualties, a rich and unique way of life was lost that could never be replaced.



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Avraham Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2012. Pp xviii + 338. \$49.50. ISBN: 9781575061795.

Avraham Faust's latest book is a fully revised and updated English version of his Hebrew monograph, *מבט אכיאלוגי: המלוכה והחברה בתקופת הישראלית* (2005), which in turn was based on his Bar-Ilan University doctoral dissertation (1999). The author's work, accordingly, has been known to specialists for at least a decade now, but since this English version will reach a much wider audience, I will approach this review as if this were a totally new volume – which to some extent it is, given the ever-increasing amount of evidence applicable to Faust's ongoing project, notwithstanding its roots stretching back to the late 1990's.

The key word in the title is 'society', for while many works by archaeologists report their findings and attempt to place their excavation within the larger picture of ancient (economic, political, military, etc.) history, insufficient attention has been paid to how archaeology can inform social history. To some extent, the springboard for Faust's monograph (and its earlier versions) is a comment by William Dever (1995) regarding a 'serious deficiency' in the field of archaeology, which as a whole fails to utilize the revealed material culture in order to reconstruct the social structure of ancient Israel and surrounding peoples. Faust has answered that challenge in strong fashion, and his book no doubt will serve as the basis for all future discussion on the topic.

The bulk of the monograph is to be found in Chapters 3 (pp. 39–127) and 4 (pp. 128–177), which present and analyze the data for the urban and rural societies, respectively. As one can see from the disproportionate length of these two chapters, not surprisingly there is considerably more material available concerning the urban

setting than there is regarding the rural landscape. In addition, for the former chapter, Faust is careful to distinguish between Israel and Judah, and for Judah, between the 8th century and the 7th century. One important data set will serve here to illustrate Faust's attempt to reveal the social aspects of ancient Israel.

Through a series of lists and graphs, Faust pays close attention to the sizes and locations of the residential houses in the different cities, especially in those cases, such as Hazor, Tirzah, Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah), Tell Beit Mirsim, and Beersheba, where such data are forthcoming in critical mass. These houses range in size from 50–160 sq.m. (experts will recognize Building 2a from Hazor as an exquisite 160-sq.m. house, for example), with an occasional outlier (such as the huge 250-sq.m. Governor's House at Beersheba), and are found in such places as 'residential neighborhood', 'near the city citadel', 'near the city gate', etc.

When the numbers are crunched, we learn that in Israel "there was a relative socioeconomic continuum [with] clear differences between the different strata but not a polarized reality of a few rich and many poor; between these two groups there appears to have been a middle class" (p. 68). The situation in 8th-century Judah was different, with "clear socioeconomic differences": "A narrow stratum of society was the wealthy elite, while the rest of the population was in a much worse economic condition" (p. 95). For 7th-century Judah the vast majority of the evidence comes from Jerusalem only, where "these gaps are wider" still. Towards the end of the chapter, the contrast between the two kingdoms is spelled out explicitly: "An analysis of the settlements shows that at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. there were usually only two classes in Judahite cities (except in Jerusalem, particularly in the seventh century B.C.E.): a lower class including the vast majority of the population . . . and a very limited upper class of the very rich. In contrast, in Israelite cities there was more of a spectrum between the richest and the poorest. The socioeconomic gap in Israel was no smaller, but there were also middle classes" (pp. 116–117). While specialists in the field may have been familiar with this picture before, Faust's analysis (to repeat) is certain to reach a broader array of readers now. For statements on this matter from the biblical prophets, one will wish to consult Amos and Isaiah for the northern and southern kingdoms, respectively.

Chapter 3 also includes a wide-ranging discussion on the role of the city gate, as the place of justice, as a commercial center, and as an area where the poor would gather. Faust garners a variety of biblical verses (e.g., Amos 5:12, Prov 22:22) in support of this last aspect, which has not received sufficient attention in the literature. As indicated above, by necessity Chapter 4 on the rural landscape constitutes a shorter treatment. The chapter divides the discussion between villages and farmsteads (the biblical *הַצְּרִיּוֹת* [see Lev 25:31 etc.] most likely). The villages have a wall; most of the houses are of the four-

room type; the residences are quite large, c. 120–130 sq.m.; and these villages typically specialized in oil and wine production. The farmsteads are essentially a single large house, also c. 130 sq.m. or even larger, once more of the four-room type, with a pen for animals.

Faust makes the important point that the rural four-room houses are larger than their urban counterparts, a feature which translates into different social aspects: the former most likely housed extended families, “including parents, married sons and their children, unmarried daughters, unmarried aunts, and other relatives who remained living there for various reasons, slaves (?), agricultural workers, and others”; while the latter typically “were inhabited by nuclear families” (p. 160).

As one indication of how widely Faust reads the social-historical and social-scientific literature, I present here an instance of how he builds on the findings delivered in an article whose subject matter is far removed from the world of ancient Israel. Faust cites M. J. Kolb and J. E. Snead, “It’s a Small World after All: Comparative Analysis of Community Organization,” *American Antiquity* 62 (1997), pp. 609–628, to the effect that villages are characterized by three important components: a) social reproduction; b) subsistence economy; and c) self-identification. Faust finds all three of these elements present in the ancient Israelite villages, as revealed through the archaeological data: “they were large enough to entail social reproduction through the interactions of their components; the community enabled a subsistence economy; and the existence of boundary walls shows that the communities maintained a large degree of self-identity and differentiated themselves from the outside world” (p. 171).

The remaining chapters examine specific issues in the study of ancient Israelite society in more in-depth fashion: fortified structures attached to the military (Ch. 5); political organization in both Israel and Judah (Ch. 6); the four-room house (Ch. 7); and ‘pots and peoples’, to use the author’s felicitous phrase (Ch. 8), though this chapter discusses other topics as well, such as faunal remains. Space does not allow a detailed summation of Faust’s views on each of these subjects, though naturally many will want to read especially chs. 7–8 carefully, given the deep interest in and ongoing discussion of the four-room house, the collared-rim jar, and the presence or absence of pig bones. To be sure, much of the treatment appears in slightly different form in the author’s *Israel’s Ethnogenesis* (London: Equinox, 2006), so that his opinions on these subjects are by now well known. In short, while the 2006 book dealt mainly with the emergence of Israel in the historical and archaeological record, and the 2012 book under review concerns the period of the monarchy, a consistent picture emerges in the two different epochs. A prime example is the lack of painted pottery both in early Israel and in the later kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

On the question of whether or not one can tell an Israelite from a Canaanite, and vice versa, in the archaeological record, Faust directs the reader's attention to the rural villages, where the essential differences may be seen. In the northern urban centers (for example, Megiddo), "there are indications of Israelites and Canaanites-Phoenicians living side by side" (p. 249). Not so in the rural sector, however. The residents of the valley villages (e.g., Tel Qiri) were Canaanites-Phoenicians; especially noteworthy is "the great similarity between the villages discussed here and the Bronze Age villages" (p. 252). In the hill-country villages, by contrast, one finds evidence of a different population, with their four-room houses and so on – and these people, of course, are the Israelites.

If I had to select one sentence that serves as an overarching statement regarding this crucial issue, and which speaks to the essence of Israelite society, it would be the following: "in complete contrast to the heterogeneity typical of the Bronze Age population, Israel was far more homogeneous. Even though there were undoubtedly differences in wealth, property and status, the archaeological findings reflect an unprecedented architectural uniformity in all strata of society and in both kingdoms (evidence for a degree of shared ethnic identity). This uniformity is also reflected in the Bible" (p. 229), to which Faust add the following footnote, "Although minimalists see the picture arising from the Bible as a deliberate forgery of course" (p. 229, n. 25).

I do not mean to imply that the issue to which I have just devoted two paragraphs dominates the monograph – it does not – but given the intense interest in the subject, I thought it pertinent to say more than a passing word. Indeed, as the bulk of this review hopefully has demonstrated, the main points of discussion relate to kinship structure, community organization, socio-economic stratification, and the like.

To round out this review, note that Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the subject with the history of the field and the *status quaestionis*; a concluding Chapter 9 provides historical, diachronic analysis, as per its title "From Hamlets to Monarchy"; and an Epilogue provide some ideas about future directions. In sum, Faust has sifted (pun intended?) through an enormous amount of archaeological data buried (ditto?) in excavation reports, and then has distilled this data through the sociological and anthropological lens (as we have come to expect from his pen), in order to weave a coherent narrative depicting Israelite society during the Iron II period. The result is an elegant statement, from which historians, archaeologists, and biblical scholars alike will benefit.

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