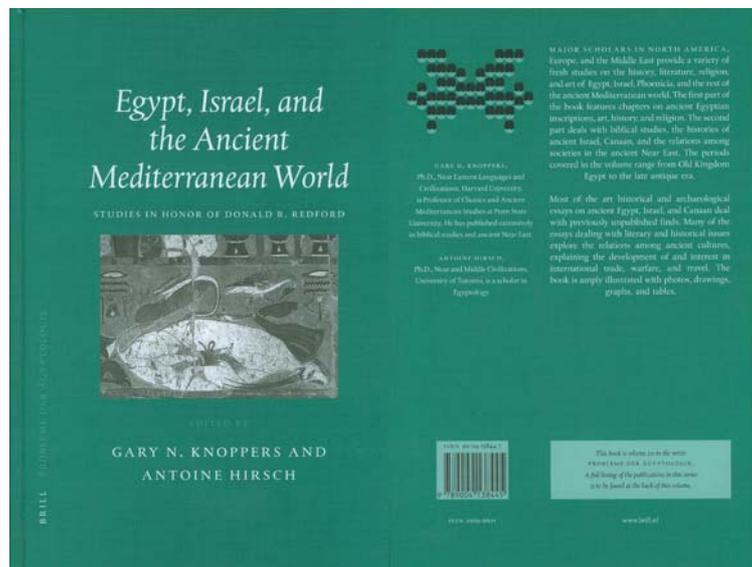


**Knoppers, G. & Hirsch, A. Eds. 2004. Egypt, Israel and the ancient Mediterranean world. – Leiden, Brill (Probleme der Ägyptologie 20)**

Book review by A. Stevenson



Donald Redford is renowned for the breadth of his knowledge and his wide-ranging interests in both Egyptian and Israelite history as well as the contacts between Egypt and the Mediterranean world. Thus, whilst the *Festschrift* genre, broadly speaking, is often criticised for the disparate nature of the articles it encompasses and the tenuous linkages between papers, in this case it is perhaps apt and the criteria for evaluation of this particular compilation as a whole should relate to the interests of Redford himself. In this regard the articles brought together for this volume do, for the most part, reflect the diversity of subject matter and the multiple methodological approaches that Redford has always encouraged his students to engage with. The twenty-five papers are divided into two separate parts; sixteen under the banner of Egyptology and nine in the section entitled 'Israelites, Canaanites and Egyptians in the Levant'.

The Egyptology section is organised on a chronological basis and, as would be expected, the emphasis is towards the later end of the standard ancient Egyptian timeline with the greater proportion of papers devoted to the New Kingdom. Only the first two papers, one by Zahi Hawass and the other by Sarah Parcak, represent the Old Kingdom. The contribution of the former is perhaps one of the more incongruous pieces in the volume but nonetheless its value may lie in its presentation of previously unpublished results from current excavations in the upper cemetery at Giza, specifically the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> dynasty tomb of the artisan Petety. Parcak's offering sits more comfortably within the broader theme of the *Festschrift* with its central concern being the wider historical context of 'Egypt's Old Kingdom Empire', a theme that will be of interest to Redford himself.

Larry Pavlish's substantial article on 'Archeometry at Mendes' is an appropriate contribution in anticipation of Redford's forthcoming (edited) book on the excavations at this site. Pavlish's offering deals with a variety of periods and is perhaps one of the more impressive pieces in the *Festschrift* on account of the extensive detail that the author presents which covers geoaerchaeology, archaeobotany and geophysical surveys. Although these are very specialised fields that may not be familiar to all, Pavlish's treatment of the subject matter is clear. Methodological concepts and procedures are concisely explained in accessible terms and are set into context thus allowing a very illuminating account of the potential value of these approaches. Moreover, as the paper itself emphasises, the Delta landscape is rapidly transforming under extensive agricultural expansion which threatens the archaeological heritage. By embracing multiple approaches the paper makes clear that a wider collaborative, cross-disciplinary rescue-archaeology effort is invaluable in these circumstances.

The Middle Kingdom is dealt with by only one rather narrowly specialist article on coffin decoration at Asyut, based on the back panel of a 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> dynasty coffin acquired by the Brooklyn Museum of Art. In contrast, the New Kingdom is well-covered with eight contributions. It is the works of a more general nature that are most successful here such as James Hoffmeier's paper which considers some of the neglected aspects of Egyptian foreign policy in the Levant and Nubia in the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty and the thought provoking article by Jan Assmann on theological responses to Amarna in the Ramesside period. The papers by Lyn Green and Diana Flores will also be of interest to a wider audience. Green's use of comparative material from ceremonial meals in the Mediterranean to elucidate aspects of Amarna banquet scenes is a particularly interesting approach. A further

paper of note is that offered by Gregory Mumford which presents the results of recent investigations at the temple and settlement at Tell Tebilla (East Delta). Amongst such well-rounded intellectual works there are a few less striking studies which deal with minor texts and reliefs that are of limited interest, but perhaps this is an unsurprising feature of *Festschriften* generally. These include the investigation by Earl Ertman into one limestone relief fragment as well as the ill-fitting brief communication about an obscure wooden stela in the Royal Ontario Museum.

The Canaanite section is less comprehensive than the Egyptian part but is nevertheless characterised by a number of thought provoking articles. Whilst the present reviewer is not familiar with this area of research, papers such as John Van Seters' was highly readable and forms a very fitting contribution to the *Festschrift* through its review of recent scholarship on the Joseph story, providing a valuable supplement to Redford's previous scholarship on the subject. Similarly, papers by John Strange and John Holladay were accessible and engaging in terms of presentation and content. The in-depth pottery study by Ann Killebrew contributes to the debate over the nature of Egyptian – Canaanite interactions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> dynasties. Killebrew, however, has perhaps overstretched the data here by asserting that the distribution of Egyptian-styled pottery demonstrates (p. 342) "a clearly targeted and organized Egyptian administrative and military presence". In this respect the paper could benefit from deeper social contextual analysis and a greater engagement with the substantial literature on the nature of group interactions. Current archaeological debates concerning social identity for instance would fill the rather large gap created by Killebrew's interpretative leap from the static pottery remains to the nature of ancient social relationships. Overall, apart from the rather odd inclusion of a very short note by A. Malamat on the genealogy of Ham in the Table of Nations (Gen 10:6–20) and a badly structured paper by Baruch Halpern this section is fairly consistent in academic quality. The *Festschrift* is rounded off with the formidable bibliography of all Redford's published work from 1959 to 2003, as well as books 'in preparation' and 'in press' in 2004, underscoring his immense contribution to academia.

Overall, the title of the volume is perhaps misleading as to the contents, suggesting discussion of interrelations between regions which is really only dealt with in a handful of papers; and even these take occasionally a one-sided, often a-theoretical perspective. The title merely acts then as a catch-all phrase which is ultimately too broad for the editors to successfully thread the conglomeration of articles together into a consistent whole. This reflected, partially, in the inconsistency of the formatting throughout the *Festschrift*. Otherwise, the volume is amicably presented although the reviewer here would make the trivial objection that the location of the plates at the end of the volume as opposed to their incorporation into their relevant articles is a minor irritation.

As the editor notes in the introduction Donald Redford is one of a rare breed of generalists capable of engaging with diverse subjects with expert authority. The consequence is that in requesting a representative collation of works dedicated to him, too many diverse areas are discussed in detail that is too specific. It is perhaps for this reason that whilst this volume will be a valuable asset to many institutional libraries it is unlikely that the more narrowly specialised workers on the one hand or a more general audience on the other would purchase the book for their personal use given the excessive price of Brill's current hardback edition. In the spirit of PalArch itself it is to be noted in this regard that eleven of the articles are available to consult and download online at <http://weaver2.la.psu.edu/cams/festschrift>.

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