

P. 296, e.g., 21:29: When Fox corrects, he does not always say from what, and this means that you really need to use the book along with a Hebrew Bible edition and his Commentary.

Pp. 302–4 to 22:17: Fox emends to make a title for the Amenhotep section: “The words of wise ones. Incline your ear and hear my words . . .”

P. 374 to 29:13: Fox assumes that giving light to the eyes means God looks at them. It seems more likely that this expression is about God giving sight to their eyes. Compare the Greek idea that we can see because light comes from our eyes. (See A. Mark Smith, “Optics and Catoptrics,” in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al. Vol. 9: 4908–11 [Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013].)

P. 399 to 31:31: The Greek states that the husband is to be praised, doubtless because of the wife, but the wife herself does not get credit!

We are all in Fox’s debt for his labors, and his work will be consulted with profit for years to come.

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*Distant Views of the Holy Land*. By FELICITY COBBING and DAVID M. JACOBSON. Bristol, CT: EQUINOX, 2015. Pp. vi + 321, illus. \$200. [Distributed by ISD, Bristol, CT]

In recent years, the Palestine Exploration Fund has catalogued and digitized its extensive archive of visual materials that document PEF-sponsored archeological activities and, less extensively, renderings of the Holy Land by visitors and artists unaffiliated with the PEF. Two volumes of photographs resulting from these preservation efforts have been published (Gibson 2003; Abujaber and Cobbing 2005). *Distant Views of the Holy Land* is a welcome addition. More than its predecessors, this new selection of images emphasizes the history and archaeology of biblical sites, which are in turn illustrated by photographs, drawings, original watercolors, maps, and a few engravings from rare travel books.

In their introduction, Felicity Cobbing, PEF Executive Secretary and curator, and David Jacobson, editor of the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, summarize the scope of the selected images. The earliest date from the 1850s, but the strength of the collection resides in photographs taken during expeditions conducted by the PEF, beginning with James MacDonald’s ordinance surveys of Jerusalem (1864–65) and continuing into the early twentieth century with other PEF researchers. In addition, Cobbing and Jacobson discuss the pictorial archive in relation to the history of the PEF, and further, in the context of pilgrimage, tourism, and commercial photography. The authors are clearly aware that the PEF’s scientifically minded researchers were embedded in a remarkable cultural phenomenon, the seemingly insatiable thirst to visit the land of the Bible, or if not visit, to at least visualize it, capture it in imagination, and thereby render it holy.

Although the majority of photographs are black and white and stem from PEF activities, some come from private individuals. A good number derive from commercial artists, such as Bonfils, Robertson and Beato, and Krikorian and Raad. The authors also include paintings, notably watercolors by Claude Conder, leader of the PEF’s survey of western Palestine; William Simpson, a Scottish artist; and his fellow Scotsman, David Roberts. Whatever their source, most of the images in *Distant Views* depict sites and landscapes mentioned in the Bible.

Cobbing and Jacobson group images by geographic regions: Galilee, Samaria, Judea and Philistia, and Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Save for the last, the authors present in each section a relief map keyed to the images that follow; an historical and geographical outline of the region; and a survey of biblical sites, especially those explored by archeologists. Each image carries a caption that sketches biblical history relevant to the depicted site. The final section of the book, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, differs somewhat. First, it comprises about one-third of the book. Second, the authors’ selections (or the distribution of images in the PEF archives) emphasize Christian, Jewish, and Muslim inhabitants, and locations such as the Temple Mount and Church of the Holy Sepulcher that continue to awaken devotional fervor even in today’s fraught political climate.

*Distant Views* is not easy to classify. It is in part a conventional treatment of historical biblical geography. For example, the authors include relief maps of Samaria or Galilee, summarizing its physical features, and then offer a summary of known human occupation from the Paleolithic period to the first century CE.

In part, *Distant Views* is episodic biblical history. Affixing captions to each selected image, Cobbing and Jacobson associate locale with biblical people and events as recorded in the Bible and informed by the latest archeological research. Their approach to debated historiographical issues is typical of numerous works in biblical archaeology: moderately critical, conservative, and sometimes conflicted. The authors try to maintain scholarly distance, although not consistently. Captions sometimes obscure critical perspective by summarizing events and citing biblical texts without distancing phrases such as “according to the Bible” or “according to tradition” (e.g., the caption to Figure S.23 “Jordan Valley Looking East to Mt. Gilead,” p. 73). Yet, Cobbing and Jacobson forthrightly discuss instances in which archaeological research contradicts the Bible or in which, as in the Book of Joshua, “historical truth . . . bears little relation to the story as handed down to us in the biblical texts” (p. 147).

However, immediately after declaring the Book of Joshua practically useless for any historian, the authors write with great confidence in the biblical record. They introduce into their text a subheading, “A Biblical Personality [Jeremiah] Revealed,” and proceed to describe events as told in the Bible, including earlier religious reforms by King Josiah, on the strength of identical personal names found in the Book of Jeremiah and on clay seals buried in the city’s ruins. It is doubtful how a very limited number of Hebrew names can justify the authors’ claim that “the reporting of detail, especially names, in the Book of Jeremiah, which can now be verified, is quite remarkable and attests to its reliability as a historical source” (p. 148).

Besides offering readers some historical geography and biblical history, *Distant Views* also serves as a kind of guide to the Holy Land. The book’s cultural ancestry lies in vicarious tours of the Holy Land that were very popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In these works, an author (a biblical scholar, missionary, preacher, or tourist) would typically restate and confirm biblical history, smoothly melding modern observation with devotion to both the Bible and the land in which it was born (e.g., Hurlbut and Kent 1914; see Long 2003: 89–129).

My impression of ancestry doubtless owes more to the types of material in the PEF archive than to Cobbing and Jacobson. However, like those earlier tour guides, Cobbing and Jacobson seem both fascinated and repelled by some aspects of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Its partitions, they write, “give the interior a gloomy and untidy appearance, which detracts from its sanctity.” The ceremony of Holy Fire is “colorful” (pp. 241–42). One of the “more absurd disputes” among Christian groups is over which Christian group has the right to remove a ladder from the church’s exterior (pp. 238–40). Such comments are rare in *Distant Views*, but when they appear, they mark the exotic and foreign, while suggesting a vestigial connection with those earlier, especially Protestant, virtual tours of the Holy Land.

Among the abiding values of this book are the updated summaries of archeological research and the opportunity to see renderings of this portion of the Levant shortly before twentieth-century development spawned urbanization, industrialization, population growth, and so much political conflict. The book also provides informative biographies of photographers, artists, and illustrators. It lacks an index of specific places.

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