

the hallmarks of faithful preaching practices, but ends up discussing the keys to faithful preaching, while the second, which seeks to address the critically important issue of methods of assessment, supplies no new ideas. The two authors featured in this section do not even speculate about what it means to assess preaching, or if it is even possible to meaningfully assess preaching.

The last section of the book, "Preaching in the Curriculum," also consists of two chapters. The first investigates the ways in which an introductory course in preaching may be configured to deliver the basic skills required for good preaching. The second explores the place of preaching in the broader framework of the institution and its constituency. Like Section 3, this section also fails to introduce or expose the reader to any new topics.

*Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice* does not attempt to exhaust all the components of preaching and, regrettably, the reader is left to speculate as to why some components are addressed while others are not. The editors do freely admit that some key elements of preaching are not addressed, including the spiritual disciplines or practices that contribute to the preacher's formation and the fundamental significance of theological analysis. They ask that readers view the volume as an "invitation to others to add their voices and analyses to ours" (viii). The delimitations of the editors notwithstanding, the reader will be hard pressed to resist the feeling that the volume fails to address a number of key themes and issues.

The major strength of the book is its examination of the practice of preaching. The premise it embraces is that preaching is a practice that can and should be taught. Because it has been some time since a book dealing with the teaching of preaching has been published, this volume should succeed in resurrecting a discussion that should be ongoing. Given the role of preaching in the life and mission of the church, teaching preaching is an important activity that should receive focused attention and emphasis in the curriculum of theological schools and Christian faith communities. Though some may argue that this book breaks little new ground, especially as it relates to its subtitle, "A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy," I believe that it is still worth reading and, as such, I highly recommend that every homiletics professor do just that.

In the end, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice* shows that teaching and writing about the art of preaching are deceptively complex activities that defy and/or elude precise, neat definitions. Perhaps because preaching is a profoundly theological act in which the divine invades and inhabits the human, preaching will always be full of intrigue and mystery, making the teaching of preaching a humbling task.

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MacDonald, Nathan. *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xv + 156 pp. Paper, \$16.00.

Nathan MacDonald lectures at the School of Divinity at St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, Scotland. His area of speciality is the OT, particularly the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets, and his research interests focus

on the ancient Israelite religion, the theological appropriation of the OT, and the biblical portrayal of God. He was one of the winners of the Sofja-Kovalevskaja Award in 2008 that will fund his current research project at Georg-August Universität Göttingen (2009-2014), where he is examining the different forms that monotheism took during the exilic and Persian periods. He has presented scholarly papers at universities in Europe, America, and Israel. He has served on the *Society of Old Testament Studies* committee and on the editorial committee of the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*. He received the 2007 John Templeton Award for Theological Promise for his first monograph, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003). His latest books, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) and *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), explore the topic of food and diet in the OT.

MacDonald notes that *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* evolved from research undertaken while in Jerusalem for an introduction chapter for another of his books, *Not Bread Alone*. He discovered that the amount of data available about the diet of the Israelites from the OT, archaeological, and anthropological material, as well as environmental data was too large for a short chapter, hence this book (ix). Since *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* is written for both the general public and the scholarly community, MacDonald uses engaging language and provides substantial notes (31 pages) and a solid bibliography (15 pages) for readers interested in further studies.

The book is divided into four main sections. The first section, the Introduction, consists of two chapters. The first chapter examines the biblical descriptions of the land of Israel (“a land flowing with milk and honey” [e.g., Exod 3:8], “the most glorious of all lands” [Ezek 20:15], and the detailed description given in Deut 8:7-10), concluding that “in the Old Testament the land flowing with milk and honey is always a future expectation . . . a land that the people of Israel have not yet experienced” (7) and “that many of the biblical expressions about the land have a particular rhetorical and theological purpose” (8). The second chapter considers other possible sources for reconstructing the ancient Israelite diet such as biblical text, archaeological data, comparative evidence from the ancient world, comparative evidence from modern anthropological research, and modern scientific knowledge of geography and nutrition (10). However, MacDonald warns, each source offers particular challenges.

The second section (chaps. 3-6), “What Did the Israelites Eat?” considers the different types of food that could have been a part of the diet (bread [wheat/barley], wine, olive oil, vegetables, pulses, fruit, meat, milk, fish, and condiments), noting that meat and fruit were at the top of the hierarchy of foods in contrast to vegetables, which were near the bottom (25). He also describes the substantial archaeological evidence for the consumption of fish, including fish originating from the Nile (38).

The third section (chaps. 7-13), “How Well did the Israelites Eat?” explores the adequacy or rather the inadequacies of the diet. He warns that due to the limitations of our knowledge, this subject cannot be addressed in an entirely

conclusive manner. Based on the role that climate and environment play in food production (chaps. 8-9), the role of meat (chaps. 10-11), and the issue of food distribution (chap. 12), MacDonald suggests “that the population of Iron Age Israel generally suffered from an inadequate diet, poor health, and low life expectancy” (87)—their heavily cereal-dominated diet would have given them bad teeth (83) and nutritional deficiencies in vitamin A, C, Iron, and Zinc (80-81), which would have made them susceptible to disease.

The final section (chaps. 14-15), the Conclusion, provides a critical view of the diet, its variety and monotonousness, and its healthiness and nutritional deficiencies, based on geographical and social variables and the temporal nature of certain food products (chap. 14). MacDonald notes that this account becomes important when evaluating claims made by the many books on “biblical diets” (chap. 15). He concludes his study by providing some brief observations on what the Bible has to say about food. He concludes that “the Old Testament presses for food to be grown responsibly, received with thankfulness and rejoicing, given generously to others, and enjoyed in moderation” (101).

*What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* provides a solid scholarly study on the complex topic of the ancient Israelite diet. MacDonald’s conclusions are based on a sensitive reading of the biblical text, careful evaluation of recent archaeological work (including paleopathology and zooarchaeology), an awareness of the role geography and climate play in food production, and the importance of social anthropology. Although MacDonald provides well-supported and guarded comments on the ancient Israelite diet, he notes that due to “the limitations of our knowledge” the book is only a “partial glimpse into the Israelite diet” (91) and should not be considered the final word on the matter.

MacDonald should also be commended for challenging the common assumption that the distribution of swine remains at a site, or the lack thereof, functions as an important ethnic marker (as evidence for or against an Israelite population). He notes that this traditional view is too simplistic as it does not take into consideration other, perhaps more plausible, explanations such as geographic, economic, and social class factors (67, n. 26). However, his assumption that the distinction between clean and unclean animals (33) was a late development and only first appeared in the exilic and the postexilic period (in the P- and the D-source of Lev 11 and Deut 14) colors some of his conclusions. It should be noted that the categories of “clean and unclean” animals appears in Gen 7:1-5, which belongs to the J-material. Although this passage does not deal with dietary laws, it does demonstrate that the distinction between clean and unclean animals was preexilic (see J. Moskala’s discussion on the flood story in the light of Lev 11 in “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: Their Nature, Theology, and Rationale” [Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1998], 233-246). On p. 60, MacDonald insinuates, perhaps unintentionally, that according to 2 Kgs 6, donkeys, though a disagreeable menu item, were considered acceptable meat for consumption during the time of the Monarchies since a donkey’s head was sold for food during the famine of Samaria. 2 Kings 6:25 notes that

the food supply had run out and that the situation had become so dire that people were willing to eat a donkey's head, dove's droppings, and even babies (vv. 28-29). There are no indications in this passage suggesting that donkey's head was considered an appropriate food item at that time and was only later added to the list of forbidden foods.

On the whole, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* is an excellent contribution to the study of the ancient Israelite diet. It provides well-substantiated conclusions, numerous references, and great bibliography for further study. It is a solid work, well edited, and enjoyable to read. It is highly recommended for both scholars and the general public who are interested in an unbiased account on the diet of ancient Israel.

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Schloen, J. David, ed. *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009. xxii + 538 pp. Cloth, \$69.50.

This impressive festschrift honors the career and scholarly contributions of Harvard University's Dorot Professor of the Archaeology of Israel and Harvard Semitic Museum Director, Lawrence Stager. As the preface by J. D. Schloen elucidates, Stager has been a formidable influence upon the history and archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant for more than thirty years, both through his own research and indirectly through his students. Stager's varied contributions have been felt in the areas of ancient agriculture ("Farming in the Judean Desert during the Iron Age," *BASOR* 221 [1976]: 145-158), the family and household unit in ancient Israel ("The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 [1985]: 1-35), the importance of sea trade to empire building, in which he coined the term "Port Power" ("Port Power in the Early and the Middle Bronze Age: The Organization of Maritime Trade and Hinterland Production," in *Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and Neighboring Lands in Memory of Douglas L. Esser*, ed. S. R. Wolff, SAOC 59 [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2001], 625-638), and the Sea Peoples and the rise of Israel ("Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. M. D. Coogan [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 123-175). His research has also touched upon the nature of David and Solomon's kingdom ("The Patrimonial Kingdom of Solomon," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*, ed. W. G. Dever and S. Gitin [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 63-74) and includes a masterful essay comparing Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden ("Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden," *Eretz-Israel* 26 [1999]: 183\*-194\*). Stager's field work has taken him to places such as Idalion, Cyprus, the burial precinct at Carthage, and from the Buqe'ah Valley's fortified settlements above Qumran to Ashkelon, where he has directed the excavations since 1985. Eisenbrauns is to be commended for their superb work in producing this volume in an attractive folio-sized format. As to be expected with a festschrift, a biographical portrait and a full list of Stager's publications is included, as well