

known to established scholars, the primary targeted audiences are undoubtedly students and interested lay persons. The personal sketches he inserts into his narrative greatly reinforce, if not largely fulfill this objective.

While neither exhaustive in its treatment of warfare in ancient Israel nor containing extensive bibliographies for further study, Seevers' book provides a well written and superbly illustrated introduction to the topic of warfare and consequently deserves a place on the required reading lists for both undergraduate and seminary courses that examine related aspects of Israelite and Old Testament history.

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Tabbernee, William ed., *Early Christianity in Context: An Exploration across Cultures and Continents*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. 640 pp. Hardcover, \$42.99.

Early Christianity in Context, edited by William Tabbernee, a specialist of the history and archaeology of the Montanist movement, makes a broad contribution to the study of early Christianity. In the table of contents, the reader will notice that this lengthy 602-page work is divided according to ten geographic regions. Several specialists have contributed to each chapter in the early Christianity manifest each region. After the Introduction, ten chapters cover The Roman Near East, Beyond the Eastern Frontier, The Caucasus, Deep into China, The World of the Nile, Roman North Africa, Asia Minor and Cyprus, The Balkan Peninsula, Italy and Environs, and The Western Provinces and Beyond. After the Table of Contents, there is a list of illustrations and an extensive list of abbreviations from the vast amount of primary sources and journals utilized for research for each article. The main body of the book ends on page 475, after which there is a sixty-one page bibliography and a list of contributors. Finally there are two indices: the first, a subject index; and the second, an index of ancient writings.

The Introduction, written by William Tabbernee, states the purpose for the present volume. According to Tabbernee, the purpose of this book is to focus on the earliest available "material evidence" of Christianity, literary and non-literary. This enables the reader to study the history of early Christianity in a particular location as well as to get a glimpse into the cultural context in which Christianity developed, whether it be in China, Palestine, or the British Isles. Because of the scope of this volume, each chapter is not intended to be exhaustive, but reflects what Tabbernee describes as the "current trends in the study of early Christianity and Late Antiquity as well as the broader movement within the humanities to take account of diverse cultures." Each chapter contains black-and-white maps of the particular regions as well as black-and-white photos of various archaeological remains of architecture or inscriptions. Each chapter is written by multiple authors, whose names are written at the bottom of the first page of every chapter. This review will focus on two chapters of interest to the author.

The first is on the geographic region of the Roman Near East, authored by Lincoln Blumell, Jenn Cianca, Peter Richardson, and William Tabbernee. This chapter is divided into five subsections. The authors begin with an introduction recounting a brief history of Rome's impact on the major geographic regions of the Roman Near East. The subsequent subsections are divided by region: Palestine, Syria, and Arabia. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the complexity of the world in which Christianity was born. While the sections are not exhaustive, the authors describe the primary socio-political events that impacted the various regions. The reader will be introduced to the geography, people, and religions existing at the time, as well as a summary of the various ethnic and religious groups inhabiting the region. By the end of the section the reader will realize the complexity of the Roman Near East, the birthplace of Christianity. Richardson highlights the intricacies of the geo-political situation, in which various Roman leaders organized and re-organized Palestine and Syria beginning with Pompey until Trajan. Tabbernee's section on Jerusalem provides detailed yet concise summaries of the main factors that describe the social, religious, and political background when Christianity began. He argues that the term "Jewish Christianity" to describe Christianity in Jerusalem prior to Hadrian is difficult for two reasons: first, this term is a modern construct; second, the term "Judaism" may be either a religious or ethnic identity. A third option that Tabbernee does not mention is that Judaism could refer to both a religious as well as ethnic identity, especially for describing the community in Jerusalem prior to Hadrian. He highlights some of the significant archaeological finds that give insight into the religious world of Jews and Christians. For example Tabbernee describes the importance of pilgrimages based on the image of a fourth-century sailing ship with a Latin inscription *Domine iuimus* on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. While many specialists of early Judaism and Christianity will be aware of these finds already, the non-specialist will appreciate the detail and brevity in which these finds are described. The authors did well in distilling a wide variety of the literary and archaeological data for the reader in order to highlight the main points of interest.

The chapter on *Italy and Environs* is equally informative and well written. Like the chapter on the Roman Near East, this chapter opens with an introduction describing briefly the socio-political environment when Christianity arrived in Rome. After the introduction, the chapter is subdivided according to the regions of Italy: Rome, Central Italy, North Italy, Ravenna, South Italy and the Islands, and Environs. Peter Lampe provides an excellent summary of the Jewish and Christian presence in Rome. His informative summaries on language, philosophy, education, and paganism in the Roman period are insightful and aid scholars who are searching for more information regarding the *Sitz im Leben* for Paul's letter to the Romans and the cultural background of the Roman world. As an example, Lampe provides evidence from inscriptions that the Jewish community in Rome was composed of Jewish slaves and freed slaves. Also, based on other epigraphic evidence, the freed Jewish slaves of the Roman legate Volumnius, their patron, founded

the Roman synagogue of the Volumneses. Lampe also briefly describes three residential areas in Rome where Roman Jews resided: Trans-Tiberim, Valley of the Appian Way near the Capena Gate, and near the Viminal Gate in the northeast. As stated previously, the specialist will be aware of many of these points, yet Lampe provides a helpful description of the Jewish culture in Rome that many specialists and non-specialists may have overlooked.

There are at least two strengths of this book one notices right away: the unique focus and the wide scope. While much of early Christian scholarship gives primacy to the written sources—and with good reason—this book fills a gap by focusing on available archaeological resources. The broad scope of the work is seen in its endeavor to highlight archaeological discoveries from diverse geographic regions—indeed from the British Isles to the Far East. This work is not a theological investigation into early Christian literature, nor an attempt at a historical development of theological doctrines. The authors certainly use the literature, yet primarily as a source for reconstructing a partial history. They avoid making any arguments either for or against an early orthodoxy. Their primary concern is to highlight the various forms Christianity took during its development in a particular region. They introduce the reader to the greater cultural milieu, and then describe the material evidence in order to elucidate the earliest forms of Christianity in their respective regions. This book, therefore, functions more as an introduction to the role that the literary and non-literary archaeological evidence plays in revealing the diffusion of Christianity in the early centuries. By the end of the book many will appreciate the complexity of a world that influenced and was influenced by Christianity. Because most scholars focus their research on a narrower region, such as Palestine or Italy for example, it is easy to neglect the broader region outside their respective areas. This one-volume work is an excellent tool for students and scholars to gain knowledge of early Christianity outside their respective regions without having to do countless hours of research. And if they would like to study more, the bibliography and indices will aid them in their journey.

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Ussishkin, David. *Biblical Lachish: A Tale of Construction, Destruction, Excavation and Restoration*. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2014. 446 pp. Hardcover, \$52.00.

The great significance of the city of Lachish for biblical history, as well as its important role as the archaeological ‘type site’ for Judah during the Iron Age II period needs no apology. David Ussishkin, the author of the book under review, directed large scale excavations at Lachish from 1973-1987, with supplementary excavation and restoration work conducted at the site until 1994. Subsequently, Ussishkin edited the massive and justifiably highly acclaimed five-volume final excavation report for Lachish, which appeared in 2004. Over the past decade, while scholars and students digested the enormous amount of data and results published by Ussishkin and his team, Ussishkin has also reflected upon his own methodology and historical