BOOK REVIEWS

P. Altmann – A. Angelini – A. Spiciarich (edd.), *Food Taboos and Biblical Prohibitions, Reassessing Archaeological and Literary Perspectives*, Tübingen 2020 («Archaeology and Bible», 2), Mohr Siebeck, VI + 158 pp. ISBN 978-3-16-159355-0.

Culinary practices have been lengthily discussed in scholarship during the last decades, concerning social stratification as well as social belonging, economic mechanisms, rituals and other religious practices, and the multiplicity of human–animal relations.[1] Such approaches have been adopted in the study of culinary practices in the Hebrew Bible and the material record from first-millennium southern Levant as well.[2] However, one has to admit that there is a specific topic that enjoys the most significant popularity in scholarly discourse – Biblical food taboos and prohibition. To be more specific, much ink has been spilt on the biblical prohibition of pig consumption, the supposed reflection in the material record from Iron Age southern Levant, and their alleged importance for the construction and maintenance of ethnic boundaries in ancient Israel.[3] Nevertheless, the picture turned out to be more complicated. A growing number of studies have shown the weaknesses in methodology and interpretation of such lines of thought and provided a more nuanced presentation of the zooarchaeological data and the possible socio-economic factors that led to the consumption of pigs in Iron Age southern Levant.[4]

The present volume provides a fresh look at this often-debated subject. It broadens up the picture by contextualizing the food laws in the Hebrew Bible by an up-to-date analysis of the relevant text; by presenting the boarder context of food laws in Mesopotamia and Egypt; and by meticulous analyses of archaeological data. It includes contributions presented at a conference that was held as part of a Swiss National Science Foundation Sinergia project, a Swiss-Israeli collaboration, titled "The History of the Pentateuch: Combining Literary and Archaeological Approaches" led by Konrad Schmid (Zurich), Tomas Römer (Lausanne), Christophe Nihan (Lausanne), Oded Lipschits (Tel Aviv) and Israel Finkelstein (Tel Aviv). It is the second in a trilogy dealing with food practices, beginning with Altmann's 2019 monograph *Banned Birds: The Birds in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14* and concluding with a forthcoming volume edited by Altmann and Angelini titled *To Eat or Not to Eat: Studies in the Biblical Dietary Laws*. Together, the three volumes would no-doubt form must-read corpora of studies for any scholar dealing with the subject of culinary practices in first-millennium southern Levant.

The volume begins with an introduction by the three editors, followed by seven chapters. In their introduction, Altmann, Angelini and Spiciarich detail the scholarly location of the volume and overview the structure of the volume as well as results and future perspectives. Following that, Altmann and Angelini present in the second chapter (*Purity, Taboo and Food in Antiquity. Theoretical and Methodological Issues*) an

1 *E.g.*, among many others, Dietler 2006; DeFrance 2009; Curet – Pestle 2010; Twiss 2012; 2019; Ivanova *et al.* 2018.

2 *E.g.*, Marom *et al.* 2009; Lev-Tov *et al.* 2011; Hesse – Wapnish – Greer 2012; Shafer-Elliott 2013; Altmann – Fu 2014; Sapir-Hen *et al.* 2016; Sapir-Hen 2019a.

3 Killebrew 2005; Faust 2006; 2018; Killebrew – Lev-Tov 2008; Bunimovitz – Lederman 2011; Faust – Lev-Tov 2011.

4 Maeir – Hitchcock – Horwitz 2013; Sapir-Hen *et al.* 2013; Horwitz *et al.* 2017; Sapir-Hen 2019b.

up-to-date anthropology-based theoretical framework to the study of food taboos as well as a detailed analysis of the biblical taboos in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. They provide a valuable understanding of the different social background and function of the two lists, the historical roots of some of the laws (*e.g.*, the list of large mammals seen against pre-exilic practices), their compositional history, and their reception of the Hellenistic period when the food taboos formed the basis for the *kashrut* laws.

The next two chapters provide the interregional context of food prohibition: Stefania Ermidoro focuses on first millennium BCE. Mesopotamia (*Animals in Ancient Mesopotamian Diet. Prohibition and Regulations Related to Meat in First Millennium B.C.E.*), and Youri Volokhine overviews third-first millennia BCE. Egypt (*"Food Prohibitions" in Pharaonic Egypt. Discourses and Practices*). These two distinct regions present a similar picture: the consumption of specific food was forbidden not as a daily practice but in a specific context, mostly before the entrance to a temple, the participation in a ritual, or during a holiday. Reasons diverge, including hygiene (most related to bad human breath) or the association of a specific animal with a particular deity. The latter is meaningful, as both authors finely discuss the potential religious significance of specific species of animals that might, in some cases, explain the avoidance from their consumption in a particular social context.

Material remains from the Southern Levant stand in the core of the last four chapters, some present new archaeological data. Abra Spiciarich (*Identifying the Biblical Food Prohibition using Zooarchaeological Methods*) discusses four food laws, the methods by which scholars identify them in the faunal record, and the interpretative framework used in scholarship. These include *Kashrut* (presence or absence of species), *Shechita* and *Nikur* (butchering marks), Priestly tithe (animal parts represented in the faunal assemblage), and sacrificial offerings (stable isotopic analysis that points at the provision of animals from remote regions).[5] Lastly, Spiciarich provides a usable protocol for the study of biblical food laws and their reflection in the faunal assemblages: relevant chronology (assemblages dating to or after the accepted period of the composition of the text; thus excluding the early Iron Age); assemblages from cultic contexts (e.g., Tel Dan, and Moza) and locales with high socio-economic status related to cult (such as s Jerusalem) that would reflect religious consumption; and statistical analyses of data that would assure the reliability of results.

In the following chapter Jonathan S. Greer discusses the zooarchaeological remains from the cultic precinct at Tel Dan (*Prohibited Pigs and Prescribed Priestly Portions. Zooarchaeological Remains from Tel Dan and Questions Concerning Ethnicity and Priestly Traditions in the Hebrew Bible*). Greer argues that food practices in such a context should be understood as a spectrum: the avoidance of pig consumption on one end and the prescription of specialized food on the other end. The former is intriguing since Iron IIA Tel Dan yielded pig bones in a significant number (bid.: 78 Fig. 2: 12%, comparable only to contemporaneous Tell es-Safi/Gath[6]); what caused this anomaly, compared to neighbouring sites that do not feature such a trend? Moreover, what led to its abandonment in the Iron IIB? Second, prescription of specialized food is investigated through the correlation between the occurrence of specific animal parts in the different sectors of the sacred precinct and the biblical commands to give to the priests (1) right-sided portions – noteworthy the prestige of right-sided portions is attested centuries earlier across the southern Levant, including assemblages from cultic contexts[7] – and (2) the skin of the burnt offering. A more nuanced analysis based on the subdivision of the Iron II would attest continuity and change in these two intriguing trends of specialized food prescription.

The much-debated alleged dichotomy between Judahite and Philistine food practices (including the consumption of pig) is dealt with by Deirdre N. Fulton in *Distinguishing Judah and Philistine. A Zooarchaeological View from Ramat Raḥel and Ashkelon*. Fulton compares late Iron Age faunal assemblages from Ramat

5 Hartman *et al.* 2013.

6 For the Tell es-Safi/Gath see Sapir-Hen *et al.* 2013, table 1.

7 Horwitz 1987.

Raḥel (south of Jerusalem) and Ashkelon; the former is considered Judahite, the latter is Philistine. As shown by Fulton, the differences are more related to environmental consideration and socio-economic role of each site rather than to assumed ethnic borders. First, inhabitants of both sites consumed prime-ages sheep and goats as the main staple, followed by a limited number of cattle, probably because the economy of both sites did not relay on field cultivation. Ashkelon yielded a high number of fish, naturally, given the fact it was a port city. Lastly, pig bones are minimal at both sites, unlike Iron I Ashkelon when pig bones comprised ca. 10% of the assemblage. Fulton concludes that the consumption of land mammals did not differ at all between the two sites and that this might explain why biblical authors never condemned the Philistines for their food practices.

Débora Sandhaus contributed the last chapter of the volume, titled *Continuity, Innovation and Transformation in Cooking Habits. The Central and Southern Shephelah Between the Late Fourth and the First Centuries B.C.E.* Sandhaus classify the sites in the region into two groups, based on their location: north of the Valley of Elah are considered Judean and south of the Valley are considered Idumean. The former group of sites feature a constant reliance on close-shaped vessels in local style, a form that attests to porridge cooking and boiling; the latter sites feature similar vessels, but sometimes during the third century BCE. they included open forms called casseroles, that they imported from the northern coast. As argued by Sandhaus, such a change is meaningful, as open vessels were used for roasting or baking, thus attesting to a culinary innovation accepted by these groups. The rejection of the open vessels by inhabitants of sites that were affiliated with Jerusalem (as attested in other sorts of material remains) is even more telling considering the last phase discussed by Sandhaus. During the zenith of the Hasmonean Kingdom, the early first century BCE, open cooking vessels did spread across the region. However, now they were all produced in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Sandhaus concludes that while the Judean community adopted an exclusive set of culinary practices at first, these boundaries became flexible and the Judeans embraced culinary innovations – they appropriated them to fit local costumes. Sandhaus's investigation is noteworthy not only because of the demonstration on the role of culinary practices in contact zones and social belonging but also because of the understanding of the same period as critical for the redaction of the biblical food laws and their reception (above, Altmann and Angelini). Further analyses of faunal assemblages from this period against textual analysis might lead to a better understanding of the acceptance of these laws by the Judean community.

The composite picture that emerges from the volume is intriguing and brings a new framework to the study of food laws and animal consumption. Regrettably, it is only briefly summarized in the introduction, and synthesis at the end of the volume would have been a valuable contribution. Also missing throughout the volume is a reference to recent ontological and social-archaeozoological turns in anthropological discourse that shed new light on human/animal interaction.[8] Nonetheless, this volume makes a substantial contribution to the study of food laws and animal consumption in first millennium southern Levant, as well as the possible correlation between the two. It provides tools for further research as outlined in the fine introduction, and it is highly recommended for those interested in the study of the biblical food laws and the culinary practices in the southern Levant.

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8 Ritvo 2007; Overton – Hamilakis 2013; Alberti 2016; Boyd 2017.

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Ido Koch
Tel Aviv University
idokoch@post.tau.ac.il

L. Bonadies – I. Chirpanlieva – É. Guillon (edd.), *Les Phéniciens, les Puniques et les autres. Échanges et identités en Méditerranée ancienne,* Paris 2019 («Orient & Mediterranee», 31). Editions de Boccard, 236 pp., b/w figs., ISSN 2101-3195 - ISBN 978-2-7018-0569-6.

Phoenician and Punic studies are usually characterised as a relatively young discipline,[1] which has grown, over the past sixty years, in a rather disordered way. Language barriers are often indicated as one of the factors preventing its more uniform development.[2] Other shortcomings can be – for instance – identified in: 1) starkly different national academic traditions, 2) discrepancies in the terminology, chronological frameworks, type, quality and quantity of archaeological data, 3) a divide between scholars working on the eastern and western Mediterranean and 4) a general delay in adopting fresh theoretical approaches and carrying out scientific analysis[3]. However, during the past twenty years or so, many individual and collective works have begun to bridge these gaps, while the number of English-language publications has increased.

In a time when Mediterranean and long-term perspectives are considered the most effective approaches to studying the Iron Age (and not only), the Phoenicians represent the only *file rouge* connecting most of the regions facing Plato's proverbial frog pond. This should imply that Iron Age Mediterranean narratives cannot disregard Phoenician and Punic studies, which may explain the recent growth of works in this field.

The book under review stems from a meeting of almost the same title held in Paris at the Sorbonne University on 13th-14th May 2016, which was organized by the editors of the present volume: L. Bonadies, I. Chirpanlieva and É. Guillon.[4] This is the latest addition to the series *Orient & Méditerranée* of the interdisciplinary research centre "UMR 8167", which brings together various French institutions working on Historical, Philological and Religious Sciences. The structure of this book reflects the organization of those Parisian study days, except for the absence of very few presentations and the addition of some works originally presented as posters, which explains the differences in length between the contributions. Besides a foreword and an introduction, the volume contains sixteen papers (in French, English and Italian) and a brief conclusion. The articles are grouped into three geographic sections: 1) Phoenicia and Egypt, 2) the island of Cyprus and Greece, and 3) the western and central Mediterranean.

1 Vella 2019, p. 27.

2 Gilboa 2012, p. 107.

3 See also the results of the discussion at the workshop "Between foreign hegemony and expansion to the west: Phoenician society and economy from the 12th until the 4th century in its Near Eastern and Mediterranean context"; https://www.vorderasiatische-archaeologie.uni-mainz.de/files/2019/05/Workshop_Discussions_Summary_Final.pdf (30.06.2020).

4 The conference programme is available at https://www.orient-mediterranee.com/IMG/pdf/programme-def.pdf (30.06.2020).