Professional archaeology in the Holy Land dates from the 1920s and has been characterized by Jewish and Christian attempts to substantiate the Biblical record. While evidence has been unearthed that supports the account of the post-Babylonian captivity, renown archaeologists such as Kenyon, Pritchard, Thompson, Glock, Hertzog, Silberman, and Finkelstein have concluded that the Old Testament is either a fantasy or highly exaggerated. Joshua’s invasion of Canaan has been reinterpreted as a peaceful migration and no traces have been found of the massive public works allegedly contracted in Jerusalem by Solomon or in Samaria by Omri. If these monarchs existed, they would have been little more than petty village headmen with imaginative publicists. This so-called minimalist outlook is fiercely challenged by others who believe that the evidence to support the Old Testament has literally yet to be uncovered.

The marked area is the region that contains the “Hebrew-isms” recorded by Chaim Rabin in Ancient West Arabian, the Old Testament place names noted by Kamal Salibi, iron deposits, and an ancient Ark culture. It also straddles the lucrative incense, gold, precious stones, and luxury goods trade routes from Sabaea (Sheba). This area was temporarily abandoned by Egyptian and Assyrian imperial control ca. 1000-920 BCE, the same years as the zenith of the Israelite states under David and Solomon.
This book examines evidence connected with the life of Queen of Sheba, including Sabaean inscriptions on the Ethiopian plateau, aspects of the Ancient West Arabian language, and geographical references in Ge'ez Kebra Nagast to offer a third alternative. It argues that the Old Testament is an accurate account but its events prior to 586 BCE took place not in Palestine but in West Arabia, and to a lesser extent in Ethiopia and Eritrea. It suggests that scholars are unwilling to consider such a strong possibility because, if true, it would not only completely undermine the raison d’être of the State of Israel but also force a total reassessment of Biblical, Arabian, and North East African history.

By accepting African traditions in providing a solution to the bitter division in Biblical scholarship, this book ranks with Martin Bernal’s Black Athena in its degree of controversy and presenting evidence that most scholars should address.

The Author

Bernard Leeman holds Bachelor and Doctorate degrees in African History from London and Bremen Universities, and a Masters in Applied Linguistics from Australia. He began his academic career teaching at Asmara University, Eritrea. In 2001 he was Visiting Fellow at Oxford University, and from 2002 to 2004 taught at London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies.