
Among introductions to archaeology and the Bible, *Stones and Stories* is distinct. In contrast to standard surveys, which tend to organize their presentation chronologically, canonically, ethnographically, historically, politically, or according to archaeological sites, Don C. Benjamin incorporates “the theories of archaeology” (p. 7) that developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the paradigm by which to explore the methodological evolution of the discipline. With this conceptual grid Benjamin seeks to identify the discrete questions asked by each school of thought and describe how the answers to these questions contribute to biblical studies. That is, Benjamin attempts to integrate archaeology into the world of the Bible in order “to put archaeology and biblical studies back to work as partners in the exciting task of understanding these ancient peoples and their remarkable ways of looking at their lives, using the earth, and thinking about God” (p. 10). In accordance with the theories under investigation, the work is divided into five parts. Each deserves a brief comment.
The initial section of the volume focuses on Popular Archaeology. Here Benjamin reflects on the contributions of representative pilgrims, emperors, travelers, antiquities dealers, and missionaries to the discipline. These contributions range from pilgrim geographies and the construction of museums to the decipherment of ancient languages and the establishment of effective socio-cultural techniques for excavating sites. The section is punctuated by intriguing stories and instructive sidebars pertaining to artifacts, individuals, and historical events. Nonetheless, the segment seems out of place within the volume, considering that the characteristic features of this alleged “school,” the questions it asks, and the degree to which the representative groups contributed to archaeological theory in general, and to an understanding of the Bible in particular, remain unclear.

The second section explores the School of Cultural History. Benjamin moves from a description of the methodological principles that characterize the school to a discussion of the difficulties involved in establishing a constructive relationship between material artifacts and literary texts. Against this backdrop, Benjamin reflects on a particular brand of cultural history, viz., biblical archaeology. Here Benjamin surveys prominent figures in the movement, before reviewing biblical archaeology's approach to two particular matters: the origins of early Israel and the settlement of Syria-Palestine. With the
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distinction between cultural history and biblical archaeology, Benjamin concludes the second section of the work by describing the goal, value, and basic components of the Wheeler-Kenyon method, as well as the contributions of the excavations at Arad and Qumran for understanding the Bible and its world.

The third section of the volume discusses the origin, development, and fundamental features of Annales Archaeology. Following a brief description of the school, the scope of its concerns, and the questions it raises, Benjamin illustrates the approach through its reconstruction of ancient agriculture, pottery, and architecture. While the chapters devoted to these subjects concretize the nature of the method and indicate these institutions were “long-lasting” (p. 159), the analysis appears to oversimplify the degree to which these institutions developed through certain periods and overlook the contribution of specific matters to an understanding of the Bible.

The fourth section of the volume reflects on the nature, assumptions, and agenda of Processual Archaeology. In view of the relationship between processual archaeology and the discipline of anthropology as well as the distinctions between processual archaeologists and cultural historians, Benjamin describes a particular species of processual archaeology: ethnoarchaeology. Here Benjamin delineates the concerns of ethnoarchaeologists, their interest in a culture's worldview, and the method's contribution to the
Bible's conception of childbirth in general and midwives in particular. The remaining chapters in the section crystallize the potential value of the approach by exploring the excavations at Gezer and Tel Miqne and their significance for understanding the reign of Solomon and the saga of Samson, respectively.

The final section provides an introduction to Post-Processual Archaeology. Benjamin describes the school's principal critique of processual archaeology, its openness to diverse interpretations, and its concern with identifying the presuppositions of archaeologists. With this methodological foundation, Benjamin then explores two specific types of post-processual archaeology—gender archaeology and household archaeology—each of which serves as a window into the hero story in Judg 9:50–56. An afterword reflects on developing trends in archaeological study and anticipates a future in which archaeologists and biblical scholars will work more closely together to reveal the world of the Bible.

_Stones and Stories_ is an attractive introduction to archaeology and the Bible. The work possesses at least three strengths. First, the stories and illustrations woven through the constituent chapters, coupled with the chapter previews, summaries, and study questions, make the volume accessible and appealing to undergraduate students. Second, Benjamin's attention to archaeological theory and the methodological approaches that characterize the
discipline provide students with a general, conceptual framework through which to understand the history of the field and its contribution to an understanding of the Bible and its world. Third, the annotated bibliography serves as a valuable resource for students, offering them an introduction to significant works within the field and a guide for research.

Despite the strengths of the volume, especially from a pedagogical perspective, Benjamin's work also exhibits several weaknesses. The first concerns the methodological orientation of the volume. While Benjamin offers a basic introduction to the schools of archaeology, the piece does not provide students with a clear understanding of the characteristic features of the Bronze or Iron Ages, nor a sense of the debates on chronology, nor an adequate discussion of the various ways in which archaeology illuminates the customs, mores, and socio-economic institutions of the strange world within the Bible. The methodological focus of the volume results in an overly simplistic presentation of the discipline of archaeology and the nature of the enterprise, which limits the value of the work as a primary text in classes.

Second, the biblical texts employed to illuminate the relationship between archaeology and the Bible raise several questions, for many of these texts appear to have no direct correlation with the archaeological data under discussion. Benjamin's treatment of Tel Miqne as well as Cape Gelidonya and Uluburun and their
respective contributions to the saga of Samson and the Philistines are representative of this issue. While excavations from Tel Miqne may provide “the scenery against which the stories in the saga of Samson were told” (p. 229), it is unclear how this scenery contributes to an understanding of the stories. As for the shipwrecks at Cape Gelidonya and Uluburun—both of which Benjamin associates with peoples from Syria-Palestine—it is difficult to understand how these sites contribute to an understanding of the Philistines, the story of David and Goliath, and the nature of processual archaeology. Benjamin's attempt to put archaeology and biblical studies back to work as partners is a commendable venture. The degree to which he is able to illustrate this constructive relationship, however, is at times deficient.

Together with the organization of the volume and its use of biblical texts, the work contains several errors (see, e.g., p. 92, p. 133) and certain sections suffer from faulty logic (see the discussion of Gezer and Solomon on pp. 218–25). These criticisms do not mean the volume is of no use in the classroom; rather, they suggest the work will play a minimal role in introductory courses on archaeology and the Bible.

Christopher B. Ansberry, Wheaton College