

Political Archaeology and Holy Nationalism

Archaeological Battles over the Bible and Land
in Israel and Palestine from 1967 - 2000

Terje Oestigaard

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Contents

Preface	7
Acknowledgements	9
Chapter 1: Nationalism, archaeology and the Bible	11
Introduction	11
Approaching the past	16
Nationalism and archaeology	20
The constructed past in the present	23
Chapter 2: Ethnicity and culture-historical archaeology	29
Introduction	29
Identity and ethnicity	30
Nationalism and the nation-state	36
Gustav Kossinna and Nazi archaeology	40
The Chosen People (researchers) for research	47
A historical approach to biblical archaeology	50
Cultures are inevitably a reflection of ethnicity	55
Cultural provinces correspond with major ethnic groups or people	61
Cultural continuity indicates ethnic continuity	70
The distribution of artefact types where characteristics of specific tribal groups reflect where these groups lived at different periods (settlement archaeology)	73
It is possible to trace historically known tribal groups backwards in time archaeologically	80
Racist and chauvinist interpretations in favour of nationalistic aims and needs	86

Chapter 3: Religious beliefs and research	94
Introduction	94
Archaeology and society	95
The <i>a priori</i> of the Bible	98
Research prejudices and scientific practice	110
The Bible as a written text	115
Truth, proof or hypothesis	122
Chapter 4: Beyond the past – towards a future	126
Introduction	126
The power of the past	126
Hazor and Israelite cities	131
Conquering the past and the present	136
Archaeology and Palestine	142
The Temple Mount	145
Cultural heritage – problem or solution?	150
Literature	153

PREFACE

The struggle for the past is the struggle for the present, and those who lose their past, have lost their present. The main battle is over land, and archaeology has an important ideological role in the creation of the narratives that politicians use in their struggle for territorial legitimacy. Israel has its history and nation, but where is the history and the nation of Palestine? Are archaeologists responsible for the knowledge they produce? What are the needs, the intentions and the motivation behind the nation-state's support for archaeology? To what degree do archaeologists produce the information the nation-states want – information that gives the state a historical and territorial legitimacy?

Biblical archaeology and Israeli nationalist archaeology are branches of archaeology with little impact in the general archaeological debate because its practitioners are only dealing with a little time segment and certain specific problems in the Middle East. But as a result of this, these branches of archaeology have had an almost exclusive hegemony in the knowledge production upon which Israel bases its nation state. The general attitude towards biblical archaeologists and Israel's past within the archaeological circles in Northern Europe is that the past is politically misused in the Middle East and that biblical archaeological research and Israeli nationalist archaeology are biased. When I started working with biblical archaeology very few of my colleagues understood why I bothered. Biblical archaeological approaches to the past are not 'scientific' and its scholars are not part of the theoretical discourse, with the consequence that there was, allegedly, no need to worry.

My answer is simple and differs. In the Middle East there is a war going on. Jerusalem is the holy city for three of the main world religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Who owns the past? How is the past used in the present? Is this a topic for archaeologists – or is our work only to excavate and analyse pottery? For my part it became impossible to measure the length of arrowheads or pottery

sherds without emphasising how archaeological knowledge is produced and the way it is used in contemporary society. Biblical archaeologists always tend to choose the religious interpretation when the data allows for several interpretations. Israeli nationalist archaeologists always tend to choose the national interpretation when the data allows for several interpretations.

In the Near East it is possible to trace a long history of politically inspired archaeology that has been harmful to archaeologists, its material and to ethnic minorities. The way biblical archaeologists and Israeli nationalist archaeologists argue is highly problematic because of the history of archaeological thought and the nationalistic and political use of the past. Although these branches of archaeology are marginalised in the archaeological discourse, they have had a major role in knowledge production in the Near East. Or more precisely, Israeli nationalist archaeologists are crucial in the construction of Israel's past. Similarly, biblical archaeologists have an autonomous discourse for themselves within Christian discourses in America, and their works have had an enormous impact in ethnic constructions in Israel and the wider Middle East.

The main problem in the discourse has been its exclusiveness. On the one hand, theologians working with The Old Testament are partly excluded from the discourse by biblical archaeologists because they do not have 'archaeological' arguments or evidences. On the other hand, with the exception of biblical and Israeli nationalist archaeologists, very few foreign archaeologists have been interested in the early history of Israel and Palestine. Thus, the archaeological discourse has to a certain extent lived its own life regardless of theoretical developments in current Anglo-American archaeology. Despite the fact that the international archaeological academy denies any claims of biblical archaeology as being a serious and important contributor to the 'scientific part' of archaeology, the Israelis in their mythmaking of ancient Israel use the information produced by this branch of archaeology. This is a major problem: extremists who

misuse knowledge for political purposes will always tend to use the most chauvinistic results regardless of its scientific content.

One of the aims with this book is to challenge the biblical archaeological and Israeli nationalist archaeological hegemony in knowledge production. Although some Israeli archaeologists oppose the biblical archaeological hegemony and its interpretations, as Israelis working in Israel they have limited possibilities to criticise. The main criticism has to be raised from archaeologists outside the biblical – Israeli discourse.

The social and political implications of archaeology in the Middle East are parts of the sources to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The war is still going on, and the ideological arguments are partly based on archaeological interpretations, which illuminate the power of the past and why and how it is used in a contemporary conflict. Archaeologists have a duty as responsible scientists to determine the limits of the evidence they control. The responsibility is also collective among archaeological colleagues. Thus, archaeologists are obliged to tell where these limits are if other archaeologists neglect or disregard this problem. Therefore, my aim and intention has been to provide a critical evaluation of biblical archaeology because the past matters for both Israelis and Palestinians.

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CHAPTER 1: NATIONALISM, ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Introduction

Political archaeology is the study of how archaeology is a part of political structures whereby archaeology as a discipline gives these constructions legitimacy, authority and scientific autonomy in contemporary societies. The study of the relation between archaeology and nationalism is crucial for two reasons: (1) The past is used to give nation-states territorial legitimacy in relation to other nation-states. Archaeology is a means for nation-states in territorial disputes, and the integration of archaeology and nationalism has consequences for the organisation and the hierarchies in between nation-states. (2) Different ethnic groups within a given nation-state are ascribed various, political rights and economical resources. The legitimacy for these internal hierarchies is often found in claims of exclusively inherited rights from the past. Political archaeology aims to illuminate the premises and the ideologies behind the contemporary political hierarchies when ethnic groups or nation-states aiming strategic advantages use archaeology as a means in their enterprises.

Nationalism is about constructions of identities, and it insists on the linkage of social organisation and culture. 'Nationalism does indeed see itself as a universal, perennial and inherently – self-evidently – valid principle' (Gellner 1997:7). The nationalist principle requires that the political unit or territory and the 'ethnic' one be congruent. It demands that within the political unit everyone is of the same culture, and the main function of culture is to 'reinforce, underwrite, and render visible and authoritative, the hierarchical status system of that social order' because that 'homogeneity of culture is the political bond, that mastery of a given high culture is

the precondition of political, economic and social citizenship' (Gellner 1997:20, 29).

The nation is imagined as a community – or a deep, horizontal comradeship regardless of the inequality and exploitation that may prevail, and this makes it possible for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for the nation or such limited imaginings (Anderson 1993:7). Dying for one's country, which one usually does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for whatever kind of social or welfare organisation cannot rival. Similarly, dying for a revolution also draws its grandeur from a notion of something fundamentally pure (Anderson 1993:144).

Israel is, however, not like any other nation state for two reasons; firstly, according to biblical tradition God gave Israel to the Israelis, and secondly, due to Holocaust and the Second World War, Israel as a nation-state was established in 1948. Thus, we have another type of nationalism which I have chosen to call holy nationalism. This holy nationalism represents a double identity; firstly it is an ethnic or national identity and secondly a personal religious identity. A religious identity is often perceived to be even deeper and more resilient than a national identity. 'For most nations, exploring the past is a source of national pride and prestige, symbolizing the historical continuity of a country, or even its timelessness... However, for the people of Israel, and for those for whom the Bible is meaningful, archaeology uncovers a special message' (Meshorer 1995:30). When the religious and national identities are combined the past is as solid as rock guaranteeing the present and the future, and any Palestinian claims to territory are sown in barren ground. How this situation has appeared is the main topic for my investigation, and more importantly, are there any scientific arguments or general humane reasons why these structures of power and exploitations should continue?

Today Israeli archaeology is studying all kinds of periods ranging from the early paleolithic times to the Middle Ages whereas biblical archaeology mainly restricts itself to the biblical periods. The

development of Israeli nationalist archaeology is not identical with the development of biblical archaeology, but most often they share one important feature: the biblical narrative plays always a fundamental part in the interpretations. The situation is then, simplified, on the one hand, biblical archaeologists, who most often are Christian American fundamentalists, study the Old Testament period in the Holy Land because of their religious faith and beliefs, and on the other hand, Israeli nationalist archaeologists study the same topics, areas and time span because of the 'birth' and origin of Israel as a nation state. This is a dialectic situation where the different disciplines give legitimacy to each other and thereby strengthen Israel's historical claim to the territory of the Holy Land. Although I am mainly concerned with biblical archaeology since this branch of archaeology is somehow the most extreme, I have included parts of the Israeli nationalist archaeology in this book because their use of the biblical narratives in their interpretations of the past is identical to the biblical archaeologists' use of the Bible.

Approaching the Bible is a difficult task because it is not an undifferentiated book but it covers poetry, laws, legends, epics, historical references, parables, exhortation, religious propaganda, etc. It is also a Sacred Scripture for two world religions; Judaism and Christianity, whereby the former reckons the Old Testament as the authentic revelation and the latter religion reckons both testaments but with an emphasis on the New Testament in daily practice and penance. Common for both religions is the acceptance of Israel as the Holy Land given by God to his Chosen People; the Israelis.

It has been claimed, 'For the Israeli Jew, archaeology plays an important role in forging national identity, but it does so only in the Israeli component of a person's personality, not in the Jewish. For the Jewish citizens of Israel, archaeology has very little to offer about their Jewishness. Judaism has, after all, survived for two and a half millennia in foreign, frequently hostile lands, without a territory of its own' (Broshi 2001:55). This might be partly correct, but only

partly, because the archaeological sites regarding the origin of Israel are indeed national monuments, but they are also pilgrimage sites.

Former General and Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan said: 'The people of Israel were exiled from their land, but their land was never exiled from their hearts. In whatever country they dwelt throughout the nineteen Diaspora centuries, they yearned for their homeland' (Dayan 1978:6). 'The people closest to me were the founders of our nations, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...they carried a weighty burden – a new faith, a new nation and a new land...Their main concern was not the present but the future, not themselves but the generations of their nation who would come after them' (Dayan 1978:13), and Dayan is quoting the Bible: These were the first words which the Lords spoke to Abraham: 'Get thee...unto a land that I shall shew thee. And I will make thee a great nation' (Ge. 12:1, 2). This was the blessing the Lord gave to Jabob: 'Israel shall be thy name...be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee...And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee I give the land' (Gen. 35:10-12). 'The revelation of the Lord to the patriarchs and his talks with them were concerned exclusively with the future, with the divine mission with which they were entrusted' (Dayan 1978:25).

Biblical archaeology, Israel nationalist archaeology and Israel as a nation-state have a mutual interest in a certain type of archaeological interpretation and explanation. Biblical archaeology and Israeli nationalist archaeology are branches of archaeology wishing to find archaeological evidence that somehow has a direct relationship to the biblical text. The role of archaeology in this conflict is evident, as Silberman (1997:66-68) puts it:

[...] the territorial shape of the Holy Land (long left hazy and undefined, but which ultimately became the legal boundaries of the post-World War I Palestine Mandate) was determined not by census or political debate, but primarily by the work of archaeological

surveyors of the British-sponsored Survey of Western Palestine [...] the most fundamental transformation in the social meaning of the ancient sites of the Holy Land came with the administration of the country by the British Mandatory authorities...The frequent mentions of disputes between the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim inhabitants of the country, on the one hand, and the arriving archaeological expeditions on the other, over property rights to ancient sites, underline the new relations of power...the ancient sites of Palestine now became a field of active historical reinterpretation, ideological identification, and political legitimisation. Digging, like war, had become politics pursued by other means.

Sir Mortimer Wheeler said that Palestine is the country 'Where more sins have probably been committed in the name of archaeology than any commensurate portion of the earth's surface' (Laughlin 2000:3). The 'conquest of Canaan' by the people the Bible calls 'the Israelites' has been the most debated and controversial topic among historians, theologians and archaeologists. Moses' Exodus from Egypt and the miraculous escape through the Red Sea and the 'conquest of Canaan' have given rise to Israel's claim to territorial rights today, as it is written in Joshua: 'Joshua defeated the whole land, the Hill Country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left no one remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded' (Josh. 10:40). Jews today claim these 'Israelites' to be their ancestors, and therefore, they have a 'divine' right to the country.

'The Old Testament story of Abraham, of the charge laid upon him by God, and of the binding promise ("Unto thy seed will I give this land") that accompanied it, is where, however incongruous it may seem, the annals of the modern State of Israel must begin' (Samuel 1989:1). Israel as a nation has a political interest in archaeological evidence and arguments that favour their territorial claims in the Middle East, and therefore the Bible is seen as an

authentic historical source giving legitimacy to their territorial claims. The battle of the Bible is a battle for an authoritative past that gives territorial rights today. Those who argue in favour of a religious or national interpretation of the Bible will inevitably have divine arguments in the battle – supreme arguments in the contest for land since it is more difficult to challenge God than secular and academic interpretations of the Bible. Biblical archaeologists produce parts of this ideological weapon in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. My aim is therefore to investigate the role of archaeology in the creation of the religious and national identities from 1967-2000, and then evaluate the validity of these arguments in the contemporary discourse.

Approaching the Past

The primary role of archaeology as a nationalistic discipline is to 'anchor' the nation by making it simultaneously timeless and very old, and therefore nationalism itself has its reasons and its roots in the past (Sørensen 1996:28). And if a nation is 'anchored' in a certain territory, within that limited geographical space or territory there are no possibilities for other nations to 'anchor'. The ideology behind this 'anchor' is nationalism. The political history of Israel's construction of the past has not been a major issue because most biblical scholars have agreed on the premises for interpretation, and as Keith Whitelam argues; 'The picture of Israel's past as presented in much of the Hebrew Bible is a fiction, a fabrication like most pictures of the past constructed by ancient (and, we might add, modern) societies' (Whitelam 1997:23-24).

The power of the past is undeniable. Matthew Johnson notes that 'the past is dead and gone, but it is also very powerful. It is so powerful that an entire nation (Zimbabwe) can name itself after an archaeological site (...) it is so powerful that even individual groups of artefacts like Parthenon friezes are the subject of major

international disputes' (Johnson 1999:1). The intervention of the state is based on the construction of Monumental Memories (Brown 1998:79). The struggle for the past is the struggle for the present, and those who lose their past, have lost their present. The main battle is over land, but when it comes to who owns the land and who has the right to settle and work on it, these issues are manifested and contested and for a time decided in narrative (Said 1993:xiii). Archaeology has an important ideological role in the creation of the narratives, which may in fact be myths, but politicians use them anyway in their struggle for legitimacy over land. Israel has its history, but where is the history of Palestine? Are archaeologists responsible for their knowledge production and if so, what are they supposed to do with the nations' use or misuse of archaeological knowledge?

The use of archaeology to legitimise the present in the Middle East is a question of interpreting the Bible. In the Middle East archaeology, nationalism and religious dogmatism have been integrated. Archaeology has played a crucial role in trying to 'prove' the truths and the authenticity of the Bible giving legitimacy to the construction of Israel's nation-state, but what if this nationalism is based on false premises both archaeologically and theologically? Even though biblical archaeology is not occupied with proving the Bible anymore, the biblical narrative is nevertheless used in historical narratives as if it was true. Radical theology argues that the Bible is not God's revelation but rather a collection of myths and stories used to create a Jewish ethnic identity. What are the implications of approaching the Bible in this manner for the use of the past to legitimise the present? According to the Old Testament Scholar Thomas L. Thompson,

Today we no longer have a history of Israel. Not only have Adam and Eve and the flood passed over to mythology, but we can no longer talk about the time of the patriarchs. There never was a 'United Monarchy' in history and it is meaningless to speak of pre-

exilic prophets and their writings [...] Not only is the Bible's 'Israel' a literary fiction, but the Bible begins as a tradition already established: a stream of stories, song and philosophical reflection: collected, discussed and debated. Our sources do not begin. They lie already in medias res. We can say now with considerable confidence that the Bible is not a history of anyone's past. The story of the chosen and rejected Israel that it presents is a philosophical metaphor of a mankind that has lost its way (Thompson 1999:xv).

The past is not a static archaic residue, but rather an inherited artefact that has an active influence on the present through the popular and official inscribed meanings. An aware, responsible, and engaged global archaeology might be a positive force which recognises, celebrates, and encourages difference, diversity, and real multivocality (Meskell 1998:4). The anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues that in a multi-ethnic society the collective uniting feature is the future, not the past, because the past is a major source of struggle and conflict (Eriksen 1996a).

The question 'why are archaeologists doing archaeology?' cannot solely be answered by the archaeologists themselves; 'because it is fun and interesting and we love it.' This is as true as it is naïve, nevertheless, we cannot deny this explanation, it is fun and we love it, and often we feel privileged when we (barely) get paid for doing what we have dreamt of. There are of course other motivations as well among archaeologists, but these reasons are rarely a topic for investigation although they definitively influence the research.

It must be recognised that archaeologists do not work and excavate only for themselves. Other social institutions and interests are involved in the archaeological enterprise, defining the practice (partly by laws and regulations determining what is allowed to be excavated), financing the practice, publishing the results and deciding what kind of museums will be built for the presentation of various nationalistic pasts. Archaeological restorations and

excavations, followed by state-sponsored printed editions of traditional texts, can be perceived as a form of a conservative educational programme (Anderson 1993:181).

What are the needs, the intentions and the motivation behind the nation-state's support for archaeology? Do we believe that our knowledge production is neutral and value free and that various institutions and governments support us because we love archaeology? What is the power of archaeological explanations? What does the society expect from archaeology and the role of the archaeologist? And finally, to what degree do archaeologists produce the information the nation-states want – information which gives the state an historical and territorial legitimacy through archaeology? Or in other words, to what degree is archaeology just a means to some other end, defined by others with political or economic motivations?

We have to be honest and admit that there is no such thing as a non-political, value-free archaeology, and one of the ideologies that have had most influence on the development of archaeology worldwide is nationalism. Nationalism is deeply embedded in the very concept of archaeology, in its institutions and its development (Díaz-Andreu & Champion 1996:2-3). If nations exist, they must have, by definition, a past, for their own good and that of the individuals who belong in them (Díaz-Andreu 1996:68). The problem is that a new nation, by definition, does not have a history, or does it? How may archaeology create a history for a given unit? My aim is to illuminate implicit and explicit religious and nationalistic biases in the way biblical archaeology and Israeli nationalist archaeology have been practised and used to legitimise Israel as a nation-state. This is a theoretical quest and I will illuminate the premises for this enterprise, and the history and pitfalls with this approach to archaeological interpretations.

The aim in archaeology is the same as in anthropology, but archaeologists interpret the Others from the material culture. This creates other problems. The discourses or the 'scientific' parts of

biblical archaeology are often loaded with emotional and fundamentalist Christian arguments and statements (Lemche 1998). When I, by coincidence, came to know biblical archaeology as a branch of archaeology, I found the field of research very much like an isolated island in the archaeological ocean. Despite theological discussions on the nature of the Bible, the archaeological discourse has lived its own life. Therefore, this is an attempt to approach Israel's history and the struggle for Palestine's past, not from the standpoint of theology, biblical archaeology or history, but rather from a broader Northern European archaeological and anthropological discourse of ethnicity and material culture.

Nationalism and Archaeology

The present constrains interpretations of past events, but present interests can also select certain aspects of the past to serve purely contemporary ends and to interpret the present (Kaiser 1995:113). In the Soviet Union, a famous archaeologist used to repeat that, if archaeological data allowed for several different interpretations, one had to choose the more patriotic version (Shnirelman 1995:125). This immediately reveals for everyone the nationalistic agenda. More invisible however, but similar, are the biblical and Israeli nationalist interpretations. As the reader will see, biblical and Israeli nationalist archaeologists always tend to choose the religious interpretation if the data allow for several interpretations.

Archaeology has by its nature an unavoidable political dimension where nationalism is only one of many possible manifestations of its character as both a scientific and a political enterprise. As a political discourse archaeology should be subject to the same standards of public accountability as other forms of public expressions in addition to adhering to scientific standards of logic and evidence (Silberman 1995:249-250). In the Near East it is possible to trace a long history of politically inspired archaeology that has

been harmful to archaeologists, its own material record, and to ethnic minorities, and as Silberman puts it, 'a scholar's responsibility to criticise and to speak out on these questions lies in his or her willingness to criticise archaeological narratives as both scientific hypotheses and literary texts' (Silberman 1995:251).

David Anthony puts it another way; 'if we abandon our standards for choosing between alternate explanations, we abdicate any right to exclude explanations that promote bigotry, nationalism, and chicanery'. Then societies have the right to wonder why archaeology exists (Anthony 1995:88). Archaeologists have a duty as responsible scientists to determine the limits of the evidence they control, what they can and cannot reconstruct with a *reasonable* confidence from the given data and the archaeological remains available at the time (Kohl & Fawcett 1995:8).

The responsibility is also collective among archaeological colleagues. Thus, archaeologists are obliged to tell where these limits are if other archaeologists neglect or disregard this problem. Among some biblical archaeologists and Israeli nationalist archaeologists, it seems like the Bible is a green card for interpretations. As long as it is possible to refer and infer from the Holy Book, anything goes. The biblical narratives are often used uncritically for creating a static history which gives legitimacy to today's nation state.

The past and the present is one. Because Israel is, at one and the same time, the name of a modern sovereign state and of a faith, the most diligently pruned history has always dealt with both context and content, with the past as well as the present. Within most Israelis the past is a part of 'a collective consciousness that influences everyday life, shaping the national self-image and colouring a shared sense of what the future may behold' (Samuel 1989:1). Despite how easy it is to forget, the more important it is to stress that 'Cultures are always in the process of changing and reconstructing themselves, sometimes in almost unrecognisable, qualitatively different ways. There is no culture that has existed "since time immemorial" ' (Kohl & Tsetskhladze 1995:151).

However, this is not the case in Israel. From the very beginning of its history two national concepts have dominated Jewish life: the concepts of the Chosen People and the Promised Land. Though most Jews lived in Palestine only the shorter part of the last three thousand years, and though a Jewish state or states only existed there precariously for a few centuries, nevertheless, the Jews have felt tied to the Land throughout the three thousand years by a close and unique link (Kohn 1971:807).

Thus, in this case, how is the archaeological knowledge production used to legitimise or strengthen these notions? Archaeologists have to be aware of the political implications of the knowledge they produce, and thus be sensitive to the contemporary social setting when a remote past is incorporated in the structuring of the society. Bruce Trigger comments critically that nationalism is a phenomenon of recent origin. Regarding nationalism, 'it is (...) a concept of importance to modern people, including archaeologists, rather than to the people who created the archaeological record' (Trigger 1995a:276). Archaeologists make the past nationalistic, and this is a political and ideological act.

This is one of the cardinal failures of biblical archaeology and Israeli nationalist archaeologists. In their ultra-positivistic approach to archaeology and in their desire to study the 'reality and the history as it was' (because it is written in the Bible), what their studies actually turn into are narratives reflecting their own prejudices of the Holy Land as an immortal nation state. But this is hard to avoid since nationalistic archaeology will continue to flourish as long as we live in a world of nation-states (Kohl & Fawcett 1995:11) because 'For historians are to nationalism what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts; we supply the essential raw material for the market' (Hobsbawn 1992:3). In the Holy Land everything becomes much more sensitive and difficult to criticise because it is linked with religion, and in this case, the Bible.

In a nationalistic way archaeology is used to legitimate the state. Questions such as 'when did this state emerge?' are in a multi-ethnic

society in reality 'did our state emerge before other groups came here, and if so, was the latter state-formation process dependent upon the former?' And thereby, they are questions that invite ethnic partisanship (Wailes & Zoll 1995:23). This is evidently the case in Israel and particularly Jerusalem.

Timothy Kaiser lists some of the ways authorised versions of the past may be used to legitimate the current order: (1) An establishment of a link between present governors and ultimate sources of power and legitimacy which resides in the past. (2) Claims that a nation's population in some or another way are superior to all the others on the basis of past achievements. (3) Glorifying the present by casting the past in an unfavourable light. In this regard archaeology may serve to (i) establish political and territorial legitimacy, (ii) buttress political ideology, (iii) maintain cultural identity and ethnicity, and finally (iiii) invent tradition (Kaiser 1995:113).

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen addresses the relation between archaeology and nationalism, and argues that archaeology (1) is institutionalised when it becomes politically powerful, (2) appears at that time in the public sphere, (3) becomes important in political decisions, and (4) becomes popular and gains new meanings. The main importance is that the role of the past in the present is largely created and constructed outside academia, and the present controls the past, a past which is defenceless and cannot protest against what is done to it (Sørensen 1996).

The Constructed Past in the Present

'Primitive man has lived twice: once in and for himself, and the second time for us, in our reconstructions' (Gellner 1988:23). Archaeological objects exist physically and represent a past reality. But context and contemporary knowledge determine the pasts that are possible to construct. If it had been possible to evaluate this

contemporary knowledge or these interpretations of the past with some of the perceptions and constructions of the world or the past as it 'really was', there might have been similarities, but most probably not.

Negative material or data is necessary for interpretations. Archaeologists interpret processes based on their material expressions. In fact, archaeology is about inferring the missing data and evidence. Social structures work inside the human mind, but they leave material traces. Besides archaeological artefacts, an interpretation depends upon several other variables: (1) Primary data collected in a non-excavation situation directly related to archaeological problems, and in this way extending the context. This relates to ethnoarchaeological or anthropological studies whereby these data are subsequently used as theoretical frameworks and analogies. (2) The social and political society of the researchers influence and determine the results. (3) The scientific practice is an acceptance of arguments in a contemporary debate and discourse.

The progress of science requires more than new data; it needs novel frameworks and contexts (Gould 1987:138). 'We often think, naively, that missing data are the primary impediments to intellectual progress – just find the right facts and all problems will dissipate. But barriers are often more abstract in thought' (Gould 1987:151). The empirical basis of science has thus nothing 'absolute' about it. Even the positivist Karl Popper said that

Science does not rest upon solid bedrock. The bold structure of its theories rise, as it were, above a swamp. It is like a building erected on piles. The piles are driven down from above into the swamp, but not down to any natural or 'given' base; and if we stop driving the piles deeper, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that the piles are firm enough to carry the structure, at least for the time being (Popper 1995:111).

The basis is not supposed to be firm. And as archaeologists we are able to undermine the constructions by excavations, or to put it another way, the archaeological method enables us to de-construct other versions of the past (for instance made by historians or theologians) and to construct other realities and pasts based on material remains. Therefore, it is in some cases necessary to philosophise with a hammer, as Nietzsche (1968) said, or in other words, sometimes the only way to break through the consequences is by undermining the premises. The problem in the Middle East is that the Bible has guaranteed the truths of the interpretations. There has been a firm basis for the interpretations unchallenged by biblical archaeologists and Israeli nationalist archaeologists. Research about religion is something quite different from research as religion.

Cornelius Holtorf raises the question why archaeology presents itself as a serious enterprise, and gives two answers: (1) scientists deal with very serious issues and (2) most scientists deal very seriously with the issues (Holtorf 1998:91). Knowledge cannot be judged according to its representation of an ontological or metaphysical reality. New knowledge is not 'better' or more in correspondence with an ontological or metaphysical reality, but it is 'better' in the sense that the construction becomes more intelligible. Instead of a unique adaptation to a single reality, there are numerous real experiences and therefore realities. This raises the problems of what kind of fitness and viability archaeology constructs for societies (Holtorf 1998:93). The challenge for archaeologists is to re-construct past constructions and thus not focus on the origin of our own knowledge of the world. Furthermore, our knowledge reflects the present conditions under which the constructions are made. Knowledge of the past and the reality of the past are two completely separate entities. 'It is inadequate to assume that some cultures in space and time are more "like us" than others are' (Shanks and Hodder 1995a:10). Hence, Michael Shanks and Ian Hodder (Shanks & Hodder 1995b:30-31) raise some general themes and questions in interpretative archaeology:

- On what grounds are different approaches to the archaeological past to be judged – epistemological? ethical? political?
- What are the politics of hermeneutic and post-structuralist interpretations in archaeology?
- Is it necessary or possible to get the original meaning of the past?
- If it is not, and there is or was no original comprehensible meaning, does the past have an indeterminate and shifting meaning, subject perhaps to the desires and interests of the present?
- What authorities may be invoked to distinguish good from bad archaeological explanation or interpretation?
- If empirical ‘fact’ and the objective are not the only sources of authority for different archaeological explanations and interpretations of the past, what others are there?

Theories bring new knowledge into being, which is what a good theory should do; it is also what a bad theory does, if the new knowledge is empirically or evidentially unjustified (Obeyesekere 1992:57). If we are going to accept general theories without testing them against particular cases we do not need to dig at all (Anthony 1995:86). Thus, there are several ways of demarcating possible interpretations: (1) An ethical and moral evaluation of the interpretations. (2) De-construction of past constructions that never could have happened (for instance projections of modern phenomena into a past, which we know did not exist). (3) Explanations that are empirically inadequate because they are contradicted by the data as they stand. This involves a process of intelligibility (or coherent or logical construction). Others can use similar data to produce a counter demonstration that ‘invalidates’ the previous theory or interpretation. It is a procedure of disagreement through an act of counter demonstration (Obeyesekere 1990:272). This strategy is true of ethnography and archaeology in general.

As Clifford Geertz said, it is a process of appraisal; 'we must measure the cogency of our explications (...) not against a body of uninterpreted data (...) but against the power of scientific imagination to bring us into touch with the lives of strangers' (Geertz 1973:16). In a theory of practice, theory is transformative and it asserts that we cannot passively observe. Henceforth, science cannot be separated from society, and this also implies that interpretations of prehistory are based on contemporary knowledge. In archaeological terms, a general theory, which draws on insight from other disciplines, is the basis for analogical reasoning and archaeological interpretations of prehistoric societies. One way of understanding archaeological practice is the application of theory in specific contexts (Hodder 1995:3-4). And as Fredrik Barth argues, 'such models become believable if we can show how the observed degree of coherence is brought about and reproduced in the lives of people, through processes involving those people's own ideas and activities' (Barth 1993:7).

Stephen J. Gould argues that 'science, in its most fundamental definition, is a fruitful mode of inquiry, not a list of enticing conclusions. The conclusions are the consequence, not the essence' (Gould 1987:417). The main problem with biblical archaeology is the combination and integration of two very different disciplines: conservative theology and archaeology. Multi-disciplinary approaches are in general welcomed in the scientific world, and especially in archaeology there are a lot of combinations, such as paleo-archaeology, zoo-archaeology, demographic archaeology, anthropological archaeology, historical archaeology, evolutionary archaeology, and so on. But regarding biblical archaeology, we are here dealing with a branch of archaeology or a separate tradition where the Bible has most often a certain authority and autonomy compared to other literary sources. The acceptance and presence of an Israelite ethnicity in the past is always inevitably a part of the research horizon and the archaeological quest to biblical or Israeli nationalist archaeologists.

A contextual emphasis does not mean that archaeologists can interpret without generalizations. It is impossible to approach the data without prejudice and without some general theory. Context does not only refer to the things of the past. The contexts are inevitably bound up in archaeological projects (Shanks & Hodder 1995a:15). The archaeological discourse is a debate among fellow scientists with few possibilities for other versions of the prehistoric world except from the archaeologists' own interpretations. A scientist chooses the best hypothesis within the references of the phenomenon that he or she investigates. Thus, there will always be a plurality of interpretations based on the same archaeological material. Among colleagues, choosing the best hypothesis is a collective act (Douglas 1992:240). But if archaeologists cannot agree on how to distinguish the adequate from the inadequate, are not the archaeologists themselves responsible for encouraging the various kinds of popular social abuse that occurs (Anthony 1995:85)?

And in what regard may biblical archaeology be used and abused, and for what purposes? This is one of the main emphases within this criticism of biblical archaeology: archaeologists have to take responsibility for their production of knowledge. The knowledge some biblical archaeologists have produced may easily be misused. The way archaeological cultures are defined and interpreted share, as I will show, many similarities with the interpretative framework used by the Nazis by which they ideologically and archaeologically legitimated the Third Reich. Many of the Israeli, nationalist, archaeological interpretations are also based on this paradigm. The history of archaeological thought has shown the potential political misuse of archaeological interpretations based on this approach.

CHAPTER 2: ETHNICITY AND CULTURE-HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Introduction

The basic question in Sían Jones' book *The Archaeology of Ethnicity* (1997) is what can be legitimately inferred about past ethnic groups from archaeological remains. After the Second World War the term 'race' was almost abandoned because of no clear distinctions existing between 'race' and 'ethnicity' and the consequent misuse of the concept of 'race' by the Nazi regime. 'Race' is typically differentiated from ethnicity in terms of a contrast between physical and cultural differences, and 'racial' differentiation is supposed to have something to do with 'physical differences' between people. But, there is a general agreement and rejection of the thesis that physical differences have cultural impact, or the only way in which 'race' matters, is that certain people still attribute cultural and social significance to physical differences (Jenkins 1998:74). In consequence, 'With notions of "race" in public and scientific disrepute since 1945, ethnicity has obligingly stepped into the gap, becoming a rallying cry in the often bloody reorganization of the post-Cold-War' (Jenkins 1998:9).

It is therefore of the utmost importance to be aware of what our subject – ethnicity – is and what it is about, and equally important; what it is not about. The concepts and the use of these units in the public and political sphere are very efficient and powerful instruments. In particular ethnicity is a lethal weapon in the issue of territorial legitimacy. Before we discuss the problem of which ethnic groups may have the right to a given territory, it is important to look at what ethnicity 'is', and how the past is used in arguments in the debate. It is important to distinguish between ethnicity in the past and ethnicity in the present. This cannot be emphasised enough. Ethnicity was important in the past constructions of identity, as

recent studies of ethnicity in the Bible have discussed and illuminated (e.g. Lemche & Tronier 1998). The problem within biblical archaeology and within Israel as a nation is that past and present constructions of ethnicity are connected and presented as identical. This is a political and nationalistic act, which has nothing to do with either archaeology or theology.

Identity and Ethnicity

Fredrik Barth's 'Introduction' in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* from 1969 is a classic study of ethnicity in which he defines and elaborates the concept, and proposes a theoretical framework for ethnicity as an analytical tool for understanding social interaction between people. Although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, they are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those the actors themselves regard as significant (Barth 1969:14). Barth argued against the static 'principle that ethnic identity implies a series of constraints on the kind of roles an individual is allowed to play, and the partners he may choose for different kinds of transactions... regarded as status, [and that] ethnic identity is superordinate to most other statuses or personalities' (Barth 1969:17).

Ethnic classification implies stereotypes like *us and them*, and these may be imposed from the outside, by dominant groups, on those who themselves do not want membership in the group to which they are assigned (Eriksen 1993:33). External definitions are embedded within social relationships between ethnic groups, and thus external groups may have possibilities for defining others as groups either by power or authority relations (Jenkins 1994:199). People who have the legitimate authority by virtue of their superior status produce the external categories. Thus, the power- and authority relations, that is domination, play a fundamental role in the practice of assigning ethnic identities (Jenkins 1998:53).

Even though members of one ethnic group know that neighbouring members of *the same ethnic group* have different traditions and values, and emphasise other features as ethnic classifiers, they may acknowledge each other as equal members of the same ethnic group and the relationship might be conceived as unproblematic. The problem is then what the differences reflect?

If we incorporate the social and historical circumstances in which the ethnic configurations have been developed (Eriksen 1991:128-129), some of the contradictions and the ambivalence in the archaeological material might be seen as results of different historical processes rather than a result of different ethnic boundaries. The notion of 'ethnicity' implies notions of 'culture', but the problems with 'culture' are many. First of all, 'culture' is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language, partly because of its intricate historical development, but mainly because it is an important concept in several distinct intellectual disciplines and incompatible systems of thought (Williams 1980:76-77).

Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1999[1993]) wrote a booklet called *Cultural Terrorism* where he argues that the idea of a 'pure culture' is a forgery, and even worse, the consequences of these thoughts have led to some of the worst catastrophes in the modern history of mankind. A 'culture' is not a 'thing' that consists of certain clearly distinguishable characteristics and properties frozen in time and given once and for all. Even though the 'culture' of a people or a group of humans implies notions of a similar way of living and being, there are two main problems with this concept of culture: (1) Within almost every group there are enormous variations in the way of living and being, and (2) it is almost impossible to distinguish or draw borderlines between cultures. One way of distinguishing cultures, but not necessarily the only one, is by ethnicity. But *ethnicity is situational and relational*. If cultures are fluid, the 'cultural' content of ethnic differences are even more difficult to grasp. This means that ethnicity occurs in certain situations, and this social

categorisation will always be based on relational differences, not absolute inherited qualities from the past (Eriksen 1999).

Contemporary ethnic assignment and the labels used today have nothing to do with the 'real' past. This brings me to the problem of ethnic continuity. Ethnicity is a contemporary construction. The 'real' history or the 'real' past is subordinate and inferior to the construction of ethnicity, because the contemporary identity and ethnicity does not rest upon actual similarities between the past and the present. In archaeology, Ian Hodder illuminated the multivocality of material culture in his study in Baringo. Material items are a part of identity, and can be used to express identity, but cultural patterning does not represent patterns of interaction because distinct cultural boundaries are foci for interaction, not barriers (Hodder 1982a:35). So with post-processual archaeology, ethnicity has been a common subject for investigation.

According to Fredrik Barth, the cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies are of two orders: (a) overt signals – the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, and (b) basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged (Barth 1969:14). Ethnicity may either have a material expression or not. Implicit is often an assumption that ethnic markers in the culture imply similarities in the actual and respective remains. The problem is the interpreter's attitude to what similarities and differences in the remains represent. When cultural differences make social difference ethnicity occurs, but which conceptualisation of ethnicity is the most useful in comparison (Eriksen 1996b)?

Margarita Díaz-Andreu discusses the possibilities for archaeologists to study ethnic identity in isolation from other types of identity like gender, religion, status etc. She argues that archaeologists are ill-prepared to distinguish which identity is the appropriate one in interpreting a particular distribution of artefacts. Archaeologists have a tendency to select those features or diagnostic types which fit their purposes and hypothesis (Díaz-Andreu

1998:203). The basic question is whether or not material culture is an appropriate factor in defining ethnicity. Furthermore, she stresses that ethnic identity is heterogeneous rather than monolithic, and in this regard the study of ethnicity should finally get rid of the nationalistic trap because ethnicity is richer than a nationalist perspective. Multiple ethnic affiliations co-exist and overlap in the same subjects, and therefore the same person can be categorised according to the relevant criteria at that time. Ethnic identity is thus multidimensional, active and negotiable intermixed in a complex manner with other types of identity (Díaz-Andreu 1998:204-206).

Ethnicity is about perception, and therefore there is no direct relationship between ethnic identity and material culture. Material culture will only exceptionally, if at all, allow us to establish ethnic territories because the pattern resulting from its role in the daily negotiations of various identities is often too complex for archaeologists to interpret. The main point is that ethnicity is not reflected in a one-to-one relationship with material culture, nor are other identities reflected in this way. However, the role of material culture in the daily negotiation and shaping of such identities cannot be denied. Each group uses overt signals in the making of ethnicity, but they are fluent, changeable, unstable and situational, because they play a role in daily negotiations. In this way material culture gives glimpses of identity production and processes, and this is the basis for the discussion of identity in the past, and thus, the discussion of ethnicity in the past remains a difficult theme (Díaz-Andreu 1998:212-213).

Archaeologists have often set aside a crucial problem; the medium of ethnic differentiation and dichotomization is not necessarily the message. Eriksen suggests that the criterion for distinguishing contexts is the varying cultural significance of ethnicity (Eriksen 1991). Ethnic signifiers may change due to changes in context; this indicates that the ethnic signifiers themselves are arbitrary. In other words, artefacts may indicate ethnicity in one context, but not in others; the meaning can change. Thus, ethnicity is

not connected to the items themselves but to the context in which the artefacts are embedded and occur. The Norwegian flag seen all over Norway on the national day, the 17th of May, is clearly an ethnic signifier. However, a Norwegian flag on the window on a German caravan probably only indicates that some tourists had a good time in Norway during their vacation. Then again, a Norwegian flag on a caravan produced in Germany but owned by Norwegians, is an ethnic signifier. Thus, it is not the flag itself that determines whether it is an ethnic signifier or not, but the context in which it actually occurs. And unfortunately in the latter case, as archaeologists studying the past we have limited possibilities to decide whether the owners of the caravan are Norwegian or German citizens. Without being able to decide this question we will be unable to analyse the context, and this is the main problem within archaeology: most of the prehistoric contexts are not suitable for analysing ethnicity.

Ethnicity must be understood in the context of the society as a part of and in relation to other social identities. A good example illustrating this is the Hindu marriage. The marriage marks the beginning of the productive and socially responsible householder stage (Bennett 1983:71). It is the most prestigious family ceremony and the main occasion on which the greatest number of members of the caste and other persons gather together (Dumont 1970:110). In marriage descent and affinity is transferred as well as subsistence production, that is the access to land and thus the relations of production and consumption. Therefore the marriage is an important happening in the village as it establishes new relations. It 'brings' the woman into the man's household, 'the household appears as a patrilineal core of men with women attached to it by marriage who enable these men to morally satisfy their passion and to realise their moral duty through their wife's reproductive fertility' (Gray 1995:50).

Normally the marriage takes place within both the ethnic group and the caste group. Nevertheless, marriages occur between ethnic groups within a caste group (Varna) as well as between ethnic

groups from different caste groups. The wedding involves the most important and emotive transformations in people's lives: the culmination of parents' duties and responsibilities toward daughters, the transfer of the bride from one place and family to another, and the creation of new relations between two lineages (Sax 1991:71). The ethnic status might change for either of the spouses if marriage occurs between two different ethnic groups. According to the ideas of purity, a high caste person changes caste to the lower status of the spouse, thereby becoming impure for his or her original caste. This is normally what happens, but on rare occasions it does not, and the opposite might happen. Thus, in rare cases (for instance weddings) it might be the gender that defines ethnicity, regardless of the material culture.

In this regard the context for assigning ethnicity in the territory we label 'Israel', 'Palestine', 'Canaan' or 'Transjordan', differs. Since the topic for the study is what is labelled the Holy Land and the Chosen People, it is worth noting that birth and religion today define the ethnic identity within Judaism. Thus, if one is supposed to trace ethnicity in the past, it is necessary to define what characterises that ethnicity, and not only to state that certain material items correlate to human behaviour. In conclusion, Díaz-Andreu's definition of ethnicity, based on Sían Jones, is thus 'an aspect of a person's self-conceptualisation which results from identification with *one or more* broader groups in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent' (Díaz-Andreu 1998:205). Richard Jenkins argues that ethnicity is a series of loosely linked propositions (Jenkins 1998:165):

- ethnicity is about cultural differentiation (bearing in mind that identity is always a dialectic between similarity and difference);
- ethnicity is concerned with culture – shared meaning – but it is also rooted in, and the outcome of, social interaction;
- ethnicity is no more fixed than the culture of which it is a component, or the situations in which it is produced;

- ethnicity is both collective and individual, externalised in social interaction and internalised in personal self-identification.

Seen as a process of social interaction, how is it possible to link ethnicity to both the nation-state, material culture *and* the past?

Nationalism and the Nation-State

What is the relation between ethnicity and nationalism? In many cases ethnicity, if we by the term refer to the social organisation of communicated cultural differences, appeared together with capitalism in many parts of the world (Eriksen 1993:80). Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) argues that Orientalism as a phenomenon is the highest stage of capitalism, and in this regard archaeology has been just another form of Victorian theft from colonial lands (Kuklick 1993:211).

The kind of ethnicity we face today is in some cases a recent phenomenon. Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues against the notion that identities are continuous through time, 'perhaps they only seem continuous and our analytical task consists in showing that they are not, and that the very notion that people ought to be concerned with the past is an ideological child of the age of nationalism' (Eriksen 1993:96): *While trees have roots, humans don't – and any claim to the effect that humans need roots is ideological.*

I will stress and emphasise that identity, ethnicity, nationalism and legitimacy of land occupation, are four very different concepts or ideologies that do not necessarily have anything to do with each other, but are often combined and presented as inseparable. If we want to discuss nationalism we need to distinguish nations from ethnic categories because of their relationship to the modern state (Eriksen 1993:99). Thus,

nationalism stresses solidarity between the poor and the rich, between the propertyless and the capitalists. According to nationalist ideology, the sole principle of political exclusion and inclusion follows the boundaries of the nation – that category of people defined as members of the same culture (...) Perhaps nationalist ideologies tend to be more concerned with clear-cut, unambiguous boundaries than other ethnic ideologies. An explanation for this could be that nations are territorial and political units with an inherent need to divide others into insiders and outsiders on the basis of citizenship (Eriksen 1993:102, 116).

Hence, ethnicity is not identical to nationalism, although the majority of nationalistic ideas are ethnic in their character. However, plural or poly-ethnic societies may still be nationalistic if poly-ethnic or supra-ethnic ideologies stress shared civil rights rather than shared cultural roots. A nationalistic ideology is an ethnic ideology that demands a state on behalf of the ethnic group. However, a conflict between ethnicity and nationalism is often a conflict between a dominating and a dominated ethnic group within the framework of a modern nation-state (Eriksen 1993:118-119).

In a book called *The Contested Past* (1996a), Eriksen argues that myths are an essential part of the making of ethnicity, the nation-state and nationalism. It is necessary and unavoidable to use myths when cultural and individual identities are created, but the problem is: who controls the past, and thereby; who is able to produce such myths, and how and by whom are they legitimated in the society? Especially dangerous are the 'suffering-myths' because they might encourage revenge because 'our' people has suffered through 'ages'. In this regard ethnicity is a fictive kinship when a myth explains a common origin.

Ethnicity and the past are two separate entities. David Lowenthal has formulated this in a brilliant way and quotes L. P. Hartley; 'the past is a foreign country – they do things differently there' (Lowenthal 1985:xvi). 'They' are not 'us'. 'The past is a foreign

country whose features are shaped by today's predilections, its strangeness domesticated by our own preservation of its vestiges' (Lowenthal 1985:xvii). Thus, the past as we know it is partly a product of the present because we continually reshape memory, rewrite history and refashion relicts. The past as it was does not matter with regards to ethnicity, but rather how it is used in contemporary societies will determine the role of the past in the making of ethnicity, and thereby, nationalism.

Benedict Anderson discusses in *Imagined Communities* (1993) how these myths and notions of ethnicity work in a nation. Anderson distinguishes analytically between nationalism and racism, a distinction that is useful and clarifying in the following discussion of biblical archaeology:

The fact of the matter is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history. Niggers are, thanks to the invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or what languages they speak and read (Anderson 1993:149).

Moreover, racism and anti-Semitism manifest themselves not across but within the national borders. Thus, they justify not so much foreign wars but rather domestic repression and domination (Anderson 1993:150).

From an archaeological point of view, I will sum up the basic points for further discussion:

1. Ethnicity is a social construct based on a collective identity. As an identity, ethnicity does not necessarily have a material expression.

2. Ethnicity is not the same as nationalism or the ideology of the nation-state, even though nations are built on some features and notions of ethnicity.
3. Our concepts of ethnicity in the past are based on contemporary knowledge of the phenomena, which are inevitably influenced by notions of nationalism, the nation-state and capitalism. Therefore, our concepts and understanding are not necessarily sufficient if we are going to interpret *ethnicity* in the past.
4. The ethnic classifying markers are always changing and subject to negotiation. Therefore, there is interplay as well as contradiction and negotiation between various identities. In this regard it is difficult to separate and focus on only one identity, especially in the archaeological material. Ethnic identity has to be discussed in relation to other identities that existed in the past.
5. To trace a contemporary ethnic identity backwards in time connecting it with a mythical, fictive or presumed 'real' past, is a political and ideological act. Ethnicity in the past has got nothing to do with the territorial legitimacy of nation-states today because ethnicity is not inherited 'cultural roots'.
6. Even if ethnicity in one or another form existed in the past, it is the archaeologist's task to illuminate and argue what the ethnic classifying criteria were, and how these markers were manifested in the material culture.
7. It is fundamental to distinguish between the ethnic 'label' and the ethnic 'content'. How is it possible to trace continuity in ethnic 'content' when it has changed? Why should past ethnic categorisations (the 'content') or an empty 'label' have social relevance today?
8. Past ethnicity shows more similarities with myths than genealogy. The contemporary and collective created identities are real, although a fictive genealogical or common descendant's origin is used to give the ethnic identity authenticity.

9. Ethnic identities are created, as continuous processes in contemporary societies, where the past can only be a means to some other end. Or in other words, the past is not the aim, the future is. Ethnicity is made here and now.
10. Finally, we have to answer the questions that arise in multi-ethnic areas today: why should the archaeological agenda focus on studies of ethnicity? What are the political purposes behind this? And how is archaeological knowledge production used or misused in contemporary societies to legitimate nationalism or the nation-state?

Gustav Kossinna and Nazi Archaeology

In order to understand the political use and misuse of archaeology, it is necessary to examine briefly the history of archaeological thought. The culture-historical approach which gained support at the beginning of the 20th century laid the foundation for the nationalistic use of archaeology (Trigger 1989:174).

The classic example of nationalistic use and misuse of archaeology is the political manipulation of the past in Nazi Germany. The prehistorian Gustav Kossinna is inevitably linked to the ethnic, nationalistic and fascist interpretations in favour of the Third Reich. In 1911 Kossinna claimed that German prehistory was an 'eminently national discipline'. During a time of strong nationalism and chauvinism just before, during and after the First World War, Kossinna's view was radicalised. In 1917 he presented a 'wartime lecture' where he focused on the 'old Germanic cultural achievement', and was speaking of 'our racial, cultural superiority over other peoples' (Wiwjorra 1996:174-175).

Bettina Arnold describes how the past was used as propaganda in Nazi Germany as an ideological weapon in nation-building. Prehistory was important in the rehabilitating of German self-respect after the humiliation of defeat in 1918 (Arnold 1990:465).

The ideas and the discussions about the leading role of Germans since prehistoric times had been going on in popular-scientific contributions for about 30 years, and the aim was to find 'Egypt in Germany' (Wiwjorra 1996). Charles Stubbs, a Bishop of Oxford and a professor of Modern History at Oxford in the 1880s could say that 'It is to Ancient Germany that we must look for the earliest traces of our forefathers, for the best part of almost all of us is Germanic in origin...The blood that is in our veins comes from German ancestors' (cited in Dennell 1996:27). Similarly, in 1909 Kossinna founded the German Society for Prehistory, but the name was changed to the Society for German Prehistory, and this change was much more than just a semantic one:

The name of an organization is its business card...In order to understand correctly what the Society for German Prehistory means one must remember what it was originally called...[It means] a prehistory of Germanness, independent of its present-day political or ethnic boundaries, reaching back to its roots and following these wherever the ancestors of the Germans originated in antiquity – and that was on occasion all over Europe (Alfred Götze 1933:68, cited in Arnold 1990:466).

The question is: how is it possible to use archaeology for this purpose? What is culture-historical archaeology? In 1911 Gustav Kossinna defined and systematically applied the concept of an archaeological culture in conjunction with the 'direct ethno-historical' method in the book *Die Herkunft der Germanen* or *The Origin of the Germans*. His axiom was that in all periods sharply delineated archaeological culture areas represent peoples and tribes. Cultures were defined on material traits associated with sites in a particular region and time, and cultural continuity was assumed to reflect ethnic continuity (Jones 1997:16). Thus, within this culture-historical approach, archaeologists claimed that they were able to identify major ethnic groups on the basis of culture provinces

whereas individual cultures corresponded with tribes (Trigger 1989:165).

Kossinna developed an ethnic paradigm called 'settlement archaeology'. The basic premise was that artefact types could be used in identifying cultures, and that clearly distinguishable cultural provinces reflected the settlement areas of past tribes or ethnic groups. But perhaps the most crucial aspect in this methodology in relation to its nationalistic tone was the direct genealogical technique used in order to trace the presence of historically known peoples back to their supposed prehistoric origin. It was on the basis of this technique that Kossinna attempted to delineate the descent of the Nordic, Aryan, Germanic super-race to the Indo-Europeans (or 'Indo-Germans'). In the process a deep antiquity was attributed to the Aryan 'race', alongside a decisive, creative role in the course of history through its continuous expansion into new areas (Jones 1997:2). Kossinna was explicit about his nationalistic and racial approaches to archaeology. After his death in 1931, his works became a dogma in support of the myth of the Aryan master race. Thus, archaeology had an important position in the ideology of the Third Reich and received considerable prestige and support from the Nazis.

The works of Gustav Kossinna were especially important in establishing a basis for German archaeological methodology. This culture-historical view also influenced European and British archaeology. When we evaluate this culture-historical approach to archaeology, we have to criticise it on the basis of its own background. It seems plausible that Kossinna based his views of culture on notions that were generally accepted by his contemporaries within their culture-historical paradigm (Olsen 1997:39). Furthermore, this view of culture was a contribution to archaeology as a science at the time when these ideas were presented. Kossinna stressed the need to learn as much as possible about how human groups (or at least the Germans) had lived in prehistoric times. Moreover, Kossinna's work marked the final

replacement of an evolutionary approach to prehistory by a historical one. Thus, his work was of major importance in the development of archaeology (Trigger 1989:166-167).

That was back then. Before the Second World War the leading archaeologists in Europe had turned away from this view of culture. Once, it was a contribution to the development of archaeology, but after some decades, responsible archaeologists took the consequences of the implicit and explicit racist view of culture implied in this culture-historical approach to archaeological cultures. This is the main clue; when did the archaeologists turn away from this direction and approach in archaeology?

Gordon V. Childe has been one of the most influential and prominent persons in the history of archaeology. Some of his earlier works illuminate that the thoughts of Gustav Kossinna were common among archaeologists in the 1920s and 1930s. In *The Aryans – A Study of Indo-European Origins* (1926), Childe writes that:

[...] the blondes constitute a racial link of the kind which has been sought between Europe and Asia and Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. If we accept this racial link as identical with the linguistic, the theory of an Aryan cradle in Europe receives confirmation. (...) As thus presented the Germanist doctrine is the most comprehensive and consistent synthesis of Indo-European people that has ever been offered...Indeed, if it can prove its validity in the realm of archaeology and ethnology, it will probably have to rank as an accurate solution of the Aryan question (Childe 1926:160, 179).

Representative for the archaeology at that time was that the concept of 'culture' was rarely defined. However, in *The Danube in Prehistory* (1929) Childe does define the concept and this may illustrate that the ideas of Kossinna were common:

We find certain types of remains – pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites, house forms – constantly recurring together. Such a complex of regularly associated traits we shall term a ‘cultural group’ or just a ‘culture’. We assume that such a complex is the material expression of what would today be called a ‘people’ (as the adjective from ‘people’, corresponding to the German ‘völkische’, we may use the term ‘ethnic’). Only where the complex in question is regularly and exclusively associated with skeletal remains of a specifically physical type would we venture to replace ‘people’ by the term ‘race’ (Childe 1929:v-vi).

But this approach could not prove its validity. Only four years later, Child rejected or became sceptical of this view of culture, and especially of Kossinna’s Indo-Germanic interpretation and his racist assumption. In 1933 he wrote an article where he asked the question ‘Is Prehistory Practical?’ Childe took a moral and ethical responsibility for the production of knowledge, and clarified at that time what was a popular and common confusion between race and culture or race and language (Childe 1933:416). He emphasised the differences, and pointed out that human physical features have nothing to do with ‘race’ or ethnicity:

There are differences in the culture of distinct groups of men. Very often the bodies, or at least the skeletons, of the people who made and used these objects can also be studied. But in many instances the skeletons, accompanied by the same sorts of implements, weapons and ornaments, belong to very different type. They cannot possibly be classified as belonging to the same race or physical stock (...) In other words, in the prehistoric past as obviously today, culture was independent of physical race, was not a matter of biological heredity but of social tradition (Childe 1933:417).

In Germany, on the other hand, the archaeological practices and approaches changed after the war. The systematic and

institutionalised misuse and abuse of archaeology to serve ideological and political ends during the Third Reich contributed significantly to the development of post-war archaeology in Germany. Archaeology has suffered from the 'Kossinna Syndrome'. German archaeologists have rejected and been unwilling to participate in theoretical debates of the role archaeology has as a discipline in knowledge production. As a consequence, archaeology in Germany neglected the role of individuals in prehistory in addition to emphasising chronology and typological artefact studies (Arnold & Hassmann 1995:70-73).

Bruce Trigger (1989:164-167) sums up six basic premises of Gustav Kossinna:

- Cultures are inevitably a reflection of ethnicity. Similarities and differences in material culture correlate with similarities and differences in ethnicity.
- Clearly defined cultural provinces correspond with major ethnic groups or peoples.
- Cultural continuity indicates ethnic continuity.
- The distribution of artefact types that were characteristics of specific tribal groups reflect where these groups lived at different periods in prehistory (settlement archaeology).
- By identifying historically known tribal groups with particular archaeological cultures for the early historic period, it is possible to trace them backward in time archaeologically.

Kossinna was the first archaeologist to use the concept of archaeological culture systematically as well as the first to apply a direct historical approach to the study of a large region. In his later works he connected specifically identified cultural and ethnic variations with racial differences:

- Racist and chauvinistic interpretation in favour of nationalistic aims and needs. Racism is the belief that human races have

distinctive characteristics that determine their respective cultures, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule others, and it may be executed as a policy of enforcing such asserted rights for instance by a system of government and society based upon it.

The history of archaeology has shown us that this point of departure may lead to extreme consequences. In this regard I think it is appropriate to challenge Henry Ford's famous statement: 'History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today' (op. cit. Eriksen 1996a:13). We may learn something from the history of archaeological thought. We have to ask: What history do we want to construct today? How do we legitimise contemporary territorial claims when discussing ethnicity in the past? Are we as archaeologists innocent, or are we responsible for the knowledge we produce?

One conclusion to be drawn is that the culture-historical approach as presented by Gustav Kossinna and his contemporaries has got nothing to do in the current scientific debate, archaeological discourse or in the contemporary knowledge production. As responsible archaeologists we have to disassociate ourselves from these thoughts. It is surprising that biblical archaeology uses part, in some cases all, of these six characteristics of the traditional culture-historical interpretations. From a theoretical point of view and based on the history of archaeological thought, this view of culture and thereby interpretative practice, is almost equivalent to the archaeological interpretations made before the Second World War in Germany. The way of reasoning is based on the relationship between the objects' form and content in relation to people. Similar form equals similar content and thereby similar people and race. Based on these archaeological inferences of cultures, the Nazis were able to 'legitimise' the Third Reich and Aryans' superiority archaeologically. Thus, the Second World War had its national 'legitimacy' and basis

in archaeology. Biblical archaeology is founded on the same theoretical basis. The archaeological production of knowledge of prehistoric cultures constructed by biblical archaeologists is used by Israelis to legitimise the occupation of land and property in the Middle East. On the losing end are the Palestinians and other political, religious or ethnic minorities, and also the credibility of archaeology as a scientific practice.

The Chosen People (Researchers) for Research

Neil Asher Silberman asked the question 'Is American Biblical Archaeology dying?' because, by the final decade of the twentieth century, the signs of morbidity were unmistakable to some (Silberman 1998:175). The constitution of *The American Schools of Oriental Research* (ASOR) declared that 'the School shall be open to duly qualified applicants of all races and both sexes, and shall be kept wholly free from obligations or preferences with respect to any religious denomination or literary institution' (Silberman 1998:181). The question is whether or not biblical archaeology fits within this intention?

In 'The death of a discipline', William Dever admits that 'we [biblical archaeologists] are becoming increasingly marginalised, often reduced to the status of spectators at a game we invented' (Dever 1995:52-53). He argues that reasons for this development are the rising status of non-American scholars combined with less financial support for American scholars. These explanations may be correct to a certain extent, but I will argue that the problems are more deeply rooted. The death of the discipline has got less to do with financial support, and represents rather a scientific crisis.

'I suppose it is every biblical archaeologist's dream to find at least one important document from the ancient world that somehow has a direct relation to the biblical text' (Geraty 1985:131). As I see it, this point of departure leads scholars to ask the wrong questions,

search for answers that do not exist, and interpret the archaeological material in an unscientific way. The problem is twofold: (1) what kind of book is the Bible? and (2) is it possible to relate archaeological material with the scriptures?

Biblical archaeology is not a single unit of archaeological interpretation. There are differences between authors and how they interpret Iron Age material in the Middle East. Nevertheless, I have chosen some examples from biblical scholars in order to illuminate the dangers in the current epistemological approach to archaeological interpretation.

Most of the presented ideas are recent and older interpretations prevail, and therefore they are all relevant in the discourse. Extremists that will misuse knowledge, choose the 'best' available knowledge that may fit their purpose. The presented interpretations are in a category which may easily be misused for political purposes, hopefully against the will of the authors, but that does not really matter as long as they have produced the knowledge and it is available.

I could of course have chosen other authors for the discussion, but any kind of summary and discourse of biblical archaeology as a discipline, and Israeli nationalist archaeology indeed, will be selective due to practical limitations of this study. The land of Palestine is one of the countries in the world which is most excavated and best surveyed. Each year some three hundred excavations of varying scales are carried out (Broshi 2001:15). It is impossible to refer to all authors and interpretations which are based upon the culture-historical paradigm. Nevertheless, the authors that are subject for discussion have been leading biblical archaeologists. Especially some of the works by William G. Dever are analysed critically because he is appreciated, hailed and honoured as '*one of the pioneers and leaders in the recent theoretical development of archaeology in Israel*' (Silberman & Small 1997: 26-27).

Biblical scholars may perceive that the referred arguments in the discussion are more or less out of context. In order to try to

justify both the biblical archaeologists and to make an attempt to present their views, I have to a high degree quoted them at some length so they speak for themselves. Thus, the examples of the discourse of biblical studies are the author's own words. The focus on biblical archaeology will be on some specific authors and some recent books. Other books could have been analysed and used as examples, but there is a general tendency that the same arguments and reasoning constitute the foundation of most biblical archaeological interpretations. Therefore, due to limitations, the works cited and quoted are chosen as representative fragments of the debate up to year 2000, which I will show by turning to Israeli nationalist archaeology.

Two points have to be made clear. Firstly, I argue from a scientific point of view and criticise the way biblical archaeology as a social and scientific practice has been done, or more precisely, I criticise the dogmatism and the lack of a dynamic (scientific) practice. Secondly, I argue from a theoretical point of view. I am not considering the plausibility of the various hypotheses in the discussion of the origin of ancient Israel. Since I cannot accept the premises of biblical archaeology, the conclusions are drawn on wrong premises. In this regard the hypotheses are unscientific independent of the arguments as such. If other methods based on other interpretative practices had presented the arguments and the conclusions in other contexts, they could have been valid in the current discourse. Thus, as a scientific explanation, it is not the arguments as such that matter, but the way that the knowledge production has happened.

There is a general lack of theoretical basis in biblical archaeology regarding the interpretations of the archaeological material, what 'culture' is, and how material remains can be used to identify ethnicity or other social units. The interpretative practice is implicit rather than explicit. Implicit assumptions represent a clouded science. This is the reason why I will illuminate the underlying theoretical basis within biblical archaeology when the

Bible is not considered as an ordinary written source used for analogical reasoning, but on the contrary, the unquestionable truth. When the Bible represents The Truth in a religious way, and even if it is only for practical convenience, the aim is to make correlations in time and space between narratives from the written sources and archaeological material. The 'fits' between the Bible and the material reality are presented as authentic narratives of the history *as it was*. As a consequence, the material remains and archaeological cultures are connected to different ethnic groups. This is a kind of circular reasoning because the archaeological material is used as 'evidence' for the ethnic groups described in the Bible, and similarly, the ethnic groups described in the Bible are 'confirmed' by the archaeological record.

A Historical Approach to Biblical Archaeology

There are of course different approaches to, and definitions of, biblical archaeology. There are, however, some leading biblical scholars and trends that have had more influence on the debate than others. W. F. Albright tried to describe the theory and task of a new level of 'biblical archaeology' in *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1957). The term 'Biblical archaeology' in the 'Albright school' is defined by Albright as anything that

may be restricted to Palestine, or it may be extended to include everything that illustrates the Bible, however superficially. Accordingly, I shall use the term 'biblical archaeology' here to refer to all Biblical lands – from India to Spain, and from southern Russia to Southern Arabia – and to the whole history of those lands from about 10, 000 B. C., or even earlier, to the present time (op. cit. Dever 1990:14).

By its very nature such a definition is chauvinistic because everything becomes related to the Bible and interpreted within this framework. Recent books such as *Archaeology of the Land of The Bible 10,000-586 B.C.E.* (Mazar 1993) and *The Archaeology of Society in The Holy Land* (Levy 1998[1995] ed.), which cover the whole history from the paleolithic periods to recent times, illuminate that within the actual discourse Albright's definition is still operative. The biblical narrative and the Bible as the ultimate reference point are, despite changes in nomenclature of the different archaeological branches working in Israel, the overall framework for interpretations of the past. The aim of Mazar (1993) in his study *Archaeology of the Land of The Bible 10,000-586 B.C.E* is to present as 'objective as possible [a] picture of the archaeological research of Palestine relating to the Old Testament Period. I have chosen to start with the earliest permanent settlements, dating to ca, 10,000 B.C.E, and to terminate the discussion with the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E' (Mazar 1993:xv). In other words, the Old Testament period covers the time span from 10,000-586 B.C.E. Prof. G. E. Wright regarded a biblical archaeologist as one who

studies the discoveries of excavations in order to glean from them every fact that throws a direct, indirect, or even a diffused light upon the Bible. He must be intelligently concerned with stratigraphy and typology, upon which the methodology of modern archaeology rests... Yet his chief concern is not with methods or pots or weapons in themselves alone. His central interest is the understanding and exposition of the scriptures (Wright 1962, 1971).

Not all Israeli scholars share this view, but the biblical narrative is always apparent in interpretations of archaeological material if the Bible may shed light on the origin of Israel. It has been argued that practically, all the information about the Israeli monarchy comes from the Bible whereas the archaeology reveals the physical remains from this period. Although the study of the Bible is governed by its

own discipline and archaeology is dependent upon totally different principles, within biblical archaeology a comprehensive picture can only be drawn by developing a dialogue between the two by which 'biblical texts can help interpret archaeological remains and these in turn can serve to illustrate biblical passages' (Biran 2001:148). In reality, it is impossible to separate biblical archaeology and Israeli nationalist archaeology when the topics of investigations are the origin of Israel and sites and events referred to in the Bible. The American biblical scholar and archaeologist H. D. Lance argued that biblical archaeology

is a biblical discipline which exists for the benefit and interest of biblical studies. So long as people read the Bible and asks questions about history and culture of the ancient world which produced it, those questions have to be answered; and the sum of those answers will comprise biblical archaeology (Lance 1981:95).

I will argue that much of the 'old biblical archaeological' thoughts still pertain implicitly in the practice of 'new biblical archaeology'. The biblical archaeology movement in its classic form, which dominated the American scene up until about 1970, was rather a subsidiary of biblical theological studies than a branch of Near Eastern archaeology. It was a chapter in the history of American religious life. This school drew its agenda not from archaeology but from problems in biblical research. In its method these biblical archaeologists stressed academic training in biblical languages and history plus field experiences. The practitioners were all biblical scholars and teachers, almost without exception 'amateur' in the sense of them being part-time archaeologists. Thus, the sites chosen for excavation were biblical, and their support came from seminaries and church-affiliated institutions and individuals (Dever 1990:19). But the question is, if we accept a significant difference between Near Eastern studies and biblical archaeology, where does biblical

archaeology stand today? What is the difference between the 'old' and 'new' biblical archaeology?

Biblical archaeology pertains to all those remains that shed light of the life, customs, history, literature, language, and architecture of early Israel and its neighbours. Prof. G. E. Wright, the founder and editor of the journal *The Biblical Archaeologist*, defined biblical archaeology as a 'special "armchair" variety of general archaeology.' In his view, biblical archaeology is largely an amateur affair, in which non-archaeologists (theologians) utilise the results of professional field archaeologists. However, there has grown up a school of professional biblical archaeologists, but the goals and methods are in my opinion not very different. According to Paul & Dever, professional biblical archaeologists are people who are competent biblical scholars *and* trained field archaeologists (Paul & Dever 1973:vii).

This relates to the problem; a biblical archaeologist is a biblical scholar with a field course in archaeology. The major discussion in theoretical archaeology is epistemological: what do the material remains mean? What is an archaeological 'culture?' What is the relationship between archaeological artefacts, people and cultures? These theoretical issues are fundamental to archaeology. Within biblical archaeology, these questions hardly matter, because biblical scholars are trained in the Bible, not in the theoretical problems of archaeology. Those two facts, the Bible as the source for interpretations and the lack of general theoretical knowledge in the contemporary biblical archaeological discourse, render possible out of date interpretations based on the culture-historical paradigm.

John R. Bartlett once asked 'What has archaeology to do with the Bible – or vice versa?' He says that

I must begin by saying something about the nature of the Bible, and the nature of archaeology, which at least reveals my starting point. Like all other written books, including holy books, the Bible is in the first place (whatever value we set upon it) a human artefact, with a

human history. It is the product of many different human minds of varying ability, written by human hands of varied powers of co-ordination, copied and recopied by scribes of varied intelligence, printed and bounded by craftsmen of varying standards of skill, read and interpreted by Jews and Christians and agnostics and atheists of differing hermeneutical approaches. It is also a book of very varied origins and contents (Bartlett 1997:1).

I think most people can agree with this view, which is an open and potentially fruitful approach to a scientific discourse. But when relating written sources to archaeology, the problem arises, 'the literary scholar has not always understood the limitations of the archaeological evidence, and the archaeologists have not always understood the complexities of the literary evidence...the biblical student and the archaeologist do not always share the same historical aims' (Bartlett 1997:2). What is actually written here, is that archaeological evidence has limitations whereas the literary evidence is complex. It is noteworthy that he has not stated that the material culture is complex and that the written sources (the Bible) have limitations. But Bartlett warns us of the direct association of biblical text and archaeological evidence that has always tempted scholars, both because it is fraught with risks and because one cannot prove the truth of the Bible.

The problems are many. When we ask whether the events of biblical narrative have actually happened, the question itself guarantees that the Bible will be misunderstood. One of the major sources of misunderstanding is the difference between the understanding of the past implied in biblical texts and the modern understanding of history. They represent two totally different ways of thinking about reality, and this difference is fundamental to our understanding of ancient texts, and as Thomas L. Thompson says: '*It is only as history that the Bible does not make sense*' (Thompson 1999:210). The main problem with biblical archaeology is that the Bible is used as a document of historical facts. This point of

departure for archaeological interpretations is highly problematic, and the scientific practice is inevitably clouded.

There is a general tendency of trying to be self-reflective and critical regarding the use of the Bible as a source and interpretative framework, a problem I will return to later. Nevertheless, the biblical archaeologists face the problem of theory and practice. They declare one thing, and interpret another. Therefore I will use the six criteria Bruce Trigger summed up characterising the culture-historical tradition in order to illuminate that interpretations of people and society within biblical archaeology often are based on the same interpretative practice. The chronology and periods referred to are:

Iron Age I: The days of the Judges, ca. 1200-1000 BCE.

Iron Age II: The Monarchy, ca. 1000-586 BCE (The United Monarchy Iron Age II A, ca 1000-925 BCE, and The Divided Monarchy Iron Age II B-C, 925-586 BCE).

Cultures are Inevitably a Reflection of Ethnicity

According to Gustav Kossinna, similarities and differences in material culture correlate with similarities and differences in ethnicity. Some Near-Eastern archaeologists are aware of the complexity of ethnicity and the limitations to cultural elaboration. William Dever, on the other hand, is 'by no means that pessimistic'. The basic premises are that 'real ethnic distinctions *did* exist, in the well documented multi-ethnic society of twelfth-century BCE Palestine. These diverse groups of people knew how they were and how they differed; if we don't yet know, it's up to us to try to find out' (Dever 1997a:42). A crucial question is why? What are the political reasons for tracing ethnicity in the Middle East? It is actually not ethnic *groups* that are the aim, although it is a multi-ethnic society, it is to trace *one single* ethnic group, namely the Israelis:

There was a 'people' somewhere in the land of Canaan called 'Israel' just before 1200 BCE. And they were already well known to Egyptian intelligence, and already well enough established to be considered a threat to security in Egypt's declining Asiatic empire. If these 'Israelites' were not our hill-country people, then who and where were Merneptah's 'Israelites'? And how can we account for our hill-country complex if it is not 'Israelite'? Simple logic suggests connecting the two sets of facts (and they are facts); and if so we have at hand the textually attested ethnic label that minimalists demand (Dever 1997a:43).

As Dever says about the 'proto-Israelites', 'nowhere in the Egyptian literature, in history, or in the archaeological record is there a reference or artefact that would indicate that the "proto-Israelites" were ever in Egypt' (Dever 1997b:70). But nevertheless, he has a very easy way of solving the problem of assigning ethnic identity in the past:

But what do these people look like when they first emerge as a separate group; how can they be recognised archaeologically; and what can that tell us about their immediate background? At the very least, some sort of 'label' for this group is needed, if only for convenience; and any label necessarily implies something about origins. We can hardly dub them simply 'the X-people', or worse still, continue to speak impersonally of 'assemblages' or 'entities' (Dever 1997a:40).

Material cultures are inevitably a reflection of ethnicity. Based on the brief discussion of the complexity of ethnicity earlier, Dever shows a total lack of knowledge about ethnicity, which is also reflected in his references where he does not mention any author (except himself) used in the international debate. Thus, the criteria and conceptions of ethnicity are based on his own imagination which is again based on the political or religious prejudices whereby he has given the

answers to the questions prior to the analysis: Israeli ethnicity *existed* and we have to find out how we can prove it.

Part of this enterprise is possible only by becoming slave to the scriptures. Once an ethnic group is mentioned in the written sources, it is supposed to reflect a truth which is possible to trace in the archaeological record. This trend is seen in later periods also. Pottery forms are isolated in the 7th century B. C. as various national ceramic corpora from Transjordan, because national scripts had at that point been diverging and could be separated quite readily (Herr 1986:282). There is in general no discussion of what culture, ethnicity and nationalism are, but the concepts are used in the discourse as self-explaining, and this 'innocent archaeological practice', or 'only for convenience' to use Dever's words, encourages the misuse of archaeological interpretations.

Dever's approach to material culture and ethnicity rests on the same paradigm as Gustav Kossinna's interpretations. Dever gives what might be called a theoretical approach to ethnicity in the article *Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II Period on the Eve of Destruction* (Dever 1998:420-421):

Ethnic consciousness, which is an essential concomitant of national identity and statehood, is often thought to be difficult or even impossible to trace in the archaeological material, but that is not necessarily the case. Artefacts may be considered properly the 'material correlates of behaviour', that is, they reflect patterns of both individual and social behaviour, as well as the thought and the intent that behaviour expresses. In that sense, archaeological remains are indeed an index not merely to material culture, but to culture, indeed to a particular culture. And when there emerge consistent, distinctive regional patterns, i.e. archaeological 'assemblages' – we can compare and contrast these with other such assemblages in order to isolate what may be called archaeological culture (...) Finally, if we happen to possess literary texts that are sufficiently detailed and can be closely correlated with such an

archaeological culture and its development over time, then we may be able legitimately to attach a specific ethnic label.

If one accepts such a culture-historical paradigm and interpretative practice, then one can use specific ethnic labels legitimately. But if one, on the other hand, rejects this practice as illegitimate, and if one for instance asks why and how artefacts are material correlates of behaviour, this interpretative practice is highly problematic. In this article Dever illuminates some of the basic premises in his ethnic research: ethnic consciousness is an essential concomitant of national identity and statehood. This is true enough, but it is a concomitant to modern processes, to the creation of national identity and statehood, which is a recent phenomenon, that has got nothing to do with the past. Modern statehood and statehood in the past (in for instance the Roman Empire) are two totally different phenomena, and the same tags or labels do not cover the different contents. We must not be misled by similarities of names, processes or events. Our nomenclature is an analytical tool we use in interpreting the past, not a direct access to the past as it was.

This relates to our approach to the past; it is a foreign country and not our own society in an out-dated and old version. There are a lot of concomitant processes in modern societies that are essential and important to us. This does in no way mean that they existed in the past, and therefore it is totally irrelevant to project these ideas or other contemporary ideological features back into a past where they did not exist. Doing so, is practising what must be described as biased research. Although we are condemned to our contemporary meanings and interpretations within our knowledge and research horizon, the fact that we are aware of our limitations and situation as researchers enable us to avoid such simple interpretations if we define the relationship between the present and the past. The aim is to study the past as it was, and not the past as we wish it was. Regarding 'Israel', Dever continues:

In the case of ancient Israel, we do have the label 'Israel' in both biblical and non-biblical texts from at least the ninth century BCE onwards (...) As for a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture assemblage, that emerged by the tenth century BCE, if not earlier (...) – but in every case the 'Israelite' culture can be distinguished rather easily from these [cultures and people of Palestine – Phoenician, Neo-Philistine, Ammonite, Moabite]. The only question remaining is how far back into Iron I we can project the origins of this culture (...) Here we do not need to elaborate the Iron II Israelite material culture, but only to point out the fact that 'Israelite' ethnic consciousness and ideology – a fundamental concept of society – is reflected faithfully in the rich archaeological remains we now have. While the biblical texts often comment on that society only obliquely, the archaeological data are increasingly able to shed light directly on it (Dever 1998:421).

Projecting the present into the past, or the Iron II society back to the Iron I or Bronze Age is a problem related to the *question about origins*. Henrietta Moore criticises the origin thinking. It is a twofold process: we search in the past for the beginning of specific things and at the same time make a number of originary moves that authorise particular accounts. It produces a continuous narrative where gaps are constantly created and filled. But the narratives are misleading, because although they appear to be concerned with the beginning, they are in reality defined by their endings. A past which is co-extensive with our present, and constructed in our own image, is a passive past. The past serves only our present needs, and is not treated as if it had any independent existence (Moore 1995:51-53). The problem is the search for a beginning of something we 'know' or 'think' exists/existed and we cannot search for something we have no conception of. Moreover, we normally study the things that we feel affect us and not those things that we perceive to be totally irrelevant (Alexandri 1995:58). This is reflected in Dever's narratives when he creates the national ethnic identity of the Israelis today *as opposed to*

other ethnic groups in the area. Stories about origin are inevitably linked with the production and consolidation of identity because the 'origin' stories are the creation of myths. Even more moderate Israeli archaeologists fall into the same trap.

As Mazar warns scholars, searching for an 'Israelite' identity has to be regarded with caution because various groups who settled in the country may have identified themselves as 'Israelis' and amalgamated with the emerging of monarchies. Therefore, defining a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture is a difficult venture. The point of departure in these issues 'should be sites which according to biblical tradition were Israelite during the period of the Judges, such as Shiloh, Mizpah, Dan, and Beer-sheba; settlements with similar material culture in the same region can be defined as Israelite' (Mazar 1993:353). In other words, there are some basic assumptions which never are challenged: (1) there is an Israelite ethnicity since such a group is documented in the Bible, (2) ethnicity has material correlates, and (3) sites and towns mentioned in the Bible are the ultimate reference point for any archaeological departure. Thus, Israeli archaeologists' excavations, documentations and mappings of these sites have obviously been a method for creating the past into a picture which fits the present.

Mazar argues further that the question of ethnicity becomes more complicated when dealing with regions rather than sites. Jerusalem and the four Gibeonite cities to its northwest are considered in the biblical tradition as non-Israelite Jebusite and Gibeonite enclaves in the period of the Judges (Iron Age I, ca. 1200-1000 BCE), and excavations at Jerusalem and Gibeon have yielded only few remains relating to the period. These remains do not differ from the remains from sites further north which are considered as 'Israelite', and nothing points to a distinct 'Jebusite' or 'Gibeonite' material culture that differs from other sites in the central hills (Mazar 1993:353).

In plain words, 'Israelite' and 'non-Israelite' so called ethnic groups are impossible to distinguish in the material culture. It is the

biblical narrative which guides both biblical and Israeli archaeologists to search for ethnic groups, and it is the Bible that has established the beliefs that these ethnic groups are possible to trace in the material culture. Despite the awareness of the 'biblical archaeology paradigm' of looking for a simplistic correlation between the archaeological data and biblical references which are now viewed as oversimplification and a disturbing and misleading approach (Herzog 2001:158), it continues although with less passionate strength and more hidden agendas. In the words of Herzog,

When I became more aware of the shortcomings of the direct archaeological-biblical analogy I looked at the evidence through different eyes...The previous views were undoubtedly biased by our 'biblical-archaeological' conception. I hope that the present discussion will contribute toward the liberation of the archaeology of Israel from that obstruction (Herzog 2001:172, 176).

Cultural Provinces Correspond With Major Ethnic Groups or People

The question was asked by William Dever in this way; 'how may the study of the texts and archaeological evidence such as artefacts combine to produce possibly a superior portrait of early Israel?' (Dever 1997a:21). He goes on to describe how archaeologists have accumulated new data illuminating the early history of Israel in a radically different way. These data principally come from two sources, firstly from a regional surface survey (!) of Israel and the West Bank conducted by Israeli archaeologists, and secondly from excavations of key sites (Dever 1997a:26pp):

One of the salient facts that emerge from these surveys is, in contrast to the continuity in pottery, other material cultural aspects

of these villages are innovative and distinctive – what we might call archaeologically ‘diagnostic traits’ or even possibly ‘ethnic markers’. These features would include the increasing frequency of rock-hewn plastered cisterns; underground stone-lined silos for grain storage; simple iron tools and implements; terraces for hillside farming; and, of course, the distinctive four-room or courtyard dwelling described above as the ubiquitous houseform sometimes called, too simplistically, the ‘Israelite house’ (Dever 1997a).

Why should I believe that for instance a cistern, a silo, simple iron tools and implements and hillside terrace farming are ethnic *markers*? Firstly, there are no arguments why these artefacts are supposed to represent ethnicity (I would for instance expect that everyone could need a cistern for water now and then). These are only assertions, and in that regard they have no scientific validity. Secondly, production and farming technologies are related to subsistence rather than ethnicity, and within an area several groups may have the same modes of production. Furthermore, the dates when these distribution patterns emerged are highly debated, but as I said previously, I will not discuss chronological questions. The clue is that any economic adaptation of conditions will make almost any hypothesis agree with the phenomena. This will please the imagination but it does not advance our knowledge. The result is not surprising when arbitrary features are regarded as ethnic markers taken out of both an archaeological and theoretical context. Implied in the reasoning is the same view of cultures that was presented in the 1920s, except that the archaeologists of the 20’s were more meticulous and stringent in their arguments:

There is no single feature that characterises the Iron I highland villages now known from surface surveys, but rather a combination of features, one that is constant and unique. I believe that this distinctive combination constitutes what we call an ‘archaeological assemblage’, usually typical of a socio-economic, cultural, or ethnic

group – in this case, one that I would not hesitate to label ‘proto-Israelite’ (Dever 1997a:30).

The argument is that an archaeological assemblage or culture is equal to an ethnic group. Furthermore, there are no distinctions between different types of group entities; socio-economic interaction groups, gender groups, ethnic group or what actually ‘culture’ is, in a multi-ethnic community. Moreover, it is not only ethnicity, but also ‘proto-ethnicity’, one type of ethnicity that will eventually ‘lead’ to another type of ethnicity; the one we want to find: the Israelites.

Clearly, many more of these supposed ‘proto-Israelite’ sites need to be excavated with modern stratigraphically and interdisciplinary methods, then properly and promptly published. Only in that way can we address the critical question of ‘ethnic identity’, that is by comparing their material culture, economy and social structure (and possible the ideology of their inhabitants) with contemporary sites that are presumably ‘Canaanite’ or ‘Philistine’ (Dever 1997a:37).

Again, continuity in material culture is *identical* to ethnic continuity. However, the arguments are fluid, because in an earlier book he wrote that although the cultural traits like early iron technology and implements, collar-rim store jars, developed terrace farming, stone silos and plastered cisterns, may be typical of supposed Israelite sites in the twelfth century B. C., they are not exclusively so, nor are they necessarily Israelite innovations as often thought. Some of these characteristics are found in non-Israelite areas such as Trans-Jordan and in earlier Canaanite contexts going back into the Late Bronze Age. Thus, it appears that the distinctive combination of those elements is not so much ‘Israelite’ as it is a diagnostic feature of the early Iron-Age cultures of Palestine generally (Dever 1990:80). Or, in other words, neither in the Bronze Age nor in the Iron Age were these diagnostic features connected to ethnicity. This is evidently in later periods as well.

In a discussion of how to approach the archaeological material, Ephraim Stern compares the material culture of Palestine in the Babylonian period (586-538 BC) with the succeeding Persian period (538-332 BC). When studying the Babylonian period one has to examine the entire groups or assemblages and not only isolated artefacts because no typical characteristics have been distinguished so far for the vessels of the Babylonian period. In the Persian period, however, the material culture has a distinctive character which can be readily identified as either local Israelite or Phoenician traditions (Stern 1982:229). The argument is truly opportunistic since it is the change from the Babylonian period to the Persian period that explains the methodology rather than acknowledging that ethnicity is not represented in a 1:1 correlation with the material culture regardless of our nomenclature of cultures or periods.

According to Arthur J. Ferch there are thirty-eight references to Heshbon in the Old Testament. Most of these references concern Israel's defeat of Sihon, an Amorite king of Heshbon during the conquest period and the settlement of the lower half of Transjordan (Ferch 1989:39). The interpretative practice concerning archaeological remains from this place and period is based upon the culture-historical paradigm. According to Ferch, although he reminds us that the assumption that biblical Heshbon is identical with Tell Hesban today is widely accepted though still unproved, the written sources

- so far only they tell us of Heshbon and Israel's conflict with Sihon the Amorite – provide the framework for interpreting the artifactual data, and not the reverse. This is not a cavalier response (or irresponsibility) to a problem; but rather its methodologically imperative if we are to take seriously recent criticism levelled against unjustified correlations between biblical and archaeological witnesses (Ferch 1989:55).

In this regard, it is not really the archaeological remains that reflect a major ethnic group or people. The groups are *a priori* determined as existing prior to the discussion because they are referred to in the Bible. Thus, a part of the 'duty' of the biblical archaeologists is to relate the finds to the picture that emerges from contemporary literary sources (Geraty 1989:ix). The consequence of this view is that 'many in the field of biblical archaeology have gone so far as to argue that this traditional history should be maintained as valid except where it has been proven to be historically impossible. Only in very recent years has archaeology begun to develop a history of Palestine independent of such theological prejudice' (Thompson 1999:4). The problem with these theological prejudices is obviously the circular reasoning.

The presence of an Amorite king north of the Arnon cannot be considered any longer as an historical impossibility. There is no coercive evidence that Sihon did not reign in Heshbon and that Heshbon was not taken by the Israelites as they were approaching the promised land (Vyhmeister 1989:6).

The ethnic groups existed, that is the point of departure, then the puzzle becomes connecting the excavated artefacts with the already known ethnic groups. The inferring or interpretative practice and logical reasoning are not about what could have been, but about what could not have been, and thereby an implicit assumption is made that the archaeological material correlates with the written sources:

Although the biblical record does not say it, it can be assumed that Heshbon and the surrounding country fell again into the hands of the Israelites. Otherwise Jephthah's statement (ca. 1100 B. C.) that 'Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns...three hundred years' (Judg 11:26) would not be meaningful (Vyhmeister 1989:7).

The scientific and inferring practice is rather clouded, and 'to use the biblical traditions as the primary source for the history of Israel's origin, is to establish a hopeless situation for the historian who wants to write critical, rather than anachronistic, history' (Thompson 1987:26). In my opinion, the situation is even worse for archaeologists. Thompson argues further that we cannot continue in this way because the method is self-consciously inconclusive and, objectively, inconsequential. But within biblical archaeology, there is an implicit notion that the Bible cannot be wrong. Even when events are not written in the Bible, the scriptures are used as the frame of reference. Paul and Dever (1973:viii) say that all Near Eastern archaeologists, when they work in the lands or in periods where the Bible is relevant, must employ it, if for no other reason than for the fact that it looms as our largest and most influential surviving work of literature from the ancient Near East. This relates to the main problem: where is the Bible relevant and in what regard? But more important and hardly discussed, *when is the Bible irrelevant and deceptive for interpretations?* The first task is to decide whether the Bible really is relevant for interpretations, and if the answer in some cases is yes, how are we then supposed to treat the written sources?

It must be stressed that there are no 'special' methods or aims for biblical archaeology. It works with the same materials and techniques, it presupposes the same standard of objectivity, and it strives for the same total reconstruction of the past that characterises all archaeology (Paul & Dever 1973:ix).

This seems fair enough, but Paul and Dever continue thus: 'biblical archaeology simply confines itself – not arbitrarily but deliberately – to those areas which are of direct relevance for the Bible'. This is not a part of 'normal' archaeology, and it reflects their view of the Bible: it is Holy. Or in other words, the Bible is useful and relevant for interpretations no matter what. They state explicitly that archaeology as a discipline is inferior to biblical scholarship. Archaeology has its

function when it can illuminate the Bible. The reason is that these areas best suit the biblical archaeologist's scholarly interest and because he recognises the limits of his own archaeological competence. It is actually not a matter of archaeological competence, but a biblical scholarly competence, which is a necessity for their interpretations.

The archaeological remains are always interpreted within the holy framework as presented by the Bible. This is clearly shown when they state that 'the biblical archaeologist defends his own particular enterprise by stressing that one of many values of archaeology, and the one he happens to be interested in, is its usefulness in illustrating the Bible' (Paul & Dever 1973:ix). Biblical archaeologists use archaeology to illustrate the Bible, or more correctly, to legitimise the ethnic groups being described. This agenda has had serious consequences for the development of biblical studies, as Thomas L. Thompson argues:

The lack of reliable historical context for the Bible has been a great hindrance to modern biblical studies. The lack of sound historical methods, however, has condemned to failure the search for the Bible's place in history from the very start (Thompson 1999:4).

The researcher's personal faith has guided the scientific approach. An implicit practice or hidden agenda in biblical archaeology is that it never produces 'evidence' or interpretations contradicting the faith of religious devotees, even if some extremists might have become offended, the interpretations are 'safe' for the main-stream of Christians in America. Paul and Dever (1973) stress that the relationship between archaeology and the Bible often has been misunderstood. The most dangerous error is to suppose the task of archaeology of 'proving the Bible', and they give an example of the problem:

It might be supposed that archaeology could 'prove' the Israelite conquest of Canaan about 1200 B.C.E. We could excavate destruction levels at various sites mentioned in the Bible, and with the modern means at our disposal could easily show whether they date to the period in question. If we found evidence of a new occupation and material culture above the ash levels, and especially if we found Hebrew inscriptions in the new building levels, we would probably be safe in concluding that the destruction was indeed due to the Israelites. Would this not prove the biblical account of Joshua's conquest? Hardly, for the fundamental point of the biblical writer's claim is not that Israel took the Land, but that God gave the Land to Israel. That claim is simply not open to archaeological investigation! We may be able to show the likelihood of certain events described in the Bible happening in such a way as to make the claim possible. But acceptance of the claim itself is a matter of faith, since it cannot be proved – nor for that matter be disproved – by archaeology (Paul & Dever 1973:x).

This clearly shows the hidden agenda in biblical archaeology and how it can be used in a nationalistic way. This is not a scientific point of departure, but a religious one. Rather than searching for answers, biblical archaeologists use a religious argumentation. The 'because' arguments are explicit dogmas or appeals to authority. Moreover, the ethnic groups are perceived as closed units, created and given once and for all. Furthermore, this illuminates the way the biblical archaeologists fail to take their responsibility for their research, how they imagine themselves to be 'pure' and 'innocent' researchers. They show the likelihood of certain events described in the Bible might have happened based on archaeological remains. Then they have done their job on the nationalistic agenda. As they say, neither the acceptance nor the disapproval of the claims belongs to archaeology. They produce knowledge or they give knowledge to one part in the contemporary discourse, knowledge which is beyond any demarcation criteria in a scientific practice. The presented

knowledge is supposed to be innocent, but as Dever says, the claim itself is a matter of faith. When they produce knowledge which supports the faith, or which they know will be used to support the faith, and thereafter is used in unscientific ways while criticism of that knowledge is not accepted, biblical archaeologists produce 'holy truths'.

From a political point of view, or from the vantage point of a 'believer', the data presented are taken as evidence of the Bible; thus supporting the scriptures. And in the mean time, 'in an attempt to throw more light on the process of the Israelite conquest of Canaan and the beginning of their settlement in the land, scholars have sought corroborative information from directly or indirectly relevant archaeological discoveries' (Paul & Dever 1973:10). It is a vicious circle because the knowledge produced is within the framework of what the faith can accept, and therefore, the faith supports the production of such knowledge. On the other hand, the faith will not accept knowledge production that contradicts the faith. This is biased research based on the researcher's religious world-view. Even though conservative archaeologists demand that we should remain objective in our work, the radical critique of archaeology tells us that the discipline does not provide us with any kind of refuge from social conflicts (Tierney 1996:20).

An irresponsible archaeology can no longer be taken seriously, and if archaeologists themselves cannot distinguish good archaeology from bad, I can hardly see any reason why archaeology should exist as a scientific discipline. Nationalism has been, and some places still is, the source of the worst tragedies in the past two centuries of European history. Archaeology should not be used as an ideological weapon in such wars.

Cultural Continuity Indicates Ethnic Continuity

The basis for arguments of ethnic continuity is that pottery is always one of our most sensitive media for perceiving cultural continuity or change (Dever 1997a:28). According to Dever, 'to put it in a nutshell, we have at least as much warrant for using the ethnic term "Israelite" in the early twelfth century BCE for archaeological assemblages as we do for using the terms "Egyptians", "Canaanite" or "Palestine" (Dever 1997a:43).' Based on the pottery remains it is therefore possible to identify ethnic identity because it is written in the Bible.

The most significant aspect of the pottery, however, which biblical scholars have been slow to appreciate, is its striking continuity with the local, Late Bronze Age ceramic repertoire. The pottery displays no 'foreign' elements, no Egyptian reminiscences, and it is certainly not anything that one could connect with a 'nomadic lifestyle' (...) This is standard, domestic Canaanite-style pottery, long at home everywhere in western Palestine. The ceramic arguments alone would clinch the question of indigenous origins for the settlers of the new highland villages; they came from elsewhere in Canaan (Dever 1997a:29-30, author's emphases).

This leads me to the point that, as archaeologists we should be very careful in assigning ethnic labels to archaeological assemblages. When this is done on the basis of pottery alone, it becomes worse. Moreover, the concept of 'culture' has been revised, there is no 'pure', authentic or real culture:

We can no longer think of societies as isolated and self-maintaining systems. Nor can we imagine cultures as integrated totalities in which each part contributes to the maintenance of an organised, autonomous, and enduring whole. There are only cultural sets of practices and ideas, put into play by determinate human actors

under determinate circumstances. In the course of action these cultural sets are forever assembled, dismantled, and reassembled (Wolf 1982:390-391).

‘Cultures’ are not static and once and for all given with a specific content. They are fluid structures and entities. But even more problematic is the notion that these fluid units and structures are possible to trace directly in the archaeological material. Cultural continuity, whatever that is, is supposed to indicate ethnic continuity.

The rationale, then, for employing the more tentative term ‘proto-Israelite’ for the pre-monarchical period is precisely that here we are on the horizon where the later biblical Israel is in the process of formation, still nascent. But even with this precaution, how do we know that the ‘Israel’ of the Iron I period really is the precursor of the full-fledged later Israel, that is, of the Iron II period, so that we are justified in using the term ‘proto-Israel’ as early as the thirteenth-twelfth century BCE? The argument is really a simple one, and it rests on the demonstrable continuity of material culture throughout the entire Iron I-II period. If the basic material culture that defines a people exhibits a tradition of continuous, non-broken development, then it is reasonable to argue that the core population remains the same (Dever 1997a:44).

I briefly discussed some of the problems with ‘origins’ and the term ‘proto-Israelite’ earlier. By its very nature this is a contradiction in terms. Such contradictions are quite common in archaeology. ‘Pre-Pottery Neolithic’ is an example where an earlier period is defined on what happens in a later period. But when ethnicity is used the same way, it is archaeologically irresponsible. This use creates fictive myths and a legitimacy of territory for the Israelites that have no roots in reality; the narratives present a past that strengthens this legitimacy. One may ask whether it is the myths that create the

research or if it is the other way around. The problem is that the Bible sets the agenda for archaeological research, but

However much archaeologists might need a story world to flesh out the bones of their history, or however much they might wish that the Bible's nations were scattered among potsherds, the wish for the Bible to be history has only confused the discussion about how the Bible relates to the past. The Bible's world does not belong to the discipline of archaeologists (Thompson 1999:34).

The conference 'Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence' was held at Brown University in 1992, and the conference papers were published in a book with the same title in 1997. Why is Exodus a question for scientific and archaeological research? The reason is the origin of early Israel (Frerichs 1997:12). This is nationalistic research because if it could be confirmed, then it would strengthen Israel as a nation state. The Exodus is fundamental in the biblical tradition as one of the foundations of Israelite faith, referred to in retrospect throughout the Bible more often than any other event of Israel's past. But the problem is whether the story is merely a product of later contemplation, mainly of a theological nature, or an event of any historic credence (Malamat 1997:15). A naïve view of cultures is reflected in the debate. In the debate on interaction between members of groups engaged in commerce with the Egyptians, a static view of culture is presented, equal to the first basic premise of Kossinna; cultures are inevitably a reflection of ethnicity:

The members of such communities, although obliged to meet with the Egyptians in the marketplace, retained their individuality as a group. Archaeologically, the record would vary considerably, depending on the contact between the colony and its homeland (not to mention such unmeasurables as predilection, social status, relations with authorities, etc.). But it might be ill advised, solely on the basis of artifacts or percentages, for example, to speak of varying

degrees of acclimation unless we have specific textual evidence (Redford 1997:58).

One group of people is represented by one type of material remains. Another group, other remains. As a consequence of this thinking and this one-to-one interpretative practice, it should, according to Redford, be possible in theory at least, to calculate the varying degrees of acclimation by percentages. Social interaction = represented in the artefacts; a 'pure' assemblage of artefacts represent one ethnic group whereas mixed assemblages represent interaction. Fortunately, Redford admits that this is difficult to do based solely on material evidence, but still, the method is accepted if there can be found texts supporting the notion. If such texts or extra-biblical sources had existed, the archaeological remains and ethnicity would still have been a one-to-one relation.

The Distribution of Artefact Types That Were Characteristic of Special Tribal Groups Reflect Where These Groups Lived at Different Periods (Settlement Archaeology)

Kossinna regarded only Germans as representative of national prehistory, and his first question in archaeological research was therefore 'where are we dealing with Germans, where with non-Germans?' It was for this purpose he had developed the settlement-archaeological method, where 'sharply defined archaeological provinces coincide with certain peoples or tribes of peoples throughout the ages' (Wiwjorra 1996:174). Most of the previously mentioned arguments from biblical archaeologists support this interpretative practice. However, some more examples might be added.

The 'facts on the ground' from the point of view of settlement archaeology, is what William Dever says is one of the most striking stories in the one-hundred-year history of biblical archaeology – the

recovery of what he calls 'proto-Israel' (Dever 1997a:27-28). The most prominent features of the sites where the 'proto-Israelites' supposedly lived are the 'four-room' or courtyard houses. These structures of various types are related to the Bible and thus he has shed light on the actual remains of 'earliest Israel'. The belief in settlement archaeology is used as a method for rejecting the Egyptian conquest model. Archaeological finds at Ai and Jericho have not corroborated the biblical tradition, but various attempts have been made to interpret the archaeological evidence found at Ai and Jericho in the light of the biblical account of the Israelites' conquest of these two royal cities (Paul & Dever 1973:13). The problem is to explain the discrepancy between the finds and the biblical account. However, this problem will not be solved until these biblical archaeologists realise the differences between archaeological cultures, ethnicity and people.

Small-scale terracing was evidently a major feature of sedentary agriculture in the highlands of Palestine from protohistoric and as late as the period of the Israelite monarchy. Widespread terracing, however, existed only in the highlands from the divided monarchy or from the eighth century BCE, and not before. This has enormous consequence for the reconstructions of the character and settlement patterns in this region during Iron Age I and II (Gibson 2001:113).

Finkelstein argues that the Israelite settlers were sedentary pastoralists who first moved into the northern part of the highlands from east to west, and then by cleaning dense forest they adapted the difficult terrain and practiced orchard agriculture. He does not believe that the Israelites invented the terraces or that terraces facilitated the Iron Age I settlement process. On the other hand, he argues that terraces must have been built as early as the Middle Bronze age period, if not earlier, and that Israeli settlements initially took place in those sectors where cultivation was possible without building terraces (Finkelstein, I. 1988a:21, 202).

In the biblical archaeology tradition it is believed that the 'Israelite house' appears first as homogeneous structure in the Early

Iron Age (12th – 11th centuries B.C.E.), and in the 10th century the 'Israelite house' became crystallised. However, the origin of the 'Israelite house' is uncertain. It is still unclear whether it is of Phoenician origin, of Late Canaanite tradition brought by the Sea People, or an independent Israelite invention (Paul & Dever 1973:45). Cultural continuity reflects ethnic continuity, and as I interpret and understand Dever, one of the aims of biblical archaeology in the future is settlement archaeology.

The main problem in the biblical archaeological discourse is the naïve view of what archaeological remains indicate. There are no easy ways of penetrating directly to the 'original' meaning of the past. We cannot just designate qualities and identities uncritically to the material culture. Archaeology as a discipline is concerned with material cultures. Objects are the point of departure regarding what data are, but objects in themselves are not enough. A thing has 'characteristics' or 'properties' which are stable, even if they do not entirely serve to define it, and we propose to approach the phenomenon of reality by studying perceptual constants.

Fredrik Barth (1993:170) emphasises that we construct our models in accordance with sets of assertions:

- Meaning is something a person confers on an object or an event, not something enshrined in that object or event – that is, it arises in the act of interpretation.
- Culture is distributed, and major aspects of its structure inhere precisely in its patterns of distribution in a population.
- Actors are always and essentially positioned, and the interpretations they make will reflect this positioning and the knowledge they command.
- The outcomes of interaction are usually at variance with the intentions of the individual participants, and so we cannot judge people's interpretations and intents directly from the observable consequences of their acts.

This can be analysed as the difference between 'form' and 'content'. The relation between form and content is not clearly defined. The form is what is left for the archaeologists, or the physical properties of the excavated objects. The aim is to analyse the content. Typology, chronology and extreme empirical focus on objects in archaeology are often considered as more 'safe' and objective than interpretations of meaning, which may be regarded as subjective or speculative. But form cannot exist without content and vice versa. There is a fundamental difference between form and content. 'Form' is stable, static, quantitative and manifest in materiality whereas 'content' is changing, dynamic, qualitative and immaterial (meaning).

All classification is artificial in the sense that the scientist selects the criteria he thinks are significant for the classification, and the central problem in archaeology is to understand the relationship between the artefacts and the cultural processes which produced them (Haaland 1977:1). Ian Hodder illuminates the problem this way: 'All pots in an area are similar in that they are made of clay, but different in that the detailed marks of decoration vary slightly or in that the distribution of temper particles are not identical. How do we pick out the relevant similarities and differences, and what is the relevant scale for analysis' (Hodder 1994:138). Classification and taxonomies are made by the archaeologists, not by prehistoric man. An analysis of these entities created by archaeologists can only be an analysis of how the archaeologists have worked. The stylistic variation in the archaeological material is decided by archaeologists to be of significance, and therefore there are no value-free concepts or terminology (Conkey & Hastorf 1990). How can we decide the relevant dimensions of variation for the analysis?

The form and the content are mutually interdependent upon each other, but there is an asymmetry in this relation. The form puts restrictions on possible interpretations of content. This relation is often perceived as superior to the opposite situation, namely that the content or meaning puts restrictions on the perception of form. The content can be more than the form. A symbol will have meaning and

content that exceeds the form it is dependent upon. But it is normally the form that puts restriction and limitations to cultural elaboration and not vice versa because it is the form we find. This might equal what Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley call 'resistance' between material culture in the transformation to archaeological text (Shanks & Tilley 1989:5).

But even though the material culture may in some cases allow several interpretations, the archaeological record has limits and then it might be the theoretical frameworks that are dead ends which have been buried. William Dever wants to excavate many more of the supposed 'proto-Israelite' sites. Regarding this settlement tradition within biblical archaeology, Niels Peter Lemche, however, has a very different approach to the problem. Archaeology and the text cannot be subsumed under a single formula:

Thus it was correct to dismiss the importance of the Settlement traditions in the OT and to see them instead as expressions of a very late view of the nation's origin (...) The consequence of this fact ought to be taken seriously. It is no longer legitimate to attempt to 'save the appearances' of certain portions of the Settlement narratives. Rather, it is the very idea Settlement, as it appears in the OT, which must be done away with, for historical reasons (Lemche 1985:391).

There is a common agreement nowadays that 'revolutions' do not occur in human sciences, even the word 'paradigm' is not legitimate because it is too closely connected to 'scientific revolutions', thus 'traditions', 'schools' or 'research horizons' are more acceptable terms, but they indicate more or less the same thing, although in a lighter version. It was Thomas Kuhn (1970) with *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* who introduced what might be called the 'sociology of scientific knowledge'. What Kuhn focused on, was that logic, the acceptance of scientific 'truths' or the falsification of

theories are not separate from society. Or, a 'paradigm' is the glasses through which the world is seen, or what is called 'perception'.

Men whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. The questions possible to ask and answer are to some degree regulated. This commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are prerequisites for normal science, i. e. for the genesis and continuation of a particular research tradition (Kuhn 1970:11). In learning a paradigm the scientists acquire theories, methods, and standards together, usually in a mixture. Therefore, when paradigms change, there are usually significant shifts in the criteria determining the legitimacy both of problems and of proposed solutions or in the ability to explain the evidence at hand (Kuhn 1970:108).

There cannot be any scientific revolutions within biblical archaeology – just the death of the discipline. One cannot scientifically incorporate the Bible as one wish into the archaeological discourse because of a personal faith.

[...] what can archaeology do for biblical studies? [...] For a non-believer this development is not particularly troublesome. But for those who claim the Jewish or Christian faith as their own, the consensus now developing in archaeology as well as in critical literary studies raises many acute questions concerning the use of the Bible as a source of religious truths. The believer seems to be caught...[quoting Willis] 'between the rock of the biblical claim and the hard place of the archaeological contradiction' (Laughlin 2000:14-15).

One approach to archaeology, which implies demarcation criteria, can be as follows: Firstly, knowledge represents at least parts of the sphere of the best available knowledge at the moment. It is possible 'to seek a "best explanation" within that frame of reference, meaning by that not the Truth, but an explanation that is both empirically adequate (is not contradicted by data as they stand) and that most

economically accounts for the widest range of apparently disparate empirical observations (...) A wide range of supporting observations protects against relying too much on a single, theory-laden interpretation' (Anthony 1995:87). Moreover, the reason why an interpretation is accepted as good archaeology at the moment is that the interpretation is a part of the contemporary research horizon or discourse. Implicitly, this social (or scientific) practice is connected to some demarcation criteria because some arguments are not socially (or scientifically) acceptable. This does not imply that 'old thoughts' cannot have any relevance. On the contrary, if 'old thoughts' still prevail, they are either still accepted as relevant for the contemporary discourse (they are parts of the sphere of the best available knowledge at the moment) or the knowledge belongs to the history of archaeological thought where it still may serve different purposes and illuminate various problems, but then in another context.

Secondly, the knowledge is accepted in the contemporary society. This is a crucial point. The history of archaeological thought may be used as demarcation criteria if ideas or the consequences of ideas cannot be accepted in the present. This problem is not related to whether knowledge really is true or not, but to the relevance of the meaning when it is incorporated in the production and structuring of contemporary societies. In a human science, changes in ethics and moral attitudes towards the current paradigm or tradition may change that paradigm, and then also the interpretation of data, or even what 'data' are. Thus, consequences of certain previously scientific arguments can be falsified as non-scientific based on moral judgements. The history has shown that certain types of archaeological interpretations may have social consequences and lead to unwanted human sufferings.

Thirdly, as a social practice in a society, demarcation in archaeology actually works the opposite way to demarcation in for instance natural sciences. The aim is not to have only one explanation, but many. The past is plural and ambiguous, not

singular and authoritative. The singular past is unscientific by its very nature. A singular presentation of the past does not do justice to the 'real' past. If only one version is accepted, it is so not because it represents the best hypothesis, but because certain mechanisms of power determine the answer. Thus, a demarcation of power and misuse of archaeology will be to strive towards the plural past. This does not at all mean that anything goes, but it is a recognition of the fact that the past is as plural as the present, and only one explanation cannot cover the plurality. Therefore, the singular past is a seduction and a false past, probably guided by hidden agendas and various biases. Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues that our duty is to present the past as plural, difficult and ambiguous (Eriksen 1996a:75-78), and thus, in archaeology as a social practice, the plural past is a social demarcation which strives to prevent the misuse of knowledge in societies.

Finally, acceptance of interpretations is both a national and an international task. This is one of the ways science can be responsible, 'democratic' and moral. In this regard, epistemologically speaking, nationalistic interpretations in favour of a certain people's or one ethnic group's demand for territory are less scientific than those interpretations favouring multi-ethnic demands. Nobody has more legacies to interpret their past than others. This is related to the research history, the current debate of ethnicity and an acceptance of human rights. These variables are, among several others, determining the legitimacy of explanations in the contemporary 'paradigm', tradition, or just simply our being-in-the-world. Biblical archaeology has failed in all of these aspects.

It is Possible to Trace Historically Known Tribal Groups Backwards in Time Archaeologically

There are some questions and problems archaeologists face in their social practice:

- The question ‘on what does our knowledge rest?’ is closely connected to ‘what do we want to reconstruct?’ or more correctly; ‘what are we able and capable of constructing?’ Our presuppositions and knowledge put restrictions on what it is possible to reconstruct. We live in a different world, and we have probably no way of understanding them.
- In a scientific discourse we arrange our propositions and arguments in *a* logical order. This is one of the fundamental differences between natural sciences and human sciences: Within the natural worldview, there is only one accepted or preferred logical order. In the human sciences, the Western logical order is often preferred by researchers because they are in positions of power where they decide the scientific logic implicitly through their academic discourse.
- As human beings we have different logical orders and different earliest propositions in the hierarchies, in other words, we have different entries into the being-in-the-world. These horizons are fundamental for the question asked and for the acceptance of arguments as scientific in an academic discourse. These various horizons and different logics are seldom questioned in the debate.

The problem is the believer, or more precisely, the interwoven practice of religion and research. Regarding the Bible, William Dever states that the holy book is

not ‘history’, but ‘His’ story – the dramatic account of God’s miraculous dealings with a particular people designated to become his chosen. The Bible is almost exclusively a sacred history, or ‘salvation-history’, written as it was (...) from a divine perspective, since its authors claim to be inspired by God. Thus the Bible is scarcely interested in humans, that is, historical explanations. It

intends to tell us not so much how or when ancient Israel originated, but why (Dever 1997a:20).

In my opinion, when you tell *why*, that is a historical explanation as long as it describes a process. Nevertheless, from this point of view, the archaeologists are redundant regarding interpretations of why something happened, but we are useful for excavating material objects which the biblical scholar can correlate (the *how* and *when* questions) with the already given explanations of the processes (the *why* answers given by God). Dever's approach to the Bible, or at least what he states, is that archaeology can comment only on historical problems, not on theological ones, and indeed only on certain kinds of historical problems (Dever 1990:3). The biblical writers were not concerned with the question 'What really happened?' but with the question 'What does it really mean?' For them and for the original readers the Bible was 'His story', an interpretation of certain happenings as seen through the eyes of the faithful (Dever 1990:7). The Bible describes the public life and the 'world of spirit'; archaeology fills in knowledge of everyday life and culture, and both sources are necessary if we are to understand ancient Israel in its full variety and vitality (Dever 1990:7). Dever writes regarding archaeology and the emergence of Early Israel:

In theory, pinpointing the origins of ancient Israel ought to be straightforward: one could simply seek information from the Hebrew Bible (or Christian Old Testament), since this purports to be the true history of Israel from its beginnings. The people of Israel originated as a band of slaves who miraculously escaped from Egypt. Then they wandered across the Sinai desert, where under Moses' leadership they met their god-to-be, Yahweh, and received his law. And finally, under Joshua, they conquered the land of Canaan, dispossessing its habitants and settling there themselves according to God's promise. In practice, however, the quest for Israel's origins is not that simple, because the Hebrew Bible is not a 'history book' in

a modern sense, and to its credit it never claims to be (Dever 1997a:20).

Theoretically speaking, this equals the way Kossinna and his companions interpreted prehistory by the use of written sources. It is important to emphasise that Dever has no arguments or objections *against* this way of interpreting if the written sources are suitable for such inferences. Or in other words, if profane texts were found that identified the same events, those scriptures would, without questions, have been used in tracing ethnic identity back in time. The historical method is unquestionable, and as Dever says himself, 'given what we have seen of the limitations of the Bible as an adequate source for history-writing, it seems obvious that an external, less tendentious source of information would be desirable' (Dever 1997a:21). But they did not find another such written or extra-biblical source, and of course, the source became archaeology, 'which has brought to light a mass of factual data about the long-lost biblical world' (Dever 1997a:21).

Within biblical and Israeli nationalist archaeology it is not only possible to trace historically known tribal groups backwards in time archaeologically, but also trace persons which most likely are mythological figures. When the biblical narrative is the guideline any study of persons and places in the Holy land are possible to conduct. Indeed, the absence of archaeological material is no hindrance for constructions the origin of Israel. According to the Bible, Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba, and the third king of Israel. Solomon is renowned for his wisdom wealth and building projects. The most significant of his building projects was the Temple constructed over a seven years period. The splendour of the Temple is described in 1 Kings, chapter 6; 7:15 ff. The palace complex was even larger and took thirteen years to construct (1 Kgs 7:1-2), and Solomon built in addition a palace for the Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kgs 7:8) and shrines for other foreign wives (Wigoder 1986:948). He had allegedly 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kgs 11:49). The

Babylonian army, according to tradition, destroyed the temple in 586 BC. The earliest extra-biblical reference to the Temple is an early 6th century BC ostrakon from Arad inscribed with a letter addressed to Eliashib and mentioning 'the House of God' (Wigoder 1986:975). *'As was the case with the other Israelite temples, nothing remains of the Solomonic Temple. Nonetheless, there is sufficient biblical evidence for a reasonable clear reconstruction of the details of the Temple'* (Wigoder 1986:976). It does not matter if there are no archaeological evidences; the biblical narrative guarantees the truth of the interpretation and therefore King Solomon has his thrown in Israeli and Biblical history.

Normally, archaeological sites are correlated to the biblical text. This is but one example. From 1 Kings 12.26-9 we learn that a high place existed at Dan in the time of the Monarchy. For political reasons Jeroboam sets a golden calf at Dan in the second half of the tenth century BCE, and he also makes a house or shrine of high places and appoints priests who are not sons of Levi. Nothing more is available from the scriptures concerning the cult of Dan. The identification of biblical Dan with Tel Dan at the source of the river Jordan, formerly Tel el Quadi, was confirmed by a bilingual inscription 'To the God who is in Dan' dated to the Hellenistic period. The inscription was found at the northern end of the site where an elaborate complex of Iron Age structures was found. Among these structures was a raised platform, a room with an altar, a square room with steps and an altar, and many objects were associated with cult. These archaeological discoveries supplemented the meagre information in 1 Kings 12 pointing to the existence of a major cult centre at Dan during the monarchy in the tenth-eighth centuries BCE. Thus, 'the centrality of the cult at the high place of Dan in the eighth century BCE may have led the prophet Amos – who prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II – to castigate the people for saying "Thy God, O Dan, liveth" (Amos 8.14)' (Biran 2001:148-149).

The problems are many, but it is enough to only challenge those 500-800 years in between the Hellenistic scripture and the monuments. Society changes during half a millennia and later

traditions always inscribe their contemporary society into an existing environment of traditions and myths. The past is continuously reused – also in later periods and historical times. This does not, however, guarantee the factuality of past events as understood and interpreted in a later society. It is important to separate myths from events, and most often myths are more important in a culture than events. This is a quest for scientific investigations. The ‘foundation stone’ in the Dome of the Rock on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem is traditionally seen as the place where Abraham was ordered to sacrifice his son Isaac. Muslim and Jewish holy places and myths are inseparable. This does not mean that the event actually took place here, but it stresses that cultures and religions are never ‘pure’ units but continuously renegotiated and consist of numerous traditions and myths which are not exclusive.

Turning to the origin of Israel, there are in general three models or hypotheses which have tried to give accounts of how Israel emerged in Canaan. The oldest is the conquest model, based directly on the story of Joshua where the twelve-tribe Israelite league invaded from Transjordan after victories both there and in Jericho. There is a political opposition in the debate. William Dever rejects the hypothesis that the early Israelites were nomads immigrating en masse from Transjordan as a

secular fundamentalism or reading the Bible in a way that is perhaps innocent of theological biases but still naïve. Amongst a few Israelis (not many), this may simply be dismissed as ‘nostalgia for a biblical past that never was’ (Dever 1997a:38).

In this case Dever is not verifying anything with the method, but he is falsifying. The methodological principal is the same. By identifying historically known tribal groups (the Israelites) with a particular archaeological material culture in the early historical period, he uses this method to say that it was not *them*, or in other

words, he wants to trace them backwards in time by this method, but he cannot use the data as they stand now.

Fortunately, there are critical archaeologists up-dated in the scientific debate in the Middle East and its political implications. David Ilan, for instance, in the *Dawn of Internationalism – the Middle Bronze Age* discusses the polemics of nomenclature and chronology. He uses the term 'Canaan' rather than the sensitive and more political terms such as 'Palestine', 'Israel' and 'The Holy Land' because the latter terms are stigmatised (Ilan 1998:298). Israel Finkelstein argues regarding 'pots and people' that there are limitations in the use of material remains as evidence in historical research. Pottery and architecture may shed some light on questions of for instance ethnicity and different ethnic groups, but they may be equally misleading (Finkelstein, I. 1998b:352), an aspect Dever seems to disregard.

But in general, there is a tendency towards discourse for its own sake, where the arguments are not really arguments, but rather narrow minded contemporary labels and problems attached to a past where they do not belong. What purposes do such discussions serve? They create invisible links between the past and the legitimacy of land occupation in the present; the nation-state of today has existed from time immemorial, we in the present are equal to them in the past, 'our' ethnicity is theirs and vice-versa, and therefore, we are their successors and have legitimacy on 'our side'. The Israelites had a nation-state in the Iron Age, the other surrounding groups did not. The myth is created and legitimised by archaeologists themselves as serious scientists.

Racist and Chauvinist Interpretation in Favour of Nationalistic Aims and Needs

Racism usually involves the idea that one's own race or ethnic group is superior and has the right to rule others. Chauvinism is an

excessive devotion to any cause, especially zealous and belligerent patriotism or blind enthusiasm. The question in this regard is how biblical archaeologists deal with 'The Chosen People and the Holy Land legitimised by God and the Bible.' The way the Bible is used as an interpretative framework renders possible chauvinistic research in several ways: Firstly, the archaeological material is forced into an interpretative framework in which it does not necessarily belong. Secondly, this research creates an ethnic continuity from the past to the present. Finally, archaeologists that don't work with the Bible as their primary or holy reference point for interpretations are not allowed to criticise certain topics and areas of research.

Since we are here dealing with religion (and *our* Western culture), we are supposed to accept everything because it is a pagan and desecrating practice to challenge the holiness of God. But what I am doing is the opposite, namely questioning how the earthly laymen are dealing with the Supreme Power. In this case archaeology is a means for biblical archaeologists to interpret the Bible. It has, however, never been legitimate to criticise those who control the Bible and have religious power on behalf of God. In the 'new' biblical archaeology of the 1990s, the focal point is that it is not possible to prove the truth of the Bible. This distance and 'critical approach' from the 'old' biblical archaeological tradition is supposed to legitimise biblical archaeology in the scientific debate (Bartlett 1997:11). But what actually is the difference?

The picture given by the archaeologist is not necessarily the same picture as that given by the biblical historian; the two are interested in different things. Neither archaeology nor biblical criticism, in fact, can really be apologists for the biblical faith, though they may provide evidence of the material context in which we believe God acted or the incarnation took place. We may not equate truth with factuality, nor history with theology, though we may find physical remains of places where we believe our ancestors believed God was present, and we preserve writings which contain our Hebrew or

Christian ancestors' interpretation of the work of God (Bartlett 1997:11-12).

The only difference between the 'old' and the 'new' biblical archaeology is that the devotees have become more faithful to their truth. They do not need to prove their beliefs anymore. Now archaeology can serve the purpose of their 'ancestors'; it is not only the ethnic link between present and past society in Israel that is created. The second aspect is the researcher's personal religious motivation for creating a religious link between themselves and their 'religious forefathers'. This religious and personal legitimacy may seem harmless in the beginning, but a myth is created about fictive ancestors, and thus about the rights for Christians and Israelis to the Holy Land instead of for other religious groups. It might be well to remember what President Nicolae Ceausescu said in Romania before the revolution;

with every excavation, the archaeologists are bringing to light more evidence, proving that it is here, in this land, and not elsewhere, that the bones of our forefathers of our forefathers' forefathers are to be found (op. cit. Kaiser 1995:115).

Why does it sound worse when a dictator says this than when biblical archaeologists propose the same arguments about ancestors and forefathers? The intervention of the state is created by Monumental Memories (Brown 1998:79), and divine powers are efficient in the legitimising of the state. The researchers' own religious background and prejudices are clearly visible. Dever says that

- all this seemed miraculous. It must have been God's doing all along. Such a conclusion may be somewhat skewed historically; it may seem naïve theologically; and it certainly cannot be confirmed archaeologically. But the Bible's 'explanation' of Israel may be in

some ways as good as our own, for much about ancient Israel still remains a mystery, if not a miracle (Dever 1997a:47).

With such a scientific approach the debate has to be blurred and clouded, because it is explicitly written that miraculous explanations are as good as any other. This opposes every kind of normal scientific practice.

Wendy Doniger discusses the status of religious arguments in 'The Authority of the Parental Metaphor' (Doniger 1993:11). She classifies the religious arguments in two groups: (1) 'Because' arguments which are explicit dogmas or appeals to authority. These arguments are like non-arguments that parents use when their child asks 'why' questions that they cannot or will not answer, but their argument should nevertheless be respected. (2) 'This is why' arguments which are implicit rationalisations or appeals to persuasion. These arguments are not about logic ('why') but about effect and habit based on an experiential basis to the parental argument: 'You had to have been there' equals 'I have been there, and you haven't, and so I invoke the authority of my past (which I equate with your future) to tell you not to do this.'

Authoritative practices are felt in the gut rather than the mind, and they hang on long after the ideas have been modified (Doniger 1993:9). The biblical archaeological practice and knowledge production is based on thoughts at least fifty years old. The knowledge prevails by the authoritative practice as a consequence of the integration of conservative theology and archaeology. Similarly, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad argues about the current Arab paradigms for an Islamic future, that 'the question is no more "whether to embrace Islam?" but "when?" and "how?" (Haddad 1993:147).' Within biblical archaeology the questions have been 'when and how did Israel originate?' and the answers have for decades been found in the Bible, and the Christian culture has embraced the debate. This is one of the major problems and biases within biblical archaeology; the asymmetry in the research both regarding the questions possible

to ask and the answers possible to accept. The religion determines the research.

Thus, it is the Bible as a holy book that supplies the premises, and therefore it has absolute superiority. Other scientific explanations are rejected or falsified because they challenge the Bible and the Truth. This statement might be perceived as blasphemous, but it is not. What I simply say is that we have to separate religious and scientific explanations into two different spheres.

The book *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*¹ is by its very title chauvinistic because there are implicit ethnic notions of Israel and the chosen people. Nevertheless, some of the articles are good whereas others are horrible. In a totally different context, Lotte Hedeager (1997) wrote a book called *Shadows of Another Reality*. The book is about Old Norse myths. Her point is that the literary sources reflect older myths and mental histories that had a continuity in later periods. People in contemporary societies have incorporated these stories in other contexts in their oral myths and poetry as ideologically relevant, but they do not know the original meaning and the contexts in which these ideas originated. This book is very useful because of the way in which 'Germanic' has been used in propaganda in recent decades. Hedeager shows that the idyllic and glorious Germanic past the extremists and fascists claim they are attached to, has never existed (Herschend 1998:77).

I focus on these aspects because of Patricia Smith's article 'People of the Holy Land from Prehistory to the Recent Past' in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*. I will treat Patricia Smith within the framework of biblical archaeology for three reasons: Firstly, the topic is within one of the many loosely defined definitions of biblical archaeology. Secondly, she uses the concepts of the Holy Land and Jews in the Middle Bronze Age, concepts she has inevitably borrowed from the Bible. Finally, she implicitly supports

¹ It is noteworthy that this book was the winner of the Biblical Book Award for Best Scholarly Work in Archaeology in 1997.

the Israeli nation-state and the Jews as an ethnic group from pre-history to the present. She argues that

Between the Natufian and the MB II (Middle Bronze Age II) it is possible to trace unidirectional micro-evolutionary trends in the skull, mandible and teeth. From the MB II onward, there are numerous fluctuations in all measurements, suggesting greater heterogeneity in all the peoples inhabiting Israel and masking, to a greater or lesser extent, evidence of micro-evolutionary trends in the skull and mandible, although tooth size continues to reduce. The extent and timing of changes in the skull, mandible and teeth have not all taken place at the same time, and in some periods, notably in the MB II and Roman-Byzantine periods, a sudden change and apparent reversal has taken place in the cranial but not dental parameters. The long-term trends can be related to long-term selective pressures, that have acted to reduce skeletal robusticity and tooth size, whereas the sudden changes seen in MB II and Jewish populations indicate the introduction of a different population group. (We) have proposed that the pattern of micro-evolutionary change that characterizes the Israeli sequence can be related to the increased levels of environmental stress in Holocene populations following the adaptation of agriculture. Obviously, many more samples are needed before any attempt can be made to map the full extent and pattern of regional temporal diversity within Israel, or the connections between populations in Israel and neighbouring countries (Smith 1998:73, my emphases).

I will make only some brief comments on this, hopefully nothing more is needed. To sum up the basis of the argument: the long-term changes in tooth size and skeletal robustness can be explained as micro-evolutionary adaptations related to environmental stress. The changes in skulls and mandible, on the other hand, cannot be explained from an evolutionary point of view. These changes represent a *different population group*. These changes are illustrated in

the article by several pictures of various skulls, which are supposed to illuminate the cranial differences.

Although Patricia Smith does not say so directly, if skeletal features correlate to an ethnic group, and if it is possible to distinguish different ethnic groups based on the skeletons, then the ethnic groups must represent 'races'. From a biological point of view, genetics tends not to speak of races for two reasons. Firstly, there has always been so much interbreeding between human populations that it is meaningless to talk about fixed boundaries between 'races'. Secondly, the distribution of hereditary physical traits does not follow clear boundaries; this means that there is often a greater variation within a 'racial' group than there is systematic variations between two groups (Eriksen 1993:4). If, on the other hand, Smith really means ethnic groups, things become even more absurd because ethnicity is a social construction. Nevertheless, as Eriksen points out, concepts of race can be important because they inform us of peoples' actions – 'race' may exist as a cultural construct, whether it is 'biological' or not. Thus, the social and cultural relevance of the *notion* that races exist (Eriksen 1993:4-5) may have a political function, and we are aware of the possible consequences of these 'scientific explanations'.

I hope such shadows of an old reality will retreat to where they belong, to the history of research as an example of what bad archaeology is. Stephen J. Gould argues, although in another context, that 'some historical arguments are so intrinsically illogical or implausible that, following their fall from grace, we do not anticipate any subsequent resurrection in later times and contexts. The disappearance of some ideas should be as irrevocable as the extinction of species' (Gould 1987:319). After all, to use words closely connected to, or which implicitly mean, 'races', is extremely dangerous.

Why do these ideas prevail today? The 'biblical part' in biblical archaeology is a hindrance to scientific development in the discipline. The paradox is that at the moment biblical archaeologists

give up the holiness of the Bible (within the scientific discourse, not as personal devotees), they are no longer biblical archaeologists, but rather Near Eastern archaeologists. On the other hand, if they continue using the Bible as they do now (even within the 'new biblical archaeological paradigm'), the interpretations are a shadow of an old reality. Thus, biblical archaeology as a discipline will be biased and clouded as long as it clings to the Bible. I will therefore illuminate some of the approaches to the Bible, which have determined the archaeological practice and which questions biblical archaeologists have been allowed to ask and answer.

CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND RESEARCH

Introduction

Researchers may of course believe in any kind of religion as anyone else in the society – in fact it is a human right to have the opportunity to believe in religion. The problems arise when the faith determines the questions it is possible to ask and the answers it is possible to accept. Faith cannot be the ultimate and divine guideline for academic investigations. An approach to a scientific practice is presented by Christopher Peacocke, who distinguishes two requirements for a belief acquired to be knowledge:

Firstly, an explanatory suggestion is proposed which would explain certain phenomena; and second, the hypothesis is accepted as true on the basis of further experiment, evidence or reasoning. The method consists not just of thinking up a simple hypothesis to explain the data: it also comprises a policy of not accepting the hypothesis as true unless one has a sufficient range of evidence which, in the circumstances, ensures that if the hypothesis was not true, one would not believe it (Peacocke 1986:140).

Whereas everyone does propose hypotheses, fewer archaeologists are concerned with a policy of accepting the hypotheses. The latter problem is a theoretical task, and a problem that has to be solved if we are to separate good archaeology from bad. The reason for rejecting creationism is not necessarily that it is wrong, but that the hypothesis is not scientific. Science is a procedure for testing and rejecting hypotheses, and not a compendium of certain knowledge. Creationism as a hypothesis is useless in a scientific debate unless one accepts that it is proved to be incorrect (Gould 1987:111), and

thus it is nothing more than an anecdote in the history of science. Claims that can be proved incorrect lie within the domain of science.

If one believes that the earth was created 4004 BC, the creationists have to demonstrate why for instance carbon dating and the stratigraphical method do not have validity before 4004 BC, but that they are valid research tools after that year. Otherwise there is no stringent practice or coherent logic, and I cannot see any reason why one should care about the stratigraphical method in archaeology in only a selected and limited time span. Thus, this chapter is basically dealing with some of the problems and paradoxes of the integration of archaeology and the Bible, not from a methodological perspective but from a meta-theoretical perspective.

Archaeology and Society

There is a vast ocean of homepages and debates on the Internet ranging from scholarly updated versions to religious fundamentalists, and some of them are incorporated in the 'scientific' discourse as well. I have tried to highlight some structural problems within the debate, and there are often minor differences between scholars and non-scholars. Some biblical theologians and rabbis emphasise the incomplete archaeological record. The Rabbi Ken Spiro (2001) expresses such a view:

This thin archaeological record means that any conclusions are based on speculation and projection. Archaeology can only prove the existence of artifacts unearthed, not disprove that which hasn't been found. Lack of evidence... is no evidence of lack... Yet that has not stopped some archaeologists from making assertions. In the 1950s, world-renowned archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon dug in one small section of Jericho, looking for remnants of inhabitation at the time of Joshua's conquest of the land in 1272 BCE. She found no evidence, and concluded on that basis that the Bible was false. The problem is

that Kenyon dug only one small section of Jericho, and based her conclusion on that limited information. Today, though the controversy lingers, many archaeologists claim there is indeed clear evidence of inhabitation in Jericho from the time of Joshua.

Scholars and non-scholars may have different aims and agendas for archaeological excavation. Kathleen Kenyon's excavations in Jerusalem from 1961 to 1967 discovered for the first time evidences for the location and the dates of the defensive walls of Jerusalem during the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

The Bible is inevitably the scale for evaluating the finds among the biblical archaeologists. However, archaeology has to base its enterprise on the data we have today. Archaeologists have to construct the past on the current data as they stand. When the future reveals new insights either theoretically or empirically, then history may have to be rewritten. This is where archaeology and religion differ. Even though the future may provide satisfactory reasons for other interpretations, one cannot infer whatever one wants in the name of archaeology when it is in fact religion.

But the enemy of knowledge and science is irrationalism and not religion. Context matters. Truth is a circumstance and not a spot (Gould 1987:125, 227). Science is an accumulative and progressive practice of knowledge. By 'progress' I do not mean closer to the 'truth' or a 'truth' in an absolute sense, but rather that the answers are accepted as giving a better understanding on the contemporary premises. The basic nature of science is as a creative practice of construction rather than conservatism, stagnation and preservation of old constructions and thoughts. This view implies a notion of deconstruction of old knowledge and constructions, because deconstructions enable or create possibilities for new constructions.

With the words of Stephen J. Gould, facts do not mean absolute certainty, but in science 'fact' can only mean 'confirmed to such a degree that it would be perverse to withhold provisional assent' (Gould 1990:254). Data (lat.), on the contrary, means 'given' (Lucas

1995:41). Thus, the difference between facts and data is fundamental. Data exist, but they are not primordial or antecedent to anything else. Data are often given the same epistemological status as facts. In reality, 'facts' are not a part of the investigation in research; they are necessary impediments at the bottom. 'Data', on the other hand, are subject to investigation and criticism.

The reputation of false facts is bolstered by the naïve belief that facts are bits of unsullied or 'pure' information extracted from nature by an objective process of pure observation or by scientific interpretation. But facts arise in contexts of expectation, and both the eye and the mind are notoriously fallible instruments. Secondly, facts achieve an almost immortal status once they pass from primary documentation into secondary sources, particularly textbooks. No publications are quite so conservative as a textbook; errors are copied from generation to generation and seem to gain support by sheer repetition. Very seldom does anyone go back to discover the fragility of original arguments (Gould 1990:384).

If the texts are considered holy, the scriptures become of course even more conservative, or in biblical archaeological terms, the Bible has documented facts, which determine the archaeological research and the questions it is possible to ask. This is an important difference; although the Bible represents facts from a religious point of view, it represents only data from an archaeological point of view. This difference is neglected in parts of the biblical archaeologically biased research, Christian religious researchers often transfer the Bible as *their* religious book to the profane sphere of archaeological research, and thus, there are certain 'facts' that one is allowed neither to question nor challenge.

What is the main subject in archaeology? If the Bible refers to mere events, they may have happened, but nevertheless, archaeology is more than descriptive references to events. This is one of the advantages of archaeology – we face the common people and the processes of change. Powerful men and their actions are not the major theme in archaeology.

The material remains are made of individuals, but they can only be understood and interpreted in a broader perspective: the society and its social structures. We face the individuals, but we are unable to interpret them without the society. The individual is a part of the society. The single artefact is a part of a totality – a context. Archaeological remains are mute, but that does not mean that we are unable to communicate with them. Narratives like history are written in one language, actions as archaeological remains in another language. As archaeologists our duty is to interpret the archaeological material, that is what is 'given' and our point of departure. Archaeology is about humans, not *a* human.

The *a priori* of the Bible

Amnon Ben-Tor argues against the abandonment of the term 'biblical archaeology' because the 'The two fields are naturally related and mutually enriching. It is as unreasonable as to demand that classical archaeology be separated from Homer and other writings of antiquity. Eliminate the Bible from the archaeology of the Land of Israel in the second and first millennia B.C.E, and you have deprived it of its soul' (Ben-Tor 1992:9).

The questions are: what kind of book actually is the Bible, and is it really fruitful and useful for archaeology? In the conclusion of the book *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*, William A. Ward says that there are hints here and there indicating that something like the Exodus happened, though on a much smaller scale, and that there is not a word in any text or any archaeological artefact that lends credence to the biblical narrative as it now stands (Ward 1997:105).

The question one immediately asks is why the literary account should be so different from the reality presented in the facts in the ground. If it were not for the literary account, neither the Exodus nor the Conquest would be known at all. The literary account is derived from folk memory and tradition, it represents a collective memory of

the people handed down for generations. These stories or oral traditions arise out of something; thus there might be a kernel of historical fact somewhere. But it might be totally obscured by later elaboration, additions, explanations, or whole stories grafted on just because they make a good story. This is one of the hallmarks of ancient historical writing, the oral tradition with its elaboration becomes 'real' history and is ultimately written down as real history, and the Hebrew scholars who wrote and edited the Bible as their national history belonged to this same tradition. This was the way history was made (Ward 1997:107-108). The rest of the ancient world ignored these events or whatever it was that originally inspired the Hebrew scholars, because they bore no significance at all. Ward continues with a discussion of the problem:

This suggests that the actual events themselves – those little kernels of history embedded in there somewhere – were minor, since they have left no traces except in the record of the people to whom they happened. The historical kernel of the Exodus may have been only one family peacefully migrating from Egypt to Palestine. The historical kernel of the Conquest may have been nothing more than a few skirmishes as disenchanting Canaanites left the coastal regions to build their small agricultural settlements in hill country. A family moving from Egypt to Canaan could well become the majestic saga of a whole people, complete with plagues, Pharaoh's army, and seas giving way. A few minor fights up in the hill could well become the heroic struggle of a whole people against overwhelming odds...Heroes and heroic events often grow from the small things that happened (Ward:109).

The biblical narratives of the Exodus and Conquest grow out of a national history of the Hebrews, written by Hebrew scholars for a Hebrew audience:

Whether it arose from mistaken folk memories or from the elaboration and mythologizing of minor events, that narrative contrasts markedly to the total absence of direct Egyptian evidence to support the Exodus story and the growing body of evidence suggesting that the Conquest did not take place. The biblical and the nonbiblical sources simply tell two different tales (Ward 1997:111).

This does not imply that we have to choose one of the narratives as the 'correct one', the post-modernist tradition has taught us that the world is plural. The Old Testament is a nationalist history written down as narrative, not as things really happened but as they were perceived to have happened, from the perspective of those to whom it happened. Ward argues that we do not have to choose between a historical narrative or the archaeological record, and concludes by saying that 'we need neither to choose nor harmonize, simply recognize each kind of evidence for what it is and forget the dual burden of choice and harmony; choice is not necessary, and harmony is not possible' (Ward 1997:112). This is a very good attempt to neither challenge the Bible nor use ad-hoc explanations in the scientific debate. However, there are some problems related to this approach:

Archaeologists have to choose the archaeological record. That is what archaeology is about. As practising archaeologists we are supposed to write history based on the material remains. If the Exodus is, as Ward pointed out, one single family on the way to Palestine, this lonesome event has little or nothing at all to do with the archaeological societies at that time. Thus, it is from an archaeological point of view religious colonialism if the narratives should be as important as the material evidence. One family, if this is the real Exodus, did not represent the society that is the topic for investigation. This is one of the major advantages of archaeology, we face aspects of societies that never were recorded, and therefore is it not the aim of archaeology to try to relate these finds and correlate them with written sources. On the contrary, it is rather the main aim

of archaeology to challenge the written sources because, as seen in the case above, written narratives have an enormous power immediately after they are written down, even though most of what is written may have but a kernel of truth and only the slightest historical value.

What implications for other interpretations does the Bible have when it is used as a reference point or for analogies, or when the archaeological material is interpreted within a biblical framework? Axel Knauf argues that archaeology and texts do not meet, and wants to write a history on ancient Israel based on the archaeological material, which afterwards can be used as a context from which to interpret the Bible (Knauf 1991:26-64). This seems to be a way to go for Near Eastern archaeology, especially regarding for instance the discussion of the Exodus. If only one family was on the move, this may have had enormous religious implications, but not in the archaeological material, and thus, the archaeological agenda should not be governed by these events as research proposals. On the other hand, biblical archaeologists do not agree. John R. Bartlett argues that this approach is just as bad as using the texts as a context from which to interpret archaeology because we give meaning to artefacts just as the biblical writers give meaning to events. 'The basic answer must be that the reconstruction of all aspects of the biblical history is an interdisciplinary affair in which linguists, philologists, palaeographers, textual critics, literary historians, archaeologists and others share' (Bartlett 1997:13).

Most of the archaeologists in Palestine have been biblical scholars and the results of the excavations have been enthusiastically received by fundamentalists. Albert E. Glock gives a summary of the biblical archaeology as an emerging discipline and argues vigorously that 'biblical archaeology' still is a legitimate term. He recognises three different modes of approaching biblical archaeology (Glock 1986:90-98):

Firstly, biblical archaeology is a sub-discipline of biblical studies and not archaeology. This involves that biblical archaeology comes

to terms with the nature of the Bible as a literary and historical source and that the questions and problems are raised by the Bible and not by archaeology. Secondly, for its own integrity as a scholarly discipline, biblical archaeology requires that archaeology, especially the archaeology of Palestine, has to be an independent discipline. Thirdly, biblical archaeology is an interdisciplinary procedure that seeks to exploit the results of excavations and archaeological investigations in order to interpret the form and content of biblical literature, history and religion. Thus, the ultimate aim of biblical archaeology is the reconstruction of the intellectual and religious experience reflected in the biblical tradition.

From an archaeological point of view, within a scientific world and discourse, the preferred practice is strategy number two where the archaeology of Palestine is an independent discipline. This, however, is not the case. From a biblical archaeologist's point of view, both strategy number one and three are legitimate as well, they are even the leading strategies of how the scientific practice is executed and performed. This is related to the implicit ethnic tracing in Biblical archaeology. Syro-Palestinian archaeology is concerned with Palestinian history (*sic*) whereas 'biblical archaeology' is 'that subspecies of biblical studies which seeks to bring to bear on the interpretation of the Bible all the information gained through archaeological research and discovery' (Lance 1982:100). In other words, it is not archaeology; it is a minor interpretative practice by theologians of Syro-Palestinian archaeological finds. And more importantly, there are two ethnic groups in the past as well as the present: The Palestinians and the Israelis. The struggle for the past will continue because Israelis have their history, and the Palestinians do not.

George E. Mendenhall in 'Cultural history and the Philistine problem' described the problem and danger with biblical archaeology (or any archaeology):

[...] an interpretation of ancient history based upon modern concepts of race, nationalism, or ethno-linguistic 'identity' is an absurd and dangerous anachronism that has already done far too much evil in the twentieth century. Quite to the contrary, the social history we can obtain from the evidence available indicates a constant process of cultural diffusion and assimilation, of migrations or conquests resulting in the symbiosis and formation of new social structures, and new cultural syntheses, often in a very short period of time. Hence it is absurd to posit some 'pure race' either of Philistines or Israelites, or to think that there has been a complete displacement of population every time some new social name appears on the historical scene (Mendenhall 1986:534).

In the light of this, what role does biblical archaeology have? In 1985 David Noel Freedman, one of the most eloquent defenders of the Albright school, summed up the problem with biblical archaeology in this way (op. cit. Dever 1990:25-26):

The combination of the Bible and archaeology is somewhat artificial; the two have not really matched up very well. The Biblical scholars deal with one kind of material and the archaeologists with another. On rare but important occasions, there is significant contact, and both disciplines gain from the exchange of data and ideas. Often, however, there is no point of contact and nothing significant happens. On the whole, I believe that the results of the interchange between archaeology and the Bible is somewhat disappointing, though perhaps that was to be expected...Archaeology has not proved decisive or even greatly helpful in answering the questions most often asked and has failed to prove the historicity of Biblical persons and events, especially in the early periods.

Nevertheless, it seems rather strange that even though biblical archaeologists are aware of these problems, they continue as if nothing has happened. In the Albright school archaeology was a

sub-discipline. William G. Dever states, 'Biblical archaeology' is a dialogue between two disciplines, the Biblical scholars and Syro-Palestinian archaeology (Dever 1990:31). This is in theory, but in reality, how is the theory related to the practice? How is the Bible used for interpretations of the archaeological material? Not surprisingly, there are only superficial differences from the Albright school:

Archaeology cannot comment on all or even the majority of the Biblical texts, but it can supply missing elements of the story, and in some cases even an alternate version. It can add matters in which the Biblical writers were simply not interested, or events of which they may have been unaware. This supplementary or corrective (rather than corroborative) aspect of archaeology is often neglected, but in reality it is one of its most valuable features of amplifying and illuminating the Biblical texts (...) To sum up: archaeology, insofar as it is a historical discipline, is uniquely equipped to help answer such questions in Biblical studies as these: What likely took place? When did it occur? Who were the principal participants? How did it happen? But here archaeology reaches the limits of its inquiry. It cannot, and is not intended to, answer the question, Why? – certainly not in terms of ultimate or divine causes. Such judgements call for judgements of faith, whose validity archaeology seeks neither to prove nor to disprove (Dever 1990:34-35).

It is the same story over again as practised by the 'old' biblical archaeologists. To paraphrase Clarke, we can say 'a biblical archaeologist is a biblical scholar after a few years of using a trowel'. I cannot really see any big difference between the 'new' biblical archaeology and the Albright tradition, but of course, within the biblical archaeologist paradigms, these minor differences may have a significant influence. But as an outsider, this shows clearly the bias and the hidden agenda in biblical archaeology; it still draws its agenda not from archaeology but from problems in biblical research.

The biblical narrative has never been, and never will be, replaced. Archaeology is still a sub-discipline, we are supposed to answer 'what, when and who' but not 'why' But it is the 'why' questions that makes archaeology into an analytic human science. I will say that archaeology can, indeed is intended to, answer 'why' questions or in other words, to understand social and religious processes. Otherwise, the situation may occur as with biblical archaeology; biblical scholars are digging with the trowel and interpreting the archaeological remains within a religious framework. This relates to my main argument: archaeologists can study everything, also in terms of ultimate or divine causes, and science is not supposed to please believers.

Fundamental in biblical archaeology is the assumption that archaeology or the knowledge of the past is not the aim in it self, the ultimate goal is a deeper understanding of the Bible. Archaeology is only a method or tool for understanding the Bible; 'archaeology's purpose is not to "prove" the Bible, but to discover, illustrate, explain, inform, supplement, illuminate, at times, even correct (the Bible)' (Paul & Dever 1973:x).

Is the role of archaeology just to add pictures of mundane objects to written sources? Is archaeology just like a colourful photo in a modern and reprinted version of old historical texts? Is the role of archaeology to be a sub-discipline so that we can understand and appreciate the Bible? What is the hidden agenda? Archaeology is then just an illustration medium or a means to the Bible. We are back to the photos, 'this is where it happened', 'this is what they used', 'here is the table they used for the Last Supper' or even better, 'this is the Holy cross on which Jesus was crucified'.

The Biblical world – a Dictionary of Biblical archaeology, among other writings, illuminates this practice. The texts explaining the pictures typically read '...note the stone that rolls in front of the opening of the tomb. It was such a stone that the women feared they could not roll away after the burial of Christ' (Pheiffer 1966:17), 'The church of St. Anne, Jerusalem. Excavations adjacent to the church

have revealed the pool now believed to be the Biblical pool of Bethesda' (Pheiffer 1966:141) or more extreme; 'Eastern slope of the Ophel hill (City of David), showing the city and the terracing – an example of what could be the "milo" (=filling) referred to in I Kings 9:15 and 24' (Paul & Dever 1973:21). The Bible is used directly as a reference not only as an interpretation, but as *the* explanation or interpretative framework. Fifteen-twenty years later, the same interpretative framework prevails. The only difference is that it is even more meticulously developed and the dictionary is substantially thicker.

In the *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible* from 1986 composed by some 70 scholars and edited by Geoffrey Wigoder, every place and person mentioned in the Old and New Testaments are given their own entry as are major religious concepts and general topics. All references in the Bible are found in the margin next to the entry, and it is if possible, illustrated by pictures of archaeological artefacts and sites (Wigoder 1986:11). It is, of course impossible to refer to all examples since the dictionary of 1070 pages covers all biblical references. The whole volume is a correlation of biblical sites and references to actual places and archaeological remains. The logic and narrative structure is as follow, with the entry 'altar' as an example: The primary aim of altars was to sacrifice to the Lord. Two types of altars were known in biblical times. Though the primary function of altars was the sacrifice of animals to the Lords, they had also a secondary purposes, e.g. 'as places of prayer and assembly or sanctuary (Ex 21:14; 1 Kgs 2:22ff). Excavations have discovered "horned altars" (Ex 27:2)'; the different types of altars are in concordance with the Bible. These could be of natural stones as with Manoah, the father of Samson who 'took the young goat and offered it upon the rock to the Lord' (Judg 13:19). The altar could consist of a single large stone (1 Sam 14:33, 35) or smaller stones collected into a heap as Jacob did (Gen 31:46), and finally, another type of altar was the one Moses ordered built on Mount Ebal (Deut 27:5-6) (Wigoder 1986:58-59).

I will just refer briefly to some of the most important towns in the history of ancient Israel, and how these are connected and explained by biblical references and narratives, and interpretative methods similar to the culture-historical paradigm. Beersheba is a town in the Negeb which has a prominent place in the history of the patriarchs. According to the Bible, Abraham planted a tamarisk there and called on the name of the Lord (Gen 21:33), and dwelt in Beersheba (Gen 22:19). Isaac went to live there and dug a well which he named Sheba (Gen 26:23-33), and later Jacob offered sacrifices at Beersheba (Gen 46:1-4). After its conquest by Joshua, Beersheba was in the territory of Simeon within the territory of Judah (Josh 19:2). In the time of the Judges it was already a city and perhaps the centre of a district (1 Sam 8:2). The saying 'from Dan to Beersheba' illuminates the religious and administrative function and importance (Judg 20:1, 1 Sam 3:20, 2 Sam 3:10, etc.). The biblical Beersheba is identified with Tell es-Sheba located five kilometres east of the modern Beersheba where large scale excavations have revealed the remains of six royal Israelite fortified towns dated from the 11th century BC up to the 7th century BC (Wigoder 1986:163).

Ai is a Canaanite city east of Bethel. According to the Bible, during the Israelite conquest of Canaan after the fall of Jericho, Joshua was told by his spies that Ai was sparsely inhabited, and he despatched a small force to attack it. The Israelites were defeated and plunged into despair. When Joshua attacked Ai for the second time the city was captured, burnt, and reduced to 'a heap forever, a desolation to this day' (Josh 8:1-29). Ai is, according to the *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible* identified by most scholars with et-Tell, located one mile southwest of Bethel, to the north of Jerusalem. Excavations have revealed settlement patterns dating back to 3000 BC. 'The city was destroyed by the 24th century BC and remained in ruins until the 13th-12th century BC. An Iron Age village on the site was probably the biblical Ai and the men of Ai defeated by Joshua were probably the first inhabitants of the renewed site'

(Wigoder 1986:54), and it is illustrated with a picture of remains of a palace of the Early Canaanite period found at et-Tell.

Regarding Jericho, 'Nothing remains of the Late Bronze Age city which preceded the conquest of Joshua. There is no consensus among scholars as to the date of the conquest, although the dates suggested range between 1400-1250 BC. The finds pertaining to Iron Age Jericho (1200-330 BC) are not rich, but generally confirm the evidence of the Bible' (Wigoder 1986:517). Megiddo, on the other hand, is one of the best known ancient cities in the Holy Land, located strategically at the Iron Brook's descent into the Jezreel Valley where it dominated the international trade route between Egypt and Syria-Mesopotamia. Due to the location numerous battles were fought in the vicinity of Megiddo, and the name became synonymous with Armageddon; the site where the final battle is to be fought at the end between the good and the evil (Rev 16:12 ff). Tell-el-Mutesellim or Tell Megiddo is one of the largest sites and most famous archaeological excavations undertaken in Israel (Wigoder 1986:669).

No critical biblical scholar acknowledges the accounts of Joshua as reflecting what actually happened prior to the establishment of the Israelites as a 'national' group (Prior 1997:289), and the archaeological data are absent. Thus, this discourse is not just a matter of innocent illustrations of the truth or a religious Truth, it is also an issue of power, religion, and rights to and authority over land. Archaeology becomes a slave of the scriptures as long as only a minority of the scholars working with these topics deal critically with these questions. The inferiority of archaeology is represented in an ultra-positivistic tradition and there is a naïve view of what material culture reflects:

Although archaeology may be successful in recognizing the 'material correlates' of human behaviour and social organization, it reaches its limitations when it comes to ideology. Archaeology does not yet, and probably cannot, comment on the political or religious motivations

behind the emergence of Israel. (...) We can only say that in the cultural vacuum following the collapse of Canaanite society in the twelfth century B. C., there arose in central Palestine a new ethnic consciousness and solidarity. The emergence of this ethnicity need not have been accompanied by a revolt at all; it may be viewed rather as simply a normal and even predictable historical development in the evolution of complex society. Archaeology may provide an ecology in which socio-economic change becomes explicable, but it cannot explain the ultimate derivation of that change. That may be a task for theology (Dever 1990:81).

Firstly, this approach is equal to Hawke's ladder of reliability (1954), a theoretical approach proposed fifty years ago. According to Hawke, there is an ascending scale of difficulty in interpreting archaeological material in terms of human processes. Technological activities is the easiest category, then economy, social organisation, and finally, ideology and religion the most difficult categories to interpret. By this old-fashioned approach to archaeology, biblical archaeologists give favour to the Bible. When the aim is to analyse religion, both explicitly and implicitly within this approach, the Bible is given a natural authority because religion is not supposed to be reflected in the material remains. Ethnicity, on the other hand, although it is just as ideological or mental as religion, is always reflected in archaeological remains.

Secondly, the biblical archaeologist's own beliefs restrict the topic of study; it demarcates the archaeological practice and leaves a major area of investigation to theology. Thirdly, if the emergence of Israel, or more correctly; the co-existence of different ethnic groups in Transjordan through time, was analysed within the analytic frameworks that exist in the post-processual paradigm in archaeology, all these aspects could have been incorporated and been subject for investigation. Finally, again we see that, regardless of fancy words in introductions and in the history of biblical archaeology, nothing has changed: archaeology is a sub-discipline of

theology. Archaeology may provide the ecological setting, but not explain why certain processes happened; this is the theological quest. Thus, the archaeological research is once again based on the theological agenda.

The advantage with Dever is that he writes explicit whereas most other scholars hide their assumptions and implicit biblical narratives. The arguments regarding evidences are often in these lines of reasoning. Archaeological investigations have '*proved beyond doubt* that the permanent site of ancient pre-Solomonic Jerusalem must be sought on the south-eastern hill known today as "Ophel" or more correctly as the "City of David" ' (Mazar 1956:6, my emphasis). 'This shows how far the details in the Bible relating to Jerusalem from the time of David and earlier are absolutely correct' (Mazar 1956:10). 'Hebron is not mentioned in the NT. The identification of Hebron with modern el-Khalil is accepted by all experts' (Wigoder 1986:436).

Research Prejudices and Scientific Practice

The problem is of course that every kind of research is a part of an agenda or various horizons of understanding. How is it possible to declare or decide that a religious basis or prejudice is less scientific than a post-modern understanding of the world? A problem archaeologists face is what the ultimate goal of archaeology should be or what 'archaeology' is. My aim is neither to define 'archaeology' nor refer to various definitions. The point is that different definitions of the ultimate goals of archaeology have significant implications for what is considered as archaeological activities (Trigger 1989:371). The world we live in and the logical order that exists in a society implicitly define the various practices. The problem then becomes 'how do we do archaeology at all' (Hodder 1994:4)? And related to this, is it possible to introduce scientific criteria (for instance demarcation criteria), and if so, how do we use them? An

archaeological interpretation always consists of both mind and matter. Without mind, nothing matters; without matter, nobody minds. Archaeology as a discipline is concerned with archaeological data, which it clusters in archaeological entities to illuminate archaeological processes, studied in terms of archaeological aims, concepts and procedures (Clarke 1968:13). This is done by analogies.

Analogies are often based on similarities in form. But the object's meaning depends upon the object's context. This is illuminated by the linguistic approach in post-processual archaeology. Post-processual archaeologists have focused on reading the material culture. The ideas behind this approach stem basically from Saussure (1960) and Barthes (1973). The diacritical linguistic sign consists of a union of two facets or components, the 'signifier' and the 'signified'. Within the conception of a sign, there exists no direct relationship with reality because the relationship between the signifier and the signified is entirely arbitrary or a matter of convention. Material culture is seen as analogous to text or it can be read as text. As a literary text it is separated from the context of production, and like the most plural text it has an openness to signification which cannot be tied down to the intention of its 'author' (Olsen 1990:164).

But it implies also that we cannot interpret whatever we want. The form of the objects puts restrictions on interpretation of meaning and content. The meaning must not contradict the form if we are supposed to accept it as an interpretation of the form's content. The world is the totality of meanings rather than of things. But the things have their reality and exercise constraints over us (Gellner 1995:50). The importance of the physicality of an artefact derives from its ability to act as a bridge not only between the mental and physical world, but also between consciousness and the unconscious (Miller 1987:99). Considering things or artefacts, their form precedes the meaning, and thus, to trace the various meanings and contexts through time is the quest in archaeology.

The problem in archaeology is that our notions of meaning and content that fit with the forms are based on a contemporary knowledge and *logic*. This is reflected in what Barth metaphorically calls a 'dossier'; the past is rewritten and we are parts of effects of experience as it has accumulated through time (Barth 1993:284). There is therefore no past but simply a present past, a present present and a present future (Moore 1995:53). We have limited possibilities to develop an alternative logic for understanding the contents of the forms in the past because we would probably not accept the indigenous' narratives as explanations and interpretations. Our contemporary perception of form limits our interpretations of past content. Ethnoarchaeology and anthropology are therefore important approaches to archaeology in solving or at least limiting this epistemological problem. Henceforth, there should be some degree of correspondence between the questions asked and the answers justified empirically. A rational explanation is not the same as 'common sense'. We need to explain other people's 'common sense' with our rationality. That is a difficult task because we live in totally different worlds.

If the analogies are unreliable, then they must also be unscientific (Hodder 1982b:12-14), because the problem '...archaeologists feel (is) that it is all too easy for different people to read different thoughts and meanings into the past' (Hodder 1987:43). These interpretations derive from the interpreter's own experience of the world combined with some degree of ethnographic and historical knowledge. The distinction between argument and assumption, the use of untested generalizations and unsupported inferences reconstructed by a process of sympathetic imagination are some of the main weaknesses of many post-processual interpretations (Trigger 1995b:455). 'The end product is clear: the anthropologist begins to understand the other culture when the previously alien life-forms become intelligible to him, even though they do not possess the *immediate intelligibility* of life-forms of his own society' (Obeyesekere 1990:229-230). There are limits to cultural

elaboration in anthropology, and of course, even more limits to archaeological elaboration and interpretations, and the aim should be to diminish these limits by a scientific practice.

When archaeologists consider archaeological remains, one should ask, why do these data matter, or more precisely, what do we want to do with these data? The aim is to study the way people of the past lived and how they coped with constraints in their natural and social environment. But the material culture is mute, the objects cannot 'speak' or 'tell their story' directly, only indirectly via our interpretative acts. It is by looking at objects in such theoretical frameworks that we should try to derive hypotheses about what objects 'say'. Objects are from this point of view evidence which may corroborate (not verify), weaken or refute our theoretically derived hypotheses (Haaland 1997:374).

In other words, the material or the archaeological remains are not superior to the interpretations of them, because 'objects do not speak for themselves, and that we have to speak for them' (Haaland & Haaland 1995:106). Instead of implicit idiosyncratic interpretation, the interpretative assumption should be made explicit, and then it has to be grounded in theoretically based frameworks (Haaland 1997:374). Of major importance in this analysis are the researcher's own premises for interpretation and horizons of understanding. We are as much cultural products as the prehistoric people were children of their time. We are conditioned by our social context, including our historical, political and personal experiences and aims, and the combination of these factors influence and determine the results. There is no objective past, there is no objective research and there are no objective researchers, even though some claim they are.

Holiness implies restrictions. The sacred is connected to power and to reality because the sacred is saturated with being, a thought which brings me back to the previous discussion of the ontological quest in human sciences. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no

orientation can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a centre. The sacred reveals absolute reality and at the same time makes orientation possible; hence it founds the world in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world (Eliade 1987:20-30).

A text is not a simple text written on paper. It is knowledge which we give value to. If the scriptures are Holy, then there are restrictions connected to them, also regarding the use of the texts for interpretations of archaeological remains. I will assume that an archaeological object does not become holy even though Holy Scriptures are used as an interpretative framework. On the other hand, if we treat the scriptures as profane, we can elaborate more. Within biblical archaeology there is a mixture of concepts. The holy scriptures are presented as being profane texts when they are used for interpreting the 'profane' archaeological remains in various times and places, but on the other hand, nobody is allowed to challenge the Bible, because then it is also Holy. Mark G. Brett argues that the Genesis was designed to undermine the ethnocentrism of the imperial governors of the Persian period. The editors used existing traditions, whether these were ancient and reliable or not, in a contemporary socio-political context (Brett 2000). If Genesis is, on the other hand, seen as the original creation of earth and mankind, it enables other interpretations of the archaeological material.

Rather than involving restrictions when the Bible has been used in archaeology, biblical archaeologists have argued for a religious imperialistic colonisation or a crusade of the past. There is no contradiction between being a Christian believer and using the Bible as a profane narrative in a scientific discourse. But it reflects that there are distinct differences between science and religion. If religion is mixed with science, then the archaeological practice becomes clouded. In its very basis it reflects the scientists' own prejudices. Religious identity is deeper than ethnicity. For a true believer, a devotee, religion is the mere being, the ontological fact. Ethnicity may change, but God is still there independent of nationality or

ethnicity. But as a scientific framework for interpretations, the Bible has to either be treated as holy or profane. Thus, as a written source, it can be perceived as either: (1) an ordinary profane source or narrative, (2) a holy book or sacred scriptures. Or more precisely, a scientific approach to the Bible treats it both as sacred and profane. The aim is not to decide whether the Bible is holy or not, but to analyse how, why and when it is perceived as holy.

The Bible as a Written Text

William Dever argues that 'if Americanist archaeology "is anthropology or nothing", then Syro-Palestinian archaeology is "history or nothing" (Dever 1997c:299).' It is unthinkable for biblical archaeologists not to use the Bible as an interpretative framework. Thomas L. Thompson discusses in length problems related to the Bible as a written source (e.g. Thompson 1992, 1999). Biblical archaeologists, and among them Dever, on the other hand, argue strongly against such post-modern ways of interpreting the Bible. But for Thompson the Bible is a subject for study, and thus he analyses it from a scientific point of view, and therefore I will refer to some of his approaches.

The problem is not that the Bible is exaggerated or unrealistic, and it is certainly not that the Bible is false. The writers of the Bible are surprisingly realistic and truthful. In their own terms – which are not the terms of critical historical scholarship – they express themselves well about the world they knew (...) They write however with ideas, thoughts and images, metaphors and motifs, perspectives and goals, that are quite at a tangent to those of the present day. For the most part, it could be said that what modern historians and archaeologists are normally interested in has little to do with the Bible (Thompson 1999:104).

One problem is related to historiography. Thompson argues that an understanding of biblical historiography has to be seen as an intellectual tradition of morally and religiously critical commentary on Israel's past, reflected in the biblical texts. A tradition of the past was collected and interpreted to stand both as a warning and a basis for an idealised ethnicity of the future; it was the future of the true Israel that determined the past remembered (Thompson 1992:375, 382). In other words, the Bible reflects different narratives that were collected, written and systematised by editors in order to create an Israelite ethnicity. The text cannot be removed from its historical context without loss of information, and no text is understood apart from its context. The final form of biblical texts rarely purports to be a united whole in itself. Thus, the distinctive peculiarity of many of the units of biblical tradition is the result of their having been collected as meaningful traditions: 'they are voices apart from the collector, historiographer or archivist. They spoke to them, as they do to us, from the past' (Thompson 1992:385). In other words, the Bible also represents shadows from a different reality.

This involves different interpretative problems. Firstly, we cannot assume that the collected traditions reflect either indirectly or directly the real world of the collectors. Secondly, our understanding of the collectors and editors does not supply us with that primary context which can be understood as a historical matrix of tradition. Thirdly, from the world perspective of the collectors, we do not understand the historical referent of a story or poem collected. Fourthly, we cannot expect to reconstruct specific historical and socio-political contexts that in one way or another must be reflected in such traditions from the past, whether or not they have been fragmented and transformed into other contexts. Finally, the more convinced the narrators or editors were that the traditions reflected the 'realities' of a distant past, or more recent events of significance to their world view, the less will we be able to understand their sources in relation to the original context (Thompson 1992:392). The Bible refers to the history of Israel, but the

biblical tradition is related to Israelite history when we use it teleologically and understand Israel as the end result of a literary trajectory. If, however, we use the tradition as historical evidences for a history prior to the historical context of the tradition, such a history can hardly avoid being anachronistic in its essence (Thompson 1992:386).

Thus, any assumption that the texts depict history is no longer self-evident. 'Not only is the Bible's "Israel" a literary fiction, but the Bible begins as a tradition already established: a stream of stories, song and philosophical reflection: collected, discussed and debated' (Thompson 1999:xv). The past is a scene of failure that will be overcome by a 'new Israel'. Based on this approach, the date of the Bible is crucial in this debate.

If we reflect on how easy it is to challenge the historicity not only of David or Solomon but of events in the reigns of Hezekiah or Josiah, or on how persuasive a dating to the Persian period or later of biblical traditions might appear today, the very substance of any historical project that attempts to write a history of the late second- or early first-millennium BC in Palestine on the basis of a direct integration of biblical and extrabiblical sources, bridging a gap not only of centuries but of a near total political, social and cultural dislocation, must appear not only dubious but wholly ludicrous (Thompson 1992:403).

I will in the extension of Thompson's arguments add another approach in order to illuminate the difficulties with the subject-object relationship in these narratives. If anthropological perspectives are valid in interpretations of other cultures, then they should also be applicable to Christian cultures and notions. By analysing the biblical narrators as anthropologists, the point is that they either described and interpreted their 'own' culture or a different or 'foreign' society and people. Thus, their role was that of

contemporary narrators. There are two problems I will illuminate from this approach. Firstly, the problem of analysing a culture as a participant observer, and secondly, the knowledge of the informants which the anthropologist (or in this case the biblical narrator) use as data for interpretations.

As a result of this, naturally the archaeological remains must also be diverse and ambiguous. The problem which arises is how to grasp this reality in archaeology, how to comprehend the complexity in the archaeological material. Since archaeologists cannot choose any one of these privileges, the solution is often abstraction until coherence is achieved. 'The challenge as I understand it is above all theoretical and concerned with how to model an account for variation and disorder, even more than how to merely assemble the data on variation' (Barth 1993:22). The aim is to analyse the society, but only when 'looking at the social life that surrounded me as my only reality and authority' (Barth 1993:25), and from an archaeological point of view, this reality is the material remains. But the reality is ambiguous.

This relates to the second problem; to what extent does an informant have knowledge of his own society and the cultural diversity? The anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere discusses this problem by using religious texts as examples in *The Work of Culture* (1990:221-226):

Firstly, even the best informants may not know the meaning of the texts he presents. Often the texts represent a long tradition and during this period the original meaning of texts may have changed, been lost or forgotten. It is *we* who analyse *them* that assume the existence of a continuous tradition, but this is only a fiction created by us and might have little rooting in reality. Meaning might be inaccessible or unknown to the specialist although he is the performer, the meaning seems to have ceased to have relevance for contemporary religion. The meaning may be 'hidden from the informant because it is buried in tradition. To unravel a hidden meaning involves an archaeological thrust, a scholarly investigation

into the past. (...) We tend to assume that the meaning of a text is accessible to informants or that informants provide the only valid exegeses.'

Secondly, ordinary persons possess knowledge different from that of priests and specialists; still, they all perform rituals and participate in *their* culture. This forces us to recognise the arbitrary nature of what we make out of these levels of native interpretations in our descriptive presentations.

Thirdly, hidden meaning is different from unconscious meaning. If one does not accept that there exists unconscious material one leaves a large area of symbolic form and social life uninvestigated by the anthropologist (or archaeologist) and unexplained by the informants (in this case in the Bible).

Finally, the subject-object relationships lie at the root of all social inquiry. Informants are not simply giving 'facts'; they are involved in a crucial and continuing dialogue with inter-subjective relationships and us. Participation is participation in a dialogue, not an identification with the other culture, and observation is not objective, but rather a disengaged identity at work alongside the participation.

How many of these problems discussed by Fredrik Barth and Gananath Obeyesekere were the biblical narrators as amateur anthropologists aware of? I say none.

All the foregoing implies that a good descriptive ethnography of symbolic forms must go beyond the natives' point of view and beyond the surface reality of everyday understandings. Consequently good ethnography must disturb, shock or jolt us into an awareness that we did not have before. (...) Thus good ethnography is an ideal typical description that probes beneath the surface reality through the use of nomological theory (Obeyesekere 1990:224-225).

And in my opinion, good archaeology should do exactly the same, and the artefacts enable us to make such interpretations. This points

out that if we are going to use the Bible as a historical source, we cannot interpret the archaeological material within the framework presented by the Bible, but have to go beyond and behind the Bible as a source. Still, the written source may give us an idea of how to interpret the material culture, but then as an analogy. But biblical archaeologists have practised differently. The epistemological status of the Bible as a Holy Book has compensated for its lack of integrity as a historical source. From a scientific point of view, this is neither sufficient nor acceptable, for biblical archaeologists it is more than enough, and this is where science and religion differ.

This discussion illuminates some of the problems with written sources in archaeology. There is often an implicit notion that texts are more real than material remains, and thus, if there exists written sources, they have to be used. But as we have seen, texts represent one reality, material cultures another, and the latter reality is probably less manipulated. How are we supposed to interpret the other realities that existed? There is an 'immanent materiality' in the texts or written sources (Norr 1998:13). From a theoretical point of view an analogy is an analogy. Therefore, the principles for using ethnographic and historical analogies in archaeological explanations are fundamentally the same. In both cases we deduce information about certain people from the texts or scriptures which we compare with material evidence in order to see whether congruent pictures can be formed out of both categories or not. The problem with both modern ethnographic texts and those of classical authors is the merging of hermeneutic horizons of understanding, i. e. the author and the studied subjects.

Thus, the best way of using written sources in archaeology is to 'read between the lines'. Then our own interpretation of the text is made explicit and incorporated in the interpretation of the cognitive aspects of the past. David Clarke labelled archaeology's 'loss of innocence' (Clarke 1973) when archaeologists became self-conscious of themselves. As a consequence, within a scientific discourse uncritical and naïve use or misuse of written sources has to be

commented on. It is not legitimate to hide an agenda behind a personal religious motivation or the Bible as Holy Book. Clarke described the problems as follows:

The loss of disciplinary innocence is the price of expanding consciousness; certainly the price is high but the loss is irreversible and the prize substantial. Although the loss of disciplinary innocence is a continuous process we can nevertheless distinguish significant thresholds in the transition from consciousness to critical self-consciousness and beyond. Consciousness is perhaps achieved when the discipline is named and largely defined by specifying its raw material and by pragmatic practice – archaeology is what archaeologists do (Clarke 1973:6).

In this regard archaeologists will be defined by *other* archaeologists or societies in general based on the practice of what fellow archaeologists are doing. Therefore, to maintain archaeology as a scientific enterprise, one has to criticise other archaeological practices if they are unacceptable.

Margarita Díaz-Andreu has discussed the relation between written sources and material remains in those periods where both sources of evidence exist. Archaeology still remains the main source of information, if not the only one, for the great majority of the people were of little concern to the literate elite who produced the texts. Furthermore, it is also the only source to contrast the information provided by those texts, which in most cases is shaped by at least status and gender identities (Díaz-Andreu 1998:206-207). Past archaeological states were appropriate for past archaeological contexts, and past explanations were very much related to past archaeological states of knowledge and our own are no better in these respects (Clarke 1973:8).

Truth, Proof or Hypothesis

The Bible for Christians is the guideline to the supreme truth. Within the biblical archaeologist's research horizons and prejudices there are *a priori* proposed truths determining the questions possible to ask and answer. The answers tend to be singular in their reflections, regardless of an awareness of the fact that the data allow for different interpretations. This is biased research whether it has a religious or political foundation. If the archaeological remains are interpreted within frameworks of absolute truths, the archaeological material will be frozen inside the researcher's static horizons of given premises.

The conservative scientific practice in biblical archaeology (as a branch of theology rather than archaeology) can be described as 'puzzle-solving'. This relates to the problem that there is only one paradigm and world-view acceptable in biblical archaeology. A change in paradigm or world-view will undermine the discipline to such an extent that it cannot survive. Therefore, biblical archaeology is as it always has been and always will be; a puzzle-solving normal-scientific enterprise within the biblical framework characterised by fact or data-gathering activities. It consists of empirical work undertaken to articulate the paradigm theory, resolving some of its residual ambiguities and permitting the solution of problems to which it has previously drawn attention. The man who succeeds proves himself to be an expert puzzle-solver, and the challenge of the puzzle is an important part of what usually drives him on. What challenges him then is the conviction that, if only he is skilful enough, he will succeed in solving a puzzle that no one has solved or solved so well before. But science students accept theories on the authority of teacher and text, not because of evidence (Kuhn 1970). This is the scientific deadlock in biblical archaeology. The puzzle solving may lead the biblical archaeologists to becoming 'more assiduous in accumulating irrelevant data, selectively presented to

support an a *priori* viewpoint' (Gould 1987:292), instead of challenging various dogmas.

William Dever illuminates this point, although naively considering how a scientific practice works. He separates between the descriptive historical-task and the normative-theological task. The descriptive-historical task is the business of the historian who must be *as objective as possible* in finding out what happened by asking, 'What did it mean?' The normative-theological question 'What does it mean?' is a question about faith, and therefore, according to Dever, incumbent upon him to suspend judgement on questions of faith (Dever 1990:36). A core of these clouded scientific thoughts is permeating the greater part of biblical archaeological practice.

After four decades of post-modernistic thought, it is commonly agreed upon that it is impossible to understand 'what it *really* meant'. We understand it on our own premises today within our own research horizon. The problem of this approach to a scientific practice is incommensurability, meaning 'no common measure' (Hacking 1983:67). How can we evaluate different interpretations? Do the theories fit the data and vice versa? Is it possible to compare theories without any exact measure for doing so? The Bible is not an objective tool that might be used as a reference in this regard, and the scriptures have to be treated as any other written documents.

This contradicts the implicit notion among many biblical archaeologists that it is possible to study past societies without our contemporary 'contaminated' beliefs. Dever argues that 'the Biblical writers concluded that Israel's election and survival were nothing less than a miracle. Who are we, their spiritual heirs, to disagree?' (Dever 1990:84). I cannot see how it is possible to take biblical archaeology seriously as a scientific branch of archaeology when the researcher's faith determines the questions and answers possible to accept. It seems rather arrogant that the same man accepting miracles in archaeological explanations criticise other biblical

archaeologists for scandalous nonsense, amateurism and sensationalism (Dever 1990:163), and he continues:

*Archaeology never sought to make a convert of a non-believer, nor surely ever did so. It could be even suggested that the partial rationale offered by archaeology provides the very antithesis of faith for those who consider such justifications as *apologia pro fide sua*. Nothing could be clearer evidence of modern lack of faith than our exaggerated expectations and demands for archaeological 'proof'. It is perhaps misleading to insist that we have asked too much of archaeology. Rather, we have been asking the wrong questions... Ironically, much of the public's fascination with recent excavations may be due to the fact that archaeology has become a secular surrogate for religion, a nostalgic search for history and a sense of identity that formerly derived from religion. This explanation certainly is consistent with the archaeological craze in Israel today, an increasingly secular society in which pursuing the latest find is a national pastime (Dever 1990:169).*

It is the religion, however, and the knowledge produced by for instance Dever and his companions, that legitimise the misuse in a national pastime. The reaction to biblical archaeology, even in the Holy Land, must be that Near Eastern archaeology gives a clearer picture of the past, a picture different from that of the Bible, and thus biblical archaeology has failed in its attempt to integrate the two different disciplines. William Dever concludes in *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research* (Dever 1990:171-172):

We may or may not someday be able to demonstrate that all the events recorded in the Bible did or did not take place, but in the end it matters very little. Religious consciousness leaps beyond event to meaning. Claims for truths of a higher order are simply not amenable to historical or archaeological investigation; nor do they

benefit by historical or archaeological confirmation. They are matters of faith.

So what then is the purpose of biblical archaeology? Archaeology and the Bible do not belong together, and biblical archaeology is a contradiction in terms. But, within the research horizon and perception of the world, including all ontological and epistemological truths, it is impossible for biblical archaeologists as long as they cling to the term 'biblical archaeology', to separate between the Bible and archaeology, and there will always be a hidden and biased agenda. Near Eastern archaeology by its very name opens up for other areas and emphases of investigation whereby it is possible to combine religion and research in other ways.

CHAPTER 4: BEYOND THE PAST – TOWARDS A FUTURE

Introduction

What is the role of archaeologists as researchers in the public sphere? It is just to admit, unfortunately, that most of the archaeology produced is only read by the archaeologists themselves. So what kind of pictures of the past exists in society in general? I will stress and put focus on the role of archaeology as a social practice rather than as a scientific practice. Or to put it another way, if the consequences of archaeological knowledge production as a social practice is not taken seriously, it is difficult to preserve a scientific and serious image. Our research influences ourselves as beings in the world because the knowledge produced is incorporated in the structuring of the society. We are unable to produce a 'pure' knowledge of the past.

The Power of the Past

Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley said 'archaeology is nothing if it is not critique' (Shanks & Tilley 1987:213). Science has to be anarchistic in its enterprise. It is construction by de-construction. Since data are changing, new data arise, other approaches and new knowledge are the basis of our prejudices, and we have different points of departure. A scientific practice has to criticise and be deconstructive if it is supposed to be constructive. A contemporary truth will be one of the best satisfactory explanations or understandings of a problem within our research horizon at a given moment, but this change through time. What is left is a temporary core of contemporary truths in a plural world. Science is always a dynamic, ambiguously defined and changing social practice. In its

very basis science has to be critical because if not, old paradigms and ideas will be retained no matter which arguments we use in the current discourse and debate.

The 'scientific' part of science is an interwoven part of science as a social practice. By this I mean that the knowledge produced by for instance archaeologists is transferred from one sphere to another, from the archaeologists to other segments of society. By this transformation the archaeologists to a great extent lose their possibilities of controlling how their knowledge is used. We produce the past, but we do not control it. Others may use the knowledge as different means to some other end, in this case nationalism.

The role of science as a social practice can be explained based on the works of Michel Foucault (e.g. Foucault 1990, 1997). The problem has to be analysed in the light of the role archaeology plays in contemporary societies from an external point of view, and not only as an internal discourse among fellow scientists. What is the role of archaeology? Or to put it another way, do non-archaeologists believe what we are saying about the past (at least to some degree)? I will argue and believe that the answer is 'yes'. Archaeologists are supposed to know most about archaeology and the past. Therefore we have, hopefully, more credibility than laymen and people in general with regards to the interpretation of the past as more true and better than other versions of the past, as for instance Eric von Däniken's explanations of certain phenomena. If I am right in these assumptions, then society accepts our versions of the past because there is a kind of confidence in the relation between archaeologists and society, or in other words, between the knowledge produced and the knowledge used and consumed.

Society, regarding the past, relies upon archaeologists. This is a huge responsibility. The crucial point in this argument is that archaeologists produce knowledge, and this knowledge is related to power. Knowledge is a condition of the possibilities of power relations, because power creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and bodies of information, and thus, power is not only

negative, but also both positive and linked with the production of knowledge (Miller & Tilley 1984:6). Power in this definition is not a group of institutions or mechanisms as a general system of dominance exerted by one group on another.

It is important to distinguish between *power to* and *power over*. *Power over* is mechanisms that enable an agent (individual or collective) to get another agent to do something he or she otherwise would not have done. As Miller & Tilley argue, *power to* is a component of all social interaction and a feature embedded in all social practices, and henceforth, power 'conceived as a dialectical moment in interaction draws upon and creates resources and is present through its effects; on this basis it may be attributed to individuals, groups, institutions etc.' (Miller & Tilley 1984:7).

In this regard I will argue that archaeology in society has the *power to* something, both positive and negative. But there is asymmetry in the power relations. Those who control the past control the present and the future. Even though archaeologists produce the knowledge of the past, they have only *power to* change the past, especially internally within an academic discourse, but they do not have *power over* the past in the society. The *power over* the past is ruled out by other social institutions in the society, as for instance governments. There are often contradictions between those who have the *power to* change and construct the past and those who have the *power over* the past in the society. We are talking about different pasts. It is possible to distinguish between 'the author's speech', the specific arguments of an author, and 'the regime speech', the official appropriation of archaeological writings. When archaeology and nationalism is concerned, attention is mainly drawn to 'the regime speech' (Fabião 1996:90). Biblical archaeology and Israel as a nation state have a mutual interest in a certain type of archaeological interpretation and explanation, and in this case there are no differences between 'the author's speech' and 'the regime's speech'. This integration of scholarly debate and the state's interest in

archaeology gives strength to the political and ideological use of the past.

Archaeologists, as knowledge producers, are in general too passive in their role watching how the knowledge of the past is managed, used or misused by others. Because we have the *power to* change the past and thereby the contemporary society, and since there is a kind of confidence in the relations between archaeologists as scientists and the rest of the society, it is our responsibility and duty to say whether the past is misused. Archaeologists construct the past. The 'past' used as an argument for various purposes in society does not necessarily correspond to the past constructed by the archaeologists.

In this regard the *power to* mechanisms as executed by archaeologists will be a part of the relations of interdependence, involving the situated activities of human subjects. Structures are properties of social systems or collectives. Social systems only exist in and through structuring, as the outcome of the contingent acts of a multiplicity of human beings. 'Structures' can be identified as 'sets or matrices of rule-resource properties governing transformations', and thus 'structure is both enabling and constraining' (Giddens 1982:35-37). Archaeologists may give the premises for the past twice, first in the production of knowledge and secondly in the use of this knowledge. In this way it should probably be possible to avoid and prevent at least some misuse of the past. One ethnic group's glamorous past is ideologically a lethal tool in a multi-ethnic society.

The differences between *power to* and *power over* the past may be analysed further with the concept introduced by Foucault, namely the *archive* (Foucault 1997). The archive defines the system of statements' enunciability and functioning, it defines a level of a practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated. 'It is the general system of formation and transformation of statements' (Foucault 1997:130).

This relates to the second round of premises given by archaeologists, or how the knowledge is supposed to be used. The main point is that long after certain hypotheses have disappeared from the scientific discourse, they may exist in the society as though they represented scientific statements. This problem raises fundamental concerns for the role of science in society. Norman G. Finkelstein illuminates such a problem, although not archaeological in its essence but with archaeological implications. In 1984 Joan Peters' study *From Time Immemorial* on the origin of the Israel-Palestine conflict evoked an enormous interest, and the book was praised by all². Her hypothesis was that a significant proportion of the 700,000 Arabs residing in the parts of Palestine that became Israel had only recently settled, and that they had migrated to Palestine only because of the economic opportunities generated by the Zionist settlement. And therefore, according to Peters, the industrious Jewish immigrants had as much or even more rights to the territory than the Palestinian 'newcomers' (Finkelstein, N. G 1995:21-23). The basis in Joan Peters' thesis was that those who called themselves Palestinians had, each and all, falsified their genealogies.

However, other researchers from 1985 and onward revealed the book as being ludicrous, worthless, sheer forgery and rubbish, except perhaps as a propaganda weapon in Israel, because all the data were manipulated and false (Finkelstein, N. G 1995:23-50). But the knowledge once produced prevails in the society long after scientists have rejected it. The knowledge functions as an archive in the society which the researchers only have the *power to* mechanism for changing, but not the *power over* mechanism for controlling. These *power to* mechanisms might be weak compared with the *power over* mechanism of those who control the society and the past. An example of this is exactly Joan Peters' hypothesis which, rejected by fellow scientists, nevertheless, still prevailed as 'knowledge' and an

² In April 1985 *From Time Immemorial* was awarded the prestigious National Jewish Book Award in the 'Israel' category (Finkelstein, N. G. 1995:45).

'argument' almost a decade later. In 1993 the Israel Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu observed in a tone of scholarly pretension that

Beginning with the first wave of Zionist immigration in 1880 and continuing through successive waves and after World War I, [Palestine] was rapidly transformed (...) And as Jewish immigration increased their numbers, it also caused a rapid increase in the Arab population. Many of the Arabs immigrated into the land in response to the job opportunities and the better life afforded by the growing economy the Jews had created (op. cit. Finkelstein, N. G. 1995:49-50).

This illuminates the role of science as a social practice in society. It is not enough to just produce the knowledge. This is one of the reasons for my criticism; I want to undermine some of the premises and interpretations made by archaeologists before they end in the archive as a source for *power over* mechanism. Although it is probably all too late, it is nevertheless important to illuminate the problems with biblical and Israeli nationalist archaeological interpretative practice.

Hazor and Israelite Cities

The methodology used by biblical archaeologists is also prevalent among Israeli nationalist archaeologists. Rather than repeating the culture-historical paradigm with examples from Israeli archaeology, it is sufficient to point out how ethnic groups are ascribed to the past. 'Canaanites' are defined as the '*inhabitants of the land of Canaan, who shared a common language, religion, material and culture*' (Wigoder 1986:208). The past's Israelites become today's Israelis; today's Palestinians are descendents of other groups but it does not really matter who they were because they are denied access to a past which can give them territorial legitimacy. The Israelites got their promised

land and escaped from slavery to freedom, not once in history, but twice.

In Israel, archaeological activity started just after the foundation of the state in 1948. The first excavation was directed by B. Mazar at Tell Quasile (1948-1951, 1956) on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. The field developed rapidly, mainly due to the work of Israeli archaeologists but also because of foreign expeditions. The Israeli founders of biblical archaeology – scholars such as B. Mazar, Sh. Yeivin, Y. Yadin, N. Avigad, and Y Aharoni – were to a great extent follower of Albright's approach regarding the role of archaeology in relation to biblical studies (Mazar 1993:15).

The extensive excavations at Hazor between 1955 and 1958 directed by Yigael Yadin were a workshop for a whole young generation of archaeologists (Mazar 1993:16). The first generation of Israeli archaeologists chose to excavate sites of biblical or Jewish interests such as Hazor (aimed at solving the problem of the conquest of the Holy Land), Megiddo (the city of Solomon), Masada and the Judean Desert caves from the time of Bar Kochba (Broshi 2001:30-31).

Israel's outstanding archaeologist, Professor Yigael Yadin, was like Moshe Dayan a former general and chief of staff. Professor Yadin had said that for young Israelis a 'belief in history' will be a substitute for the religious faith:

Through archaeology they discover their 'religious values'. In archaeology they find their religion. They learn that their forefathers were in this country 3,000 years ago. This is a value. By this they fight and by this they live... (Elon 1971:281).

The first generation of Israeli archaeologists showed a particular interest for Jewish themes after 1948. Elon characterised these entrepreneurs as 'the patriotic archaeologists', referring to the archaeologist who directs 'his efforts to the exploration of the country's Israelite past, often to the exclusion of the other rich and

fascinating products: Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Moslem and Crusader...Archaeological excavation, as opposed to the restoration of existing sites, primarily done to promote the tourist industry, has largely been restricted to Jewish objects' (Elon 1971:281).

According to the Bible, Hazor was one of the greatest city states in Canaan when Joshua conquered the city, and apart from Jericho, it was the only city which was completely burnt by Joshua; 'Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms' (Joshua 11:10). Thus, Hazor is one of the most important cities in the Holy land. In the Egyptian Execration Texts of the 19th century BCE the ruler of Hazor is mentioned. 'Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. And they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing. Then he burnt Hazor with fire' (Josh 11:10-11). According to the Bible, after the conquest Hazor was allotted to Naphtali and it was one of the royal cities in Solomon's kingdom (Josh 19:36, 1 Kgs 9:15). The city of Hazor has been identified at the huge mound of Tell Hazor north of the sea of Galilee (Wigoder 1986:431).

The first season of excavation started in 1955, and it was already clear by the end of this season that beneath the late Citadels (dating from Assyrian, Persian and Hellenistic Periods) laid an enormous Israelite Citadel and a ramified system of fortifications. The destruction of this Citadel was dated to 732 BC and the work of this destruction was credited Tiglath-Pileser III. Moreover, the beginnings of the Israeli settlement of the Tell were before Solomon founded the city proper and laid bare the Canaanite levels of Middle Bronze Age II and Late Bronze Age corresponding to those in the Lower Canaanite City (Yadid 1960:xxi-xxii).

The difference between these examples and the methodological discussion in chapter 2 is that no explicit reasons are given when ethnic labels are ascribed. Regarding Hazor, the whole stratigraphical stratum is described as 'Israelite' (Yadid 1960:43).

There are very few explicit theoretical discussions of how it is possible to ascribe ethnic identity and how ethnicities are addressed to the past. Most often pottery sherds and stratigraphical layers 'just become' Israelite, Phoenician, Philistine, and so forth. The problem is when these layers, pots or cities once are labelled, the labels never disappear. Similarly, biblical references are normally not mentioned but just appear explicit in the historical narratives such as 'David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital in about 1000 BCE' (Broshi 2001:181). The documentation and references of persons and places are *a priori* truths and facts that are neither worth referring to nor discuss theoretically. These hidden prejudices constitute the agenda, and by dismissing the term 'biblical archaeology' and by advocating 'Syro-Palestinian' archaeology they become even more distant and irrelevant. The past 'just appears' seemingly innocent, but still clothed in biblical narratives and ethnic labels.

During the 1990s there have been a lot of discussion regarding the archaeology of Palestine, and numerous scholars have argued strongly for the substitution of 'biblical archaeology' with 'Syro-Palestinian' archaeology. The chief protagonist has been W. G. Dever (Broshi 2001:25-26). But the change of nomenclature does not matter. There is one thing that never change; *the use of the biblical narrative as the dominant interpretative framework*. Even though the label of biblical archaeology is changed and the majority of the new generation of archaeologists is not using the culture-historical interpretative framework, the problem still persists. *These Israelite cities are, together numerous other sites, Israeli sites, not Arab or Palestinian sites*, although it is evidently that many of them have both earlier and later occupation phases. Thus, the consequence is that the past as interpreted within the culture-historical paradigm prevails, although in camouflage. The stratigraphical layers beneath and above the 'Israelite' layers are inferior but most often irrelevant because they are not a part of Israel's history. It does not matter if post-modern theories are applied to all other sites and periods as long as those sites which give Israel as a nation state legitimacy remain 'Israelite',

meaning 'Israeli'. The past as it is perceived today is based on the culture-historical paradigm.

The spatial patterning of ancient Israeli towns which are described in the Bible can be seen as a process of colonialism. The distribution patterns of the ancient Israelite towns on maps seem quite identical to maps showing today's settlements of new settlers in the Palestinian areas or occupied territories. The Ancient Israel as it is documented and mapped in the current Holy Land gives legitimacy to the current territorial claims. Excavations of other people's sites are, seen from an ideological perspective, means which give legitimacy to an asymmetrical relation between contemporary groups, basically meaning the Israeli presence on the expanse of the Palestinians. When sites and cities are ascribed with ethnic labels, the Palestinians' sites are always inferior to the Israelis'. When the past once is conquered and colonised, it is almost impossible to reverse and de-colonise it. Amos Elon pointed out this:

It is intriguing in this context to observe the extraordinary appeal of archaeology as a popular pastime and science in Israel. The millennia-spanning mixture of ancient and modern history, coupled with notions of 'controversial' legitimacy, combine to produce this peculiarly syndrome. Archaeological finds have inspired nearly all Israeli national symbols, from the State Seal, to emblems, coins, medals and postage stamps. For the disquieted Israeli, the moral comforts of archaeology are considerable. In the political culture of Israel, the symbolic role of archaeology is immediately evident. Israeli archaeologists, professional and amateurs, are not merely digging for knowledge and objects, but for the reassurance of roots, which they find in the ancient Israelite remains scattered throughout the country (Elon 1971:280).

Museums are important weapons in this colonialism. The Israel museum was opened on 11 May 1965. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion delivered a speech in Knesset on May 30, 1960, during a

debate concerning the budget allocation for 'the National Museum of Israel':

As it befits an ancient people, dedicated to the values of the spirit throughout its tortured history and now reviving its independence in its ancient land, Israel, in its twelfth year of statehood, is about to establish a National Museum. It will rise in Jerusalem, city of King David, amidst the timeless Judean hills...Despite the daily preoccupations with defence and security, economic and social development, and housing the newcomers, it has been resolved to spend part of our resources, energy and talent in what is destined to become the most impressive cultural centre in the country (op. cit. Weyl 1995:8).

Conquering the Past and the Present

Returning to the former General and Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan, his biography *Living with the Bible* is possible to read as a documentary of the relation between war and archaeology. Apart from being the chief of the army and a politician, Dayan was an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist, and he collected and bought archaeological objects everywhere. Dayan's archaeological collection was the largest private collection amassed by an Israeli, and just recently acquired by the Israel Museum (Broshi 2001:31).

The Israelis have re-conquered the Holy Land twice, first archaeologically and then military or these two types of wars and victories seem to go hand in hand. Israel's war of independence is compared to Joshua's war, the battles of Jericho and Ai are taken as evidences, but what differs between Joshua's battles and the modern Israel's campaigns was that the latter were conducted from and within the country itself. General Dayan says, 'To me, David Ben-Gurion was the Moses of our time, which witnesses the resurrection of the nation of Israel and its restoration to its land. Like Moses, Ben-

Gurion set the people of Israel a dual objective: to return to their homeland; and to be a “moral nation”. Like Moses, Ben-Gurion was a unique figure’ (Dayan 1978:77).

For seven hundred years – from 1276 until 8 June 1967 – the structure above the traditional Cave of Machpelah and the cave itself had been barred to Jews. On the fourth day of the Six Day War when the Israeli army captured Hebron the seven-hundred-year anti-Jewish ban was broken, and Jews entered the building which marks the tombs of the patriarchs. Tens of thousands of Jewish visitors came to the tombs of the patriarchs after the Six Day War (Dayan 1978:46). After the Six Day War Dayan visited often the West Bank and he was delighted to see objects and loved to read words on silver coins written in ancient Hebrew script: ‘Israel Shekel’; ‘Jerusalem the Holy’; ‘Year One of the Freedom of Jerusalem’, ‘Year Two of the Freedom of Israel’, and so on. However, he felt more drawn to the earlier periods; to the patriarchs, Joshua and king David (Dayan 1978:109-110).

Moses crossed the Red Sea. ‘Not until 3,300 years later did the children of Israel return to Goshen. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, an Israel army force crossed the Suez Canal and captured the territory between Ismailia and the Gulf of Suez. The troops called it Goshen’, but Dayan ‘tried to convince them that the biblical Goshen lay somewhere further to the north’ (Dayan 1978:64). The past is used as metaphors for current warfare, and even the fight between David and Goliath is used as a symbolic expression of courage and bravery.

Goliath was heavily armoured and his weapons were huge and massive. David rapidly whirled his sling and cast a stone at the exposed forehead of Goliath, and Goliath collapsed and fell flat on his face. ‘The victory of David over Goliath has become a symbol of the victory of the weak over the mighty, the victory of the spirit, of courage and faith pitted against physical strength and armour [...] The state of Israel, in its thirty years’ existence and its victory over the Arabs in the four wars, is a perfect expression of the symbolism

in the David-Goliath duel' (Dayan 1978:183-184). Today, this metaphor seems at best odd.

The past is powerful, but it is not only the 'conquest of Canaan' that is used in a contemporary context. The fall of Masada in the Judean Desert is a political metaphor involving the past in Israel. A group of Jewish freedom fighters fled to Masada in AD 70 after the Romans' conquest of Jerusalem and were captured by the Romans at the end of their Great Revolt against Rome in AD 73. But when the Romans took the fortress, the freedom fighters committed suicide rather than surrender themselves. According to the legend, 960 people died. Two thousand years later the splendour of this tragedy is still powerful, even though the mythical narratives are a fabricated moralistic claim (Ben-Yehuda 1995:3-5). This archaeological site is a political pilgrimage monument in Israel, which is also the most profitable tourist attraction in modern Israel.

Elazar Ben-Yair, the last commander of the Sicarii of Masada, who persuaded his people to kill one another (Josephus Flavius, op.cit. Ben-Yehuda 1995:vii), said:

Brave and loyal followers! Long ago we resolved to serve neither the Romans nor anyone other than God...The time has now come that bids us prove our determination by our deeds. At such a time we must not discourage ourselves. We must not choose slavery now...And I think it is God who has given us the privilege, that we can die nobly and as free men...we are free to choose an honourable death with our loved ones. This our enemies cannot prevent, however earnestly they may pray to take us alive; nor can we defeat them in battle. Let our wives die unabused, our children without knowledge of slavery [...] we choose death rather than slavery...Come! While our hands are free to hold a sword, let them do a noble service! Let us die unenslaved by our enemies, and leave this world as free men in company with our wives and children.

Then they committed suicide. This event has been an important part in the very definition of Jewish and Israeli identity. Masada has a fundamental role in every kind of Jewish life, and this event is interwoven in cultural and official spheres. In a booklet called *Facts about Israel* published in 1985 by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the official version of Masada is this (Ben-Yehuda 1995:13):

Masada (70-73 ce): Nearly one thousand Jewish men, women and children who had survived the fall of Jerusalem refused to surrender to Rome. They took over King Herod's fortress on the steep rock-mountain of Masada by the Dead Sea. For three years they managed to hold their own against repeated Roman attempts to dislodge them. When the Romans finally broke through, they found that the Jews had committed suicide so as not to surrender to the enemy.

Moshe Dayan, the famous Israeli chief-of-staff and politician, said in 1983 that 'Today, we can only point to the fact that Masada has become a symbol of heroism and of liberty for the Jewish people to whom it says: Fight to death rather than surrender; Prefer death to bondage and loss of freedom' (Ben-Yehuda 1995:14). The slogan 'Masada shall not fall again!' is in all spheres of society a vow that what happened then shall never happen again.

Masada was excavated by professor Yadin – the former Israeli general – in the years 1963-1965. He was assisted by thousands of Israeli and foreign volunteers. Yadin's account of the Israeli volunteers is filled with descriptions of their enthusiasm: 'It was an unforgettable moment. Suddenly a bridge was thrown across two thousand years...How great was their satisfaction, and our, when they – the young generation of the independent State of Israel – uncovered with their own hands the remains of the defenders of Masada' (Elon 1971:287). As a part of their training, hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the Israeli Army have climbed up Masada over the years. Until around 1991 soldiers from the Israeli armoured units had to climb to Masada after completion of their basic training,

to swear allegiance to Israel and the army in a dramatic ceremony (Ben-Yehuda 1995:147). A characteristic remark made by Yadin during a speech during a national-ritual army ceremony at Masada in the summer of 1963 has often been quoted:

When Napoleon stood among his troops next to the pyramids of Egypt, he declared: 'Four thousand years of history look down upon you.' But what would he not have given to be able to say to his men: 'Four thousand years of your own history look down upon you...' The echo of your oath this night will resound throughout the encampments of our foes! Its significance is not less powerful than all our armaments! (Elon 1971:288).

Archaeology is more important than the army; pottery sherds are more powerful than pistols; the past is what guarantees the future. Conquering the past is therefore an ideological warfare which gives legitimacy to the conquering of present territories. At Masada in a similar ceremony in 1990, Yitzhak Ben-Ari, a famous tank-unit commander in the Israeli Army, said:

Don't forget that there was a Holocaust. And we wanted to make sure that 'Masada shall not return,' that we should not reach a situation of Masada. We are here in a place where people committed suicide, took their lives [...] and it was clear to people that we have returned to [our] homeland and that is the role of each fighter in [the army] to help this idea into being, that we shall never fortify ourselves again on Masada [...](Ben-Yehuda 1995:156).

Archaeological monuments are political monuments, but propaganda is not science. Glis pointed out as early as 1964 while Masada was still being excavated, that because the suicide was a tragedy which reflected an ideology that was antithetical to Judaism.

There is propaganda focused on the excavations of Masada. This propaganda aims to place Masada at the centre of Israeli life during the period of the destruction of the Second Temple. The propaganda aims to present Masada...as a 'symbol for generations'...We must speak of Masada knowing that 'this is not the way' and not the tradition of Israel...We must tell our children...that Masada is not a symbol, that it never was a symbol, and that it never will be a symbol. The only sense in which it can be a symbol is in what should not be, and for an ideology that must be kept away and never be accepted (op.cit Ben-Yehuda 1995:231).

Amos Elon argues that myth-faking appears frequently when new nations produce symbols of a false, 'unbroken' past; a political continuity uninterrupted through the centuries and even the millennia. 'Israel has not escaped such myth-faking. Fake myths of the past can produce a fake, and sometimes a dangerous, present. The insistent search for authentic roots into the distant history of the country at times ignores', as Elon warns, 'three thousands years of subsequent Jewish history and ethics by reaching back directly to the barbaric Hebrew tribes of ancient times' (Elon 1971:282). In other words, the apprehension and value of later cultural traditions might be obstructed and obscured by the search for origins which are supposed to define some authentic 'ethnic core' or 'substance'.

Nevertheless, towns and sites once labelled 'Israelite' remain 'Israeli' no matter if it is impossible to advocate these ethnic labels according to new theories. It is the entire intellectual framework by which the past has been understood that needs to be changed.

The biblical account has been used to justify conquest of land in different regions, and Michael Prior argues that scholars have to make a moral stance when the Bible is used for contemporary, ideological and political purposes. 'Any association of God with the destruction of people must be subjected to an ethical analysis. The obvious contradiction between what some claim to be God's will and ordinary civilized, decent behaviour poses the question as to

whether God is a chauvinistic, nationalistic and militaristic xenophobe' (Prior 1997:13). Prior argues further, 'Biblical studies and theology should concern themselves with the real conditions of people's lives, and not satisfy themselves with comfortable survival in an academic or ecclesial ghetto' (Prior 1999:xii).

In the words of Michael Prior, 'Uniquely in the discourse of colonialist enterprises, Zionists not only protests their innocence, but, even while perpetrating the comprehensive oppression of another people, they retain the psychology of victims, and even blame the victims' (Prior 1997:298). The sufferings caused by the Zionist enterprise requires scholars to re-examine the biblical, theological and moral dimensions of the question (Prior 1999:xiii).

Archaeology and Palestine

Since it is impossible to argue against the presence of inhabitants prior to the 'emergence' of Israel, the standard procedure in political use of the past has been to deny their achievements or their right to exist (Whitelam 1997:57). The Palestinians are

a people without history – or deprived of that history by the discourse of biblical studies – they become unimportant, irrelevant, and finally non-existent. It is an act of interpretation presented as objective scholarship, carrying the full weight of Western intellectual institutions, which is intricately bound to the dominant understanding of the present in which the modern state of Israel has made an 'empty' and 'barren' land blossom (...) The discourse of biblical studies has steadfastly refused to acknowledge that the construction of the past is a political act. Biblical scholars and archaeologists have sought to escape to the haven of objectivity effectively ignoring, or even denying, the context in which they work and the contexts in which they work is received and read (Whitelam 1997:46, 128).

Palestinian history must cover all aspects of the region's history independent of the Hebrew Bible. Palestinian history demands its own time and space, something which it has been denied for more than a century by the discourse of biblical studies (Whitelam 1997:69). As we have seen, when one nation has anchored their history within a certain geographical area, other histories are denied time and space. This is how nationalism works. 'Nationalism is innovation, using selected fragments of the past to build a new house. That is only forgery if we pretend the new house is the old one' (Ascherson 1988:62). Nations are new constructions, and the denial of an ethnic group's right to found a nation-state is a political act, not a scientific truth. It is a scientific task to point out that these constructions are new, and thereby undermine the power of the past.

The Zionist claim to Palestine rests on one or a combination of the following arguments: (1) divine right, (2) historical right, and (3) compelling need (Finkelstein, N. G. 1995:100). The question then is why Israel has used a 'German' interpretative practice to legitimate the nation-state. This legitimacy practice has been a part of the basis for the Israel nation-state from the very beginning. Hans Kohn (he was a Zionist himself at one time) remarked on the nationalism that

According to the German theory, people of common descent or speaking a common language should form one common state. Pan-Germanism was based on the idea that all persons who were of German race, blood or descent, wherever they lived or to whatever state they belonged, owned their primary loyalty to Germany and should become citizens of the German state, their true homeland. They, and even their fathers and forefathers, might have grown up under 'foreign' skies or in 'alien' environments, but their fundamental inner 'reality' remained German (Kohn 1971:817).

The Zionist approach is based on analogous assumptions; indeed, the Zionist analysis of the Jewish Question duplicated the reasoning of anti-Semitism, which invoked the same argument to justify Jew-

hatred. To achieve this aim the Jews had to constitute them somewhere as the majority because the crucial cultural institutions in any society are subordinate to the state and the state always bear the imprint of the majority nation (Finkelstein, N. G. 1995:8-10).

This criticism of Israel is relevant for most of today's nation-states because many of these ideas and structuring principles constitute the basis for nations and nationalism (e.g. Østigård 2001). In fact, the Israelis only duplicated a more general approach to the creation of their nation-state. Nevertheless, biblical archaeologists have produced 'unquestionable scientific truths' about the origin and the Israelites' historical claims to the territory. The problem is that in a multi-ethnic society this approach is the wrong solution to questions concerning territorial claims.

Edward W. Said argues in *The Question of Palestine* that 'we must understand the struggle between Palestinians and Zionism as a struggle between a presence and an interpretation, the former constantly appearing to be overpowered and eradicated by the latter' (Said 1980:8). The past is still a foreign country. The establishments of nation-states are recent phenomena involving arguments and power mechanisms that are beyond any archaeological or scientific discourse. The only archaeological (or biblical) argument I can see as valid and a basis for further discussion is that there have existed multi-ethnic societies in Transjordan and Palestine for several millennia. Therefore, it is totally irrelevant to argue about who came first and thereby legitimise access to land and territory by myths of a past ethnicity.

Archaeology is about politics, or at least archaeology has political consequences. From a political point of view, there are two main approaches to how the past is used to give territorial legitimacy to ethnic groups today. One approach turns into nationalism, chauvinism and discrimination based on past achievements. This approach is difficult to defend from a scientific point of view because these ideas rest mainly on the out-dated culture-historical paradigm. The other approach favours a democratic and pluralistic past which

renders possible a multi-ethnic present, and these interpretations are more or less in accordance with contemporary archaeological theory.

The Temple Mount

Jerusalem is a holy town and pilgrimage site for three of the world's religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Moreover, some of the monuments and holy shrines have references to more than one of the religions, and as such, they are sites of conflict and contest. Nobody can really legitimise why archaeology is important, but if there is a solution to this problem, it exists in Jerusalem. In *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* (1988) it is written regarding Israel:

Following the United Nations partitions of Palestine, Israel emerged on May 15, 1948. It was the first Jewish state to be established in nearly 2,000 years. Its creation represented a fulfilment of the historical ideal of the Jewish people stemming from traditional religious belief in God's promise of the land of Israel to the people of Israel. The ideal found practical expression in a desire to forge a nation without dependence on the goodwill of others. The establishment of Israel as a member of the family of nations signified a decisive step in modern Jewish history.

This involves the legitimacy of a physical presence for the future by claiming historical rights. The problem is that when one nation is 'anchored' in a certain territory, within that limited geographical space or territory there are no possibilities for other nations to 'anchor'. In Jerusalem, the anchoring of the past is manifested at the Temple Mount. The Arabs control the major part of this area. The Temple Mount is a manifestation of the problems and the inter-relatedness of religion and ethnicity by using the past for a future.

The Temple Mount is reckoned and worshipped in both Jewish and Islamic tradition as the area of Mount Moriah where Abraham

offered his son in sacrifice (Genesis 22:1-18; the Koran, Sura Al-Saffat 37:102-110). 'Then Solomon began to build the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. It was on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David, his father.' (2 Chronicles 3:1). According to the Old Testament, King Solomon built the First Temple almost 3,000 years ago (an interpretation that is disputed theologically and archaeologically). The Babylonians destroyed the temple in 586 BCE, but 70 years later the Jews on the same place built the Second Temple. The Bible says, 'And they will pray to You through the land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You chose, and the house which I have built in your name' (I Kings 8:48). Accordingly, those who pray abroad should direct themselves toward Israel, those living in Israel should direct their prayers to Jerusalem, and those living in Jerusalem should direct their prayers towards the Temple.

In Muslim tradition, this place is identified as the 'furthermost sanctuary' from which the Prophet Mohammed, accompanied by the Angel Gabriel, made the night journey to God's throne; 'Glory be to Him who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Sanctuary to the farthest Sanctuary, whose precincts We did bless....' (The Koran, Sura Al-Isra' 17:1). After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70, the area of the Temple was deliberately left in ruins until the Muslim conquest of the city by the Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab in 638. He ordered the clearing of the site and the building of a 'house of prayer'. The Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (685-705) built the Dome of the Rock – 'place of the sacrifice' on Mount Moriah – in 691 (or sometime between 685-692). Scholars disagree where the Jewish Temple was located, but there is an agreement that it is more or less located under the Doom of the Rock. The Caliph built also, or according to some his son, the Caliph al-Walid I (705-715), the large mosque at the southern end of the Haram, which came to be called al-Aksa, which is also the Koranic name for the entire area.

The al-Aksa mosque is the Jerusalem mosque, and it stands on the top of the ancient Hebrew substructures called 'the stables of Solomon' by Arab authors. It is located south of the Dome and together they form an inseparable whole – similar to the placement of the Church of Resurrection and the adjacent Holy Sepulchre. The mosque has been rebuilt several times. The political aspects of this location are not unproblematic. 'Al-Aksa refers to the covered part of the Umayyad sanctuary of Jerusalem, for the entire Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) was considered a vast place of prayers and prostration. This area is none other than the ancient *temenos* of the Temple of Solomon, covering a space of 430 meters by 300 meters, whose central terrace, on which the Dome of the Rock stands, measures 190 meters by 130 meters' (Stierlin 1996:38-40).

The Western Wall is also called the Wailing Wall. In The Talmud (Brachos 32) it is written that when the Temple was destroyed, all the Gates of Heaven closed. But there was one exception: the Gate of Tears. Therefore, this wall is known as the 'Wailing Wall' because of all the tears Jews have shed there. The Western Wall is the only remaining part of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. According to the rabbinic beliefs the Divine presence will never depart from this wall. The Wall is a symbol of the Jewish people because just as there have been many efforts to destroy this Wall, it remains eternal, and this is similar to the Jewish People who have outlived their enemies. Today the wall is a part of the larger wall that surrounds the Dome of the Rock, and consequently, the access to the area is controversial and a political topic. Who owns the past in such a situation?

The waqf started construction works on the Temple Mount. The waqf is a religious organisation and endowment regulated by Islamic law. Revenues from the waqf finance among other things mosques. Trucks and bulldozers loaded with soil and other remains are removed from the Mount to the Jerusalem city dumps. This dirt removal is destruction of archaeological strata and data, which is unacceptable from any kind of archaeological point of view.

Regardless of contemporary ethnicity and religion, this case illuminates a major problem with contemporary society's relation with archaeology; the past is mobilised on national, ethnic and religious basis.

In January 2001 the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau accused Israel of making a historic mistake when the nation gave control over the holy site to the Moslem authority just after the Six Day War, or according to Lefkovits and Shapiro:

Any nation who does not know how to safeguard its past has no possible future,' Lau said in a message to Barak that claimed Israel made a 'historic mistake' when it relinquished control of the Temple Mount to the Jordanian-appointed Wakf after the 1967 Six Day War. After Israel captured east Jerusalem in the war, then-defence minister Moshe Dayan ordered that the keys to the Temple Mount be returned to the Moslems. He feared Israeli control could provoke a religious war with the entire Moslem world. But Lau said Dayan made a terrible mistake. 'Handing over the keys of the Temple Mount to the Wakf was a major historic mistake over which generations will weep,' Lau said in his message, in which he also accused Moslem authorities of systematically destroying archaeological remains from the temples (...) 'The Western Wall and the Temple Mount are not anyone's private property. A people that does not know how to honour its roots has no right to dream and plan its future,' he said. Referring to Islam and Christianity, Lau said the Jewish people's bond to Jerusalem and the holy places was established before the other religions came into the world (Lefkovits and Shapiro 2001).

The traditional reasoning and appealing to ethnicity and religion emphasise the 'roots' of a people. The logic is that without a past, there is no future. The Chairman of Knesset Education Committee, Zevulun Orlev, said:

There is no ethnic dispute here, it is a dispute over sovereignty – does the State of Israel enforce its laws on the Temple Mount or not?’ Committee member MK Silvan Shalom (Likud) disagreed: ‘It is not just a question of violating the Antiquities Law, which is an important issue in itself. There are also deep religious-political ramifications: We heard from several sources that the reason the Waqf is doing this is to prevent the Jews from being able to pray on the only place on the Temple Mount (Arutz-7, Dec 5, 99).

The Justice Minister Yossi Beilin argued on the same premises emphasising that ‘Ever since 1967, no Israeli government has tried to fully exercise Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount. The issue there is a very sensitive one... and every Moslem home boasts a photograph of the Al-Aksa Mosque’ (cited in Arutz-7, Dec 6, 99). The destruction of parts of this area is called ‘the largest destruction at the Temple Mount since the razing of the Second Temple’. Moshe Feiglin, head of the Zo Artzeinu (This is Our Land) organisation, emphasised that ‘The Moslem Waqf well understands the significance of what [it has done], and is already attempting to cover these finds with piles of garbage.’ In a letter to the Jerusalem Police Chief and the Head of Antiquities Authorities, he wrote, ‘Your immediate and primary job must be to fence in the site, and to protect the past and future of the Jewish Nation. Please!’ (Arutz-7, Dec 15, 99). Furthermore, he argued

How can we wage a struggle for the limbs of the nation, if we turn our backs on the heart of the Land, the heart of the nation? We must begin by telling the truth to ourselves, first of all. When we [Israel] took down the flag after capturing the Temple Mount in the Six Day War, that was the beginning of our collapse in Judea and Samaria and the Golan. The way to tell if there is life in a body is by stabbing it; if pain is felt, and if a scream is heard, this is a sign of life. Whoever comes to participate in tonight’s demonstration is reacting to the stabbing in the heart of the Jewish people, and is showing that

he feels pain and is still alive. This will be a show that Am Yisrael Chai – the People of Israel lives! (Arutz-7, Dec 27, 99).

Except of some demonstrations and objections from archaeologists, a lot of the criticism has been raised against the Israeli authorities themselves. They are accused of not taking action and defending their heritage. The ideological knowledge of the past is often more important than the sites and the monuments in themselves. Stratigraphy is one of the core concepts in archaeology. But stratigraphy is methodologically and not politically important. The basic axiom is that strata are superimposed one on another, and that the bottom series have been laid down earliest and those above it successively through time from the bottom to the top (Harris 1989:12-13). If various stratigraphical layers are connected to distinct ethnic groups we are once again back to the culture-historical paradigm and way of linking ethnicity to material correlates. To put it simply: One layer – one ethnic group. To erase one group's history is successively done by the destruction of the layer representative of that particular group. This is not only bad archaeology, it is even worse. If Muslims make the same mistakes as the Israelis, it will inevitably trigger off more tensions escalating the conflict regarding the contested past.

Culture Heritage – Problem or Solution?

The problem is how the Palestinians can create their own past without using the same interpretative practice as the biblical scholars. One way to do that is by writing the history of the peoples biblical scholars have neglected to write. Thus, it is possible to avoid a retroactive imperialism (Davies 1992:31), but rather to construct a democratic past. Only a plural past can give legitimacy to a plural present. If archaeology matters, then narratives of every group of humans in history are equally important.

The past is crucial in contemporary cultural constructions. National legislation of the cultural heritage is important in the constructions of these identities. Laws act as symbols of the importance of archaeology, and research and management are authorised through a firm protective legislation. Hence, archaeologists have to be aware of the implications of their constructions of pasts. To make a part of a people's history passive implies to deny the people parts of their identity and cultural heritage. Archaeological narratives are therefore inevitably of political importance. 'Heritage' is a wide, open resource for constructions of culture and identities.

'Heritage' is everything that belongs to the distinct identity of a people and which is theirs to share, if they wish, with other peoples. It includes all of those things which international law regards as the creative production of human thought and craftsmanship, such as songs, stories, scientific knowledge and artworks. It also includes inheritances from the past and from nature, such as human remains, and naturally-occurring species of plants and animals with which a people has long been connected (Daes 1993).

The past matters but to different peoples in different ways. The archaeologist is not a disinterested observer but part of the process whereby certain parts of the past are given importance. The academic debate may deny a public engagement with the past (Hodder 1998), as in the case of the Palestinians, but the problems persist.

'This is the point where relativism, so useful for getting inside the logic of cultural actions, has to stop and moral judgement begin. It is not difficult at all' (Taylor 2002:286). We have to be aware of the moral issues related to what we are doing.

Archaeology is a humanistic discipline seeking to investigate the past. 'The human sciences are "ontological" in the broad sense of concern with human existence' (Obeyesekere 1990:104). Thus, the

ontological quest for human sciences is a broad concern about human beings and being human. Based on history, archaeology, common principles for nation-states and indigenous rights, the Palestinians have equal rights to territory and land as the Israelis. If archaeology and the Bible cannot contribute to this aim, but rather stimulate and encourage nationalism, chauvinism, political misuse, struggle and war, society is better off without both archaeologists and biblical scholars.

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