

Chapter 1 : Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion - Oxford Handbooks

Archaeology and World Religion is an important new work, being the first to examine these two vast topics together. The volume explores the relationship between, and the contribution archaeology can make to the study of 'World Religions'.

Landscape, Water and Religion in Ancient India Landscape, Water and Religion in Ancient India This project is geared towards building integrated models of religious, economic and environmental history in central and western India through the documentation of ritual sites and water-resource structures in their archaeological landscape. A central question is how did the spread and institutionalisation of Buddhist and Brahmanical religious traditions between c. There are two major interrelated research themes: Religion in the Landscape; and Water and Civilisation, with three main geographical zones of application: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Research themes Religion in the Landscape The study of ancient Indian religion has long since been dominated by textual scholarship which has given priority to the Sanskrit tradition, and drawn on archaeology largely for supplementary evidence. Furthermore, until recently the site-based focus of South Asian archaeology has meant that ritual sites have tended to be studied in isolation from wider patterns in the landscape. This project has sought to build a more integrated approach to textual and archaeological scholarship on early Indian religion, focussing in particular on the following questions: What was the changing relationship between the state and religion? How did the different religious traditions attract local patronage networks? How did they relate to local agricultural communities? What was the nature of inter-religious dynamics? Water and Civilisation The development of advanced irrigation systems has been seen as a major factor in the rise of complex, urban societies in ancient India. However, a number of questions regarding the history and chronology of irrigation technology and its role in the wider economic, political and religious landscape, have remained unanswered. The traditional view, based largely on readings of problematically dated texts such as the Arthashastra, is that the building and management of irrigation works was dependent on centralised state administration. In recent years, these have undergone major revision following studies of more devolved systems of irrigation management in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia involving village councils and religious institutions. In India, however, traditional models have until recently remained unchallenged due in part to the paucity of archaeological research on irrigation. Steps towards redressing this problem have been taken in relation to a group of dams documented during the Sanchi Survey Project Madhya Pradesh with comparative studies in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Related outputs Shaw, J. Vivekananda International Foundation and Aryan Books, Sanchi hill and archaeologies of religious and social change, c. Chauhan, with contributions by E. Willis, with contributions by J. British Museum Press, Publications in preparation Shaw, J.

Chapter 2 : - Archaeology and World Religion by Timothy Insoll

Archaeology and World Religion is an important new work, being the first to examine these two vast topics together. The volume explores the relationship between, and the contribution archaeology can make to the study of 'World Religions', including, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and.

In recent years, archaeologists have become increasingly interested in the study of religion and ritual. The authors of this volume present a variety of strategies for the archaeological investigation of religion drawn from widely divergent geographic and temporal contexts. While necessarily including discussions of different theoretical understandings of religion, the central goal of the volume is to explore how archaeologists can effectively employ the material remains of past societies to construct informed understandings of religion and ritual. In this sense, the volume is a methodological primer on the archaeology of religion. A unifying theme of the essays is the value of using multiple perspectives or approaches. Different authors combine studies of iconography, symbolism, landscape, architecture, history, ethnohistory, and mortuary archaeology to construct theoretically sophisticated and methodologically robust understandings of ancient religion and ritual. In recent years, religion has become a popular topic in archaeology, with several edited volumes, review articles, and books either in print or in press. The thrust of much of this work, including one of my own contributions Fogelin b , was to challenge earlier proscriptions against archaeological studies of religion by archaeologists such as Lewis Binford and Christopher Hawkes Using theoretically sophisticated arguments these publications justify, I believe, the value of the archaeological study of religion. The chapters in this volume take this position as a starting point—the archaeology of religion is a legitimate venue for archaeological research. Fogelin tributors to this volume address how they have studied religion archaeologically. As such, this collection of essays is a methodological primer for the archaeological study of religion—with examples drawn from around the world. The aim of the conference was to allow archaeologists with interests from widely divergent areas to come together to compare their approaches to the archaeology of religion. For two days the participants in the conference gathered to discuss their approaches and share their research strategies. Over the course of the two days I was impressed by the marked similarities that many of the contributions shared. Particularly striking was an emphasis on combining insights from multiple research areas to approach ancient religion and ritual. In sum, the contributions to the conference addressed the uses of history, ethnohistory, iconography, architecture, landscape, and mortuary analysis in a bewildering number of combinations. Religion is a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single dimension or variable. While most of the participants shared a wide-ranging approach to their studies, there were some important differences in their understandings of religion. Among the most pronounced differences existed among those who saw religion, and therefore the archaeological study of religion, as symbolically oriented. Here religion was viewed more in terms of cosmological understandings and mythological enactments of meaning. Conference participants with this orientation saw the archaeology of religion as investigating the meaning of past rituals, symbols, and religious artifacts. In many cases, archaeologists who employed this perspective relied heavily on historic or ethnohistoric sources to inform their interpretations. Other participants, taking a more functionalist approach, focused on how the experience of religion and ritual served to promote forms of authority in the past. Finally, several participants actively argued against studying ritual in terms of meaning but rather for seeing ritual as a form of human action. Despite these differences in perspective and lively debates over these issues, I was impressed that most of the participants were not overly dogmatic in their perspectives. The conference participants were happy with any approach that seemed to work, and their research was stronger for it. As with their employment of wide-ranging methodologies, most participants were happy to use a variety of theoretical understandings of religion in their research if they thought they could help. Theories Though this volume takes a methodological approach to the archaeology of religion, the different theoretical understandings of religion are important for understanding the different methods that archaeologists employ. Among the most basic differences is how different authors understand some of the basic Methods for the Archaeology of Religion 3 concepts of religion. For the most part, these

theoretical understandings were created outside the discipline of archaeology by cultural anthropologists, sociologists, and scholars in religious studies. In borrowing these theories, archaeologists have been forced to derive material implications of often esoteric and metaphysical understandings of religion. This is not an easy or self-evident process. However, one central point seems to be clear. Whatever understanding of religion archaeologists bring to their research they must exploit the simple fact that religion is not simply of the mind but is made manifest in the material world. While all archaeologists must address the material remains of religion, there are important differences in the way that archaeologists view the relationship between material culture and religious beliefs see Fogelin a for an expanded discussion of this point. In some cases archaeologists take a more structural view of religion: These symbolically laden actions, in turn, order archaeological assemblages. From this perspective, the goal of archaeological studies of ancient religion is to identify the underlying meanings of religious practices. Other archaeologists take a more bottom-up view of religion: Other archaeologists see religion as a subset of ideology. Here religion is understood as creating and contesting relationships of power. Below I discuss each of these perspectives and the implications of these understandings of religion for the methodologies archaeologists can employ.

Practice Theory In the past few decades, a new approach to the study of religion has been promoted by a number of scholars in religious studies, sociology, and anthropology. This perspective, practice theory, explicitly rejects the top-down structural assumptions that have traditionally dominated discussions of religion see Bell , ; Bourdieu ; Comaroff ; Humphrey and Laidlaw ; Ortner Rather, practice theorists emphasize how the practice of ritual and religion serves to create and alter more esoteric religious principles. As stated by Bell, As practice, the most we can say [about ritual] is that it involves ritualization, that is, a way of acting that distinguishes itself from other ways of acting. Archaeologists have long recognized that the archaeological record is constructed not by human beliefs or cultures but rather by human behaviors or actions Schiffer , ; see also Walker 4 L. While none of the essays in this volume focus on nonreligious ritual, the characteristics that Bell provides could easily be adapted to this purpose. Rituals often employ more formal, or restricted, codes of speech and action than everyday life. Rituals often employ archaic or anachronistic elements. Rituals often follow strict, often repetitive, patterns. Rituals often are governed by a strict code of rules that determine appropriate behavior. Rituals often make reference to, or employ, sacred symbolism. Ritual often involves public display of ritual actions. Ritual density refers to the degree or amount of ritual that a society engages in. Bell notes that while some societies appear to engage in ritual constantly, others seem much more lax in their devotions. Moyes examines the density of rituals within Chechem Ha Cave in western Belize through careful examinations of the frequency of charcoal deposits from torches and of ceramic offerings within the cave. Further, the intensity of ritual can in turn be correlated with larger political, economic, and social issues in society as a whole.

Dominant Ideologies Another approach used by some contributors focuses more on how the practice of religion serves to promote and resist systems of authority. Here religion and the practice of ritual are viewed as a means for promoting elite power and hegemony Bloch ; DeMarrais et al. They conclude that rituals occurred in these villages that promoted Cahokian hegemony over its hinterlands. In essence, the rituals that Emerson and colleagues discuss served to naturalize the Cahokian orthodoxy among those people who lived in smaller, surrounding settlements. The same perspective is employed by Swenson Chapter 13 in his study of Moche ceremonial architecture. Like Emerson and colleagues he argues that the iconography and architecture employed by local elite in the Moche hinterlands served to promote a particular form of group identity that legitimized the rule of Moche elite. In contrast to Emerson and colleagues, Swenson pays particular attention to the ways that local Moche elite appropriated the ritual practices of the center to support their own local power. Laneri argues that Mesopotamian elite employed funerary ritual to materialize an ideology of elite authority. All three of these chapters follow a tradition in archaeology that sees religion as a subset of ideology. Ideology, in this sense, is conceived of in Marxist terms—legitimizing elite rule, creating hegemonic power, or promoting false consciousness. Resistance to authority is addressed but typically in terms of how resistance is overcome to establish a common social identity. Like the studies that employ the concept of ritualization generally, those studies that emphasize the creation of religious orthodoxies have an important diachronic element; they investigate how orthodoxies were created through the practice of religion

and ritual. Here symbolic or cosmological understandings of religion are viewed as the primary focus of inquiry. As stated by Geertz, Religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic [For archaeologists following this perspective the goal of archaeological research is to identify the meanings of archaeological symbols and the ways these meanings served to orient and underlie broader cultural patterns. While archaeologists employing this perspective recognize that these symbolic meanings can serve to legitimize elite power, they are less concerned about it. Several contributors productively employ a structural understanding of ritual in their analyses. John Kelly, James Brown, and Lucretia Kelly Chapter 16 identify falcon imagery and associated rituals as central to Cahokian cosmology, particularly in regard to conceptions of fertility. In essence, Kelly and colleagues argue that within the Cahokian cosmology the falcon is a key symbol Ortner 6 L. Fogelin that structures cosmological understandings and ritual practices in a wide variety of contexts. Using the idea of conceptual metaphors Ortman ; Tilley , Bray argues that common symbols were employed that show a general cosmological understanding among the Inca elite that some material things were understood metaphorically in terms of the human body. Thus, pots could be decorated with legs, arms, and design motifs common in Inca clothing. In this sense, the Inca saw some pots as animate beings, not simply ceramic receptacles. Both of these studies illustrate the value of symbolic approaches to the archaeological examination of iconography. They demonstrate that the meaning of symbols can be deciphered—though often with the help of ethnohistoric sources. The more static understandings derived from these more structural understandings of religion are balanced by the richness of their symbolic interpretations see Hays for a more extensive discussion of the value of studying archaeological symbolism. Conclusion The theories that archaeologists employ directly inform the methods and sources they use in their investigations of ancient religions. More structural understandings of religion lead to studies that rely heavily on historic and ethno-historic sources. In contrast, those who advocate a practice-based approach to religion tend to place greater emphasis on archaeological assemblages. Those who see religion and ritual as sources for hegemonic power tend to lie somewhere between the two. That said, most archaeologists blend different understandings of religion in their studies. Few are so dogmatic that they reject outright the insights from alternative perspectives. Methods and Approaches As with the diversity of theoretical understandings of religion, archaeologists also employ a variety of methods and approaches in their research, often blending insights from different perspectives and methods. Likewise, none of the chapters in this volume employ a single method or approach. Below I discuss the chapters in terms of what I feel are the dominant methodological themes of each. Here, the material indicators for common forms of religious practice taboo, animism, shamanism, and so on are developed and compared with archaeological assemblages see also Jordan ; Lewis-Williams ; Price concerning shamanism. Iconographic Methods for the Archaeology of Religion 7 studies are also popular among the contributors to this volume, but the authors employ them in a bewildering variety of ways. Alternatively, some archaeologists employ recent insights into the study of landscape and architecture to infer cosmological meanings, while others use architectural and landscape perspectives to explore ritual practices that legitimize social orders see Smith and Brooks Not surprisingly, mortuary analysis is also employed by several contributors but, again, from radically different perspectives. While many of the contributors employ historic and ethnohistoric sources in their analyses, several address the value and importance of these sources more directly.

Chapter 3 : Landscape, Water and Religion in Ancient India

Archaeology and World Religion is an important new work, being the first to examine these two vast topics together. The volume explores the relationship between, and the contribution archaeology can make to the study of 'World Religions'.

Souk el-Oti Libya 13 1. Kiyomizo-Dera Temple, Kyoto Japan 24 1. Yorks Variations in the locations of the font and baptistery in early Palestinian churches Architectural developments and changing sizes of churches in Nubia, c. Support for this project has also subsequently been provided by the School of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Manchester for which I am grateful. A debt of gratitude is also owed to the referees who looked at the papers, often at short notice, and to Vicky Peters at Routledge and the assessors of the original proposal for making the volume more cohesive. Finally, I would like to thank the students who have taken my MA course in the Archaeology of Religion at the University of Manchester for stimulating my thinking on the subject and for much lively debate. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders. The editor, authors, and publisher would like to apologise in advance for any inadvertent use of copyright material, and thank the following individuals and organisations who have kindly given their permission to reproduce copyright material. Jones, and for Figure 1. Chapter 1 Introduction The archaeology of world religion Timothy Insoll Definitions and objectives The archaeology of world religions is a vast subject, and one which it might seem foolhardy to attempt to consider within the confines of an edited volume composed of nine chapters, three of which are considerably shorter commentaries. However, this volume does not claim to be universal, rather it aims to examine the relationship between, and the contribution archaeology can make to the study of, what are today termed world religions, through focusing upon the examples of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This raises a couple of questions. First, why world religions in particular? There is also a certain imbalance in the mainstream literature the focus, at least, of this introductory chapter in favour of Christian archaeological remains see for example Frend , Platt , Blair and Pyrah , probably a reflection of the bulk of work having been undertaken in Europe, which is also the centre of many of the relevant archaeological journals and publishing houses. Thus applicable studies of Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jewish archaeology or archaeological material tend to be confined to specialist journals and other publications, though to be fair this imbalance has begun to be rectified of late see for example Barnes , Insoll a. Second, it could be asked why these religions in particular? The examples chosen are certainly not meant to be exclusive, but merely reflect the interests and specialisations of the contributors to the volume. Third, what constitutes a world religion? This is in fact something which is frequently neglected in the literature. Is it number of adherents? Is it geographical spread? Is it length of time in existence? Is it unity in practice 2 Timothy Insoll and doctrine? Is it Universality, or consideration by their adherents to be proper to all mankind? Is it the existence of a notion of salvation, or because they rest on a basis of written scripture? Is it all, some, or none of these, or many other criteria which could be listed? One could turn to the simplistic definitions of religion listed in major dictionaries see for example Renfrew [This might be taking the easy option, but the author is unapologetic for this, and it is merely noted that with regard to the examples chosen, geographical spread and thus an extensive archaeological legacy tie these five religions loosely together as much as anything else. Archaeology is the concern, and is witnessed by the material record of Judaism in Israel and the Diaspora, Buddhism in south and south-east Asia, and more recently, elsewhere in the world, Hinduism likewise, Islam within the borders of the Muslim world as usually defined from Morocco in the west to Indonesia in the east, but also, increasingly, worldwide, and finally, that of Christianity similarly spread across the continents. Definitions aside, what then does this chapter attempt to achieve? First, a possible structure of study for the archaeology of world religion will be considered. Whether the archaeological study of world religion can draw upon methodologies and concepts developed elsewhere in the study of religions, notably the broad field encompassed by history of religions, or whether there is little to be gained from adopting explicit theoretical approaches from such sources. Second, the approaches which have been adopted to the archaeology of world religion will be briefly outlined, again with the proviso added that within the limits of circa 10, words this cannot be considered exhaustive. This section will essentially be divided into two parts—what could be

termed negative aspects regarding archaeology and its application to the study of world religion, and in contrast, the positive aspects as well. Finally, the papers themselves will be introduced, and the perceived similarities and differences in how they might be approached by archaeologists will be examined. Archaeological approaches to religion are remarkably piecemeal, at least in the U K, ad hoc almost, with the subject being considered as and when necessary, with few serious attempts at examining approaches to the archaeological study of religion overall. Conferences, for example, have been occasionally organised with archaeology and religion as their focus, the Sacred and Profane meeting in Oxford Garwood et al. More recently Renfrew has approached the archaeology of religion within the framework of cognitive archaeology Renfrew and Zubrow The components of religion, world religions, for example, have been little considered in terms of archaeological approaches that might be employed to further their study. The Sacred and Profane conference referred to previously Garwood et al. A further and well-known example of a dedicated mainstream consideration of religion is provided by the Sacred Sites, Sacred Places volume Carmichael et al. Coverage in this is more even than in the Sacred and Profane volume previously considered, yet besides the introductory papers see for example Hubert , the ensuing case studies are particularistic in focus, a further characteristic of relevant research discussed below. This weakness in archaeological theory towards the investigation of religion in general is something remarked upon by Garwood et al. These are admirable sentiments and even today, too often, material that is unusual or eludes interpretation is placed within that convenient catch-all interpretative dustbin of ritual. Anthropology, in contrast, would appear to be more mature in its theoretical approaches to religion, a debate which has continued for some years and a process charted, in part, by Parker Pearson this volume. Anthropology also benefits from several convenient summaries of approaches to religion which have been employed within the discipline see for example Evans-Pritchard , Saliba , Morris , Bowie This debate is something which archaeology has lacked to date Insoll forthcoming. Yet this does not mean that anthropologists over the course of the past years or so have worked out the perfect methodological and theoretical approaches to religion, they have not. The excesses of the early evolutionary approaches to religion, exemplified by, for example, Frazer , Spencer , and Tylor might be past, and a much more mature approach in evidence, but a dichotomy still appears to exist. So-called tribal religions are thus split up into phenomenaâ€”myth, witchcraft, magic and so onâ€”whereas in contrast, as Morris also notes *ibid.*: Admittedly, anthropological approaches to the study of religion are more complex than this, as Parker Pearson indicates below, but the important point is that even after many metres of bookshelves-worth of relevant material have been published and much introspective disciplinary soul-searching completed, an ideal approach has yet to be adopted, and in all probability never will. Where then does this leave the archaeology of world religion as regards theoretical perspective? Put simply, there is not one. As already indicated, archaeological studies of religion with an explicit theoretical focus are few and far between, whereas innumerable studies of actual material exist in both mainstream and more specialised media. These are studies completed Introduction: Insoll at a variety of levels, local, regional, focusing upon component parts of religious practice such as pilgrimage Figure 1. Even within this volume, edited by one person with fairly clear views as to the desired end product, the disparity in approaches is readily apparent. Yet this is not necessarily a bad thing, and it is not the presumption here to try and develop a theoretical approach for the archaeology of world religion. This is patently an absurd proposition, but it is possible, perhaps, to point to a few useful avenues of investigation, which other better qualified scholars might then explore. Primary amongst these would appear to be the acknowledgement that a useful source of material which might be drawn upon to begin to consider relevant approaches exists within the fields of study encompassed within history of religions, comparative religions, or what is sometimes rather forbiddingly referred to in its untranslated and untranslatable German as Religionswissenschaft. This is defined by Hinnells In many ways the certain degree of untranslatability of Religionswissenschaft into English reflects the dichotomy of archaeology as a discipline in itself, with Religionswissenschaft as a term 6 Timothy Insoll in German covering both science and humanities, a meaning largely lost in translation Hinnells *ibid.* This multi-disciplinary aspect of what we might refer to as history of religions might be useful as it draws in many different aspects of research, conveniently defined by Saliba This idea of unity is exciting and might help in

breaking down many of the particularities all too often evident in relevant archaeological research, and thus help us to move beyond merely description or the listing of facts. Within the history of religions, study is encompassed under a number of sub-disciplines, psychology of religion, philosophy of religion, sociology of religion, phenomenology of religion, history of religion lacking plural. Why not archaeology of religion as well? To investigate phenomena such as religion—world religion, archaeology does not really take the ascendancy but forms part of a battery of techniques applied to understanding such complex phenomena. Thus the over-arching framework of history of religions appears to offer a multi-disciplinary superstructure under which to labour as archaeologists. Yet history of religions under its umbrella encompasses a wealth of relevant ideas and methodologies which might benefit archaeology. This notion of the position of the observer, the researcher, the archaeologist, would appear all-important but little discussed as regards archaeology and religion. The controversies, biases, and general opportunities for misuse of archaeological data of a religious nature and of various other forms, not the focus of discussion here is all too well known, and is indeed considered with reference to a couple of case studies later. Thus this notion of sympathy, neutrality, and of being free of valuejudgements on the part of the researcher is of critical importance, or should be to the archaeologist involved in the investigation of religion, even if it is not always possible to achieve see below. But is this notion of stance, of faith, really of such importance? Equally, the existence of the converse position was also stated, that something could also be lost by being an adherent of the said faith or belief system, by making it difficult to question established doctrine or practice. These are issues which the author had to grapple with in connection with a recently completed study *ibid.* It is also something which has been considered by Hubert Such issues could have an obvious effect upon the role of the archaeologist, a product of this social milieu, as interpreter of religion, whose understanding of the sacred might be fundamentally different from that imbued in the material culture which they study. Practical issues also arise when the notions of faith and archaeology are considered. It is not so much the specific example that is important here but could be to 8 Timothy Insoll someone engaged in archaeology in Tibet , rather the general ideas are of relevance, that faith can impinge upon archaeology and religion in many ways, both theoretically and practically. Similar factors can underpin the varying significance of monuments. This notion of the varying importance of monuments, in this case directly influenced by issues of faith, can be clearly seen when the issue of varying levels of access is considered. Bergquist this volume describes the complex negotiations which had to be completed to gain permission to complete a survey of the traditional Tomb of Christ. But as convoluted as these negotiations were, research was allowed to finally take place here and elsewhere in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre see also Gibson and Taylor In contrast investigation of the Holy Places of Islam, those in Mecca and Medina would not be possible, if indeed, it was desired see below. Though the Temple Mount, on which sits the third most holy site in Islam, the Dome of the Rock, has been the scene of some research and much controversy Anon , Walker Figure 1. These are complex issues and many other dimensions to them exist than those briefly touched upon here, but at this juncture it is profitable to observe that we appear to be flailing around somewhat, and it might be useful to search deeper within the component parts of history of religions for more precise ways to approach the archaeology of world religion. The psychology of religion, defined by Hinnells The same could be said of philosophy of religion. Whilst conventional history of religion, more a collection of facts and collation of dates and events in a manner reminiscent of the type of descriptive approach bemoaned by Evans-Pritchard, referred to earlier, is also inappropriate. This leaves phenomenology of religion. Having acknowledged this, it is possible that phenomenology of religion might offer some potential for the archaeologist interested in world religion, Introduction: Otherwise, elements of phenomenology of religions are equally of little practical use to the archaeologist interested in world religion or religion in general. This is something which archaeologists will similarly fail to approach, regardless even of advances in cognitive archaeology. Because as Sharpe This is the essence of religion, the search for which has been the focus of so much effort. It is something which has perhaps existed from as early as the Middle Palaeolithic see for example Trinkhaus , Parker Pearson Although it might be materially elusive, and equally the very suggestion of the existence of the numinous has been criticised by some for the lack of evidence Sharpe Such a concept acknowledges the sacred element in

religion, something often abstracted in archaeological studies, and allows study to move beyond merely cataloguing religious buildings and artefacts and thinking that this is the sum total of the archaeology of religion. Yet academic minds, including archaeological ones, could well be sceptical about the existence of this numinous element.

The archaeology of religion and ritual is a growing field of study within archaeology that applies ideas from religious studies, theory and methods, anthropological theory, and archaeological and historical methods and theories to the study of religion and ritual in past human societies from a material perspective.

Archaeology and religion have always been intertwined, but will the field be better off without its influence? In her recent essay in Aeon Magazine, Rose Eveleth discussed the relationship of archaeology and religion and how it has evolved as time passes. She cited that since this field of science has started, religion became essentially intertwined with it. The college subject Biblical Archaeology is a testament to such special relationship. The subject focuses on archaeological studies on the Levant or Near Eastern region and how it is vital to the development of mainstream and Western religions. But modern archaeology is going more and more distant to religion as the world today requires a more unbiased scientific research. It can also be attributed to the declining interest of students on the religion subject itself. And most often, it is biased towards the specific religion that funded or sponsored such study. This phenomenon has been observed throughout history. Archaeological expeditions were often funded to defend the Bible or to validate religious texts. Eveleth cited several examples. The Palestinian Exploration Fund established in aimed for the exploration of the Levant region. Although it was already put under the care of an Islamic trust group called Waqf, Jewish archaeologists are claiming that the site is still being explored and destroyed by their Muslim counterparts. One good example of the negative effects of archeological bias is the case of Beirut, Lebanon. It is home to the oldest existing cities in the world. It is historically considered that the inhabitants of Beirut are Arab in origin until French archaeologists eventually discovered that it was also home to the Canaanite Phoenicians. Today, all the ancient ruins and evidences of the past civilizations in Beirut have been demolished in favor of modernization. Is archaeology better off without religion? In the second half of the 20th century, religion has continuously tried to balance its interest religiously and scientifically. One contributory to the achievement of unbiased archaeology is due to the fact that projects or explorations are now mainly funded by governments instead of religious groups. But is moving away from religion a good thing for archaeology? According to Eveleth, religion and culture will always be a part of archaeological research. In her example, the Native Americans and ancient Mayans may be considered as extinct by most archaeologists. But those with the proper religious and cultural background will learn that these ancient people and cultures still exist only that they have adapted to the changing and modern world.

Chapter 5 : Archaeology And World Religion by Timothy Insoll

Archaeology and world religion. [Timothy Insoll;] -- This is the first text to consider the subjects of religion and archaeology in conjunction with each other. It explores the relationship between, and the contribution archaeology can make to the.

Based on written scriptures. Has a notion of salvation, often from outside. Universal, or potentially universal. Can subsume or supplant primal religions. Often forms a separate sphere of activity. Confined to a single language or ethnic group. Form basis from which world religions have developed. Religious and social life are inseparable. Strict dichotomies of religious forms may also contribute to skewing research toward state religions, leaving household religious practice, and the relationships between these, under-investigated a trend noted by Elson and Smith, [7]. The archaeology of religion also incorporates related anthropological or religious concepts and terms such as magic , tradition , symbolism , and the sacred. Theory[edit] Anthropology of religion[edit] Theory within the archaeology of religion borrows heavily from the Anthropology of religion , which encompasses a broad range of perspectives. They include religion as an axis of identity that structures social life and personal experience. For example, John Chenoweth [16] interpreted ceramic assemblages and burials according to Quaker ideals of plainness and modesty. Because social identity is both imposed and negotiated through social practice, including material practice, archaeologies of religion increasingly incorporate practice-based theory. Religion, power, and inequality[edit] Because religion and political power are often intertwined [22] [23] particularly in early states, the archaeology of religion may also engage theories of power and inequality. Historical method and theory[edit] Historical archaeologists have made major contributions to the understanding of the religion and ritual of peoples who have remained underrepresented or misrepresented in the historical record, such as colonized peoples, indigenous peoples, and enslaved peoples. Mandatory religious conversion was common in many colonial situations e. This research combines archaeological and anthropological method and theory with historical method and theory. In addition to recovering, recording, and analyzing material culture, historical archaeologists use archives, oral histories, ethnohistorical accounts. Researchers read texts critically, emphasizing the historical context of the documents especially regarding underrepresented peoples whose voices may be distorted or missing in order to better understand religious practices that may have been discouraged or even severely punished. Combined archaeological, historical, and anthropological data sets may contradict each other, or the material record may illuminate the details of covert or syncretic religious practice, as well as resistance to dominant religious forms. For example, our understanding of the religious practice of enslaved peoples in the United States e. Leone and Frye , [30] Fennell [31] has increased dramatically thanks to research in historical archaeology. Material correlates[edit] Because archaeology studies human history through objects, buildings, bodies, and spaces, archaeologists must engage theories that connect anthropological and sociological theories of religion to material culture and landscapes. Theories of materiality [32] and landscape [33] serve to connect human activities, experiences, and behaviors to social practices, including religion. Theories of embodiment [34] also serve to interpret human remains as they relate to religion and ritual. The archaeology of religion makes use of the same material evidence as other branches of archaeology, but certain artifact classes are particularly emphasized in studying religion and ritual in the past: Human remains and burial assemblages can offer many clues to religious and ritual activity. Methods of interment including burial position, cremation, burial location, primary and secondary burials, etc. Total burial contexts, i. Religious buildings, such as temple complexes, kivas , and missions, are often used to examine communal religious and ritual activity e. Barnes , [37] Graham , [38] Reid et al. Part of archaeoastronomy is the investigation of how buildings are aligned to astral bodies and events, such as solstices, which often coincide with religious or ritual activities. Archaeological examinations of religious buildings can reveal unequal access to religious knowledge and ritual. Religious buildings frequently contain religious iconography that provides insight into the symbolic dimensions of religious life. Within landscape archaeology, sacred landscapes are an increasingly important focus of study e. Landscapes are imbued with sacred meaning throughout the world; aboriginal Australian

songlines , and the related belief that mythical events are marked on the landscape, are one example. Religious iconography, symbols , [42] ethnographic texts and ethnographic analogy are important tools that archaeologists use to compare with the material record to examine religions in the past e. Clendinnen , [43] Elson and Smith [44]. Common artifact classes such as ceramics have been increasingly reinterpreted within a religious framework. According to the idea of religion as a form of social practice and a total worldview, any artifact may potentially be used to embody religious ideas and ideals in material form. Patterns of artifact and ecofact use within ritual contexts may expose preferences or sacred meanings of certain materials; the ritual use of pine among the ancient Maya is one example Morehart, Lentz, and Prufer [45]. Examples of research by area[edit] Evolving religious structure in Egypt Baines [46] Ritual and political process in Tanzania Hakansson [47] Tswana religion and Christianity in Botswana and South Africa Reid et. Biblical archaeology[edit] Biblical archaeology is a field of archaeology that seeks to correlate events in the Bible with concrete archaeological sites and artifacts Meyers , [62] Richardson [63].

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Chapter 7 : Interaction of Archeology and Judeo-Christianity

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