

When the French scholar Ernst Renan wrote his *The Life of Jesus* in the last century (1863) he spoke of his journeys in Galilee providing him with a fifth gospel, 'torn but still legible.' Renan could scarcely have imagined how, over 100 years later, his fifth gospel has come to life by digging up the familiar landscape which to him seemed to confirm so powerfully the gospel accounts. Archaeology is just one of the new resources available to scholars in search of the historical Jesus, the potential of which has not so far been properly realized.

The reluctance to draw on this source by many of the more influential current books about Jesus may well be due to the traditionally conservative image of biblical archaeology, the practitioners of which were perceived to be interested in confirming the reliability of the biblical narratives. The discipline has considerably changed its image, however, due not just to a more technically scientific approach, but also by broadening its horizons to engage with issues on a regional and inter-regional basis. Surveys of landscape, mapping of changing settlements patterns and the like, can now supplement detailed stratified digs as archaeology joins forces with the social sciences in order to achieve a more adequate interpretation of its data.

Galilee in the Hellenistic and Roman periods has become a veritable testing ground for many of these developments, but the results have not always been properly exploited by the historians, especially those interested in Jesus and his movement. The alleged urbanization of Galilee is often taken to mean that the region's inhabitants participated fully in every aspect of Greco-Roman culture, including its religious and philosophical assumptions about life. 'Galilee of the gentiles' then becomes a description of the cultural affiliations of the inhabitants rather than a promise of hope for those surrounded by the nations, as Isaiah had intended.

Such a depiction of first-century Galilee fits well with one of the most recent trends in Jesus research, namely, to view him as a peddler of popular Cynic philosophical aphorisms in a counter-culture manner, rather than as a Jewish prophet or Hasid inspired by the traditions of hope and restoration of his Jewish faith.

While archaeologists and literary historians must be allowed to speak in their own voice, they need to dialogue constantly with each other, recognizing the limits of their own discipline and the methods of their dialogue partners. With a few notable exceptions this has not occurred in contemporary studies of Jesus of Galilee. Archaeologists need to be aware that texts, especially religious texts, despite their selective viewpoint and particular interests can tell us a lot about the things that really mattered to people. Likewise, historians who work mainly with texts must acknowledge that archaeologists can illumine aspects of life as it was lived in the everyday by ordinary people, which did not interest literary authors. Both accounts may be valid from their perspective, even if they do not always appear to agree. While many aspects of the material culture may be shared, difference can easily occur over the really important matters. Even language patterns may change for commercial or administrative reasons, without being a pointer to a radically altered view of life and its meaning.

Archaeology has been able to show that from the early Hellenistic age (i.e. third to second century B.C.E) there was an increasing number of settlements in Galilee, which are taken as Jewish because of Hasmonean coin finds at bedrock. This is true even of Sepphoris, which was refurbished by Herod Antipas in the first century C.E. to celebrate his patron Augustus, where remains of observant Jewish practices are to be found side by side with such trappings of the Roman way of life as a theatre and a bath house. To be an observant Jew in the first century did not mean being isolationist or obscurantist. Trading links between the Phoenician port of Tyre and Galilee are clearly indicated by the frequency of the coins of that city at both upper and lower Galilean centers. Pottery analysis has shown that Galilean household ware from Kefr Hanania was marketed in the Golan at both Jewish and non-Jewish centers as well as in the cities of Acco/Ptolemaios and Caesarea Philippi.

Thus a Galilee where the social world is retrieved by means of the archaeological record need not, indeed was not hostile to the Jewish way of life in the first century. Its links with Jerusalem and the south, affirmed by literary sources, seem to go back to the expansion of the Hasmoneans in the second century B.C.E. on the basis of the material evidence. When today I encounter sweeping generalizations about Galilee's culture

being open to all the various strands of Greco-Roman intellectual life, I am reminded of Renan's green, shady, smiling landscape of Galilee, contrasted sharply with the and land of Judea. The ideas emanating from each place were equally opposed: the one fresh, vital and magnanimous, the other, insipid, hypocritical and obstinate. That picture was surely not based on observation but on prejudice. A gentile Galilee could be used to explain why 'Jesus was not a Jew,' according to a German N.T. professor writing at the height of the Nazi regime in 1941. One might have hoped that we could learn from history, our own history, that is, and allow Jesus the Jew to have his true spiritual home. The new archaeology, properly and critically employed supports the enterprise.

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